

PARKING GARAGE BUILDING COMMITTEE

1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONFERENCE ROOM "A"

3:30 P.M.

Thursday, January 5, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilor Lown, Chair; Councilor Pearson, Councilor Spear, John O'Leary, Mark McNabb, Everett Eaton, Nancy Colbert Puff, Deputy City Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Allen, Project Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Rice, Public Works Director; Dan Hartrey, Facilities Project Manager, Eric Eby, Transportation Engineer; Joey Giordano, Parking Manager; Nick Cracknell, Planner; Gary Glines, Chris Brennan, Sarah Morkos, Abigail O'Gara, Walker Parking; Joe Almeida, Lisa DeStefano, DeStefano Architects; and Liz Good, Acting Secretary

Councilor Lown called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

1. Acceptance of Minutes

Mark McNabb moved to accept and approve the minutes of the December 20, 2016. Councilor Spear seconded.

Peter Rice stated that he had several points of clarification concerning the minutes. He stated that with regard to the structural systems recommended by Walker, page 3 of the minutes did not reflect that the committee was supportive of the precast structural system. Also, on page 3, 7th paragraph, last sentence, Mr. Rice felt that more words were needed in the minutes with regard to ground water infiltration. He felt the statement was vague and should reflect the desire to use other opportunities where they arise and are appropriate for handling rain water. Lastly, Mr. Rice stated that on page 3, section E, paragraph 8, the minutes read that the installation of the photovoltaic panels were definitely going to be included as part of the project. It was his understanding that they intended to do the design so that it was ready for the panels and then they could be pursued on a separate track if the City wanted to. Mark McNabb clarified that he was only one voice at the last meeting stating that he would like to see the panels incorporated right out of the gate as an option. Councilor Spear concurred. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff recalled that the design should not be an afterthought but that currently the panels were well beyond the budget at this point in time. Planning for it and including it as part of something to be able to happen later was what was the committee's consensus. Mr. Rice pointed out that the City has in-house expertise in

solar arrays and that he would work with Jacob Levenson to get a better handle on it. Nick Cracknell added that it would be advantageous to have the designers show the committee what the panels might look like in place should the City choose to do it. Chris Brennan agreed with Mr. Cracknell.

Hearing no further discussion, the committee accepted the minutes as amended.

2. Progress Updates – Chris Brennan, Walker Parking

a. Site Design/Permitting Process

Mr. Brennan showed the committee the site plan that was currently in front the City for consideration. He said that they have had two Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings where it was voted to send the project on to the Planning Board on January 19th. He updated the committee on several changes that came as a result of the TAC meetings. They have relocated a transformer, generator and other equipment to the west end of the garage. Parking spaces will be lost because of it but the two spaces negotiated with the railroad will remain. The cul-de-sac will now have a raised (3” to 4”) area in the center of the circle to make sure that all vehicles can make the turns easily. The last significant change was that some areas of pavement in front of the garage entrance will be changed to pavers. Mr. Rice clarified that he did not hear that as a stipulation in the TAC approval but that Planning Board may want that change and to keep the idea open. Additionally, there have been some changes in the location of cross walks and the opportunity to move some curb cuts around as well.

b. Soils/Geotechnical

Mr. Brennan stated that the geotechnical data report is in and they are discussing the various systems and what will be the most efficient. Additionally, they are working with the geotechnical and civil engineers to determine what soils will need to be moved off site. They will not be reusing much of the soil that is on site.

Mr. Rice clarified on the use of the pavers. He said that one of the concerns TAC had was that if and when the pavers had to be maintained, it would cause major disruption to the garage entrance because the pavers are time consuming to work with. Mr. Brennan added that it would affect the lot 6 entrance as well.

3. Architecture Presentation

Joe Almeida and Lisa DeStefano of DeStefano Architects presented several design schemes to the committee. Mr. Almeida explained that the site was unique in several ways in that it is nestled between the west end and the north end with the historic district coming right up to it. It is also a transitional site due to the fact that it is adjacent to a small scale neighborhood as well as a commercial area. He pointed out that they have focused on using precast systems for its durability. They discussed whether this

was to be a background building or an iconic building and it was agreed that this was to be an iconic building and should make a statement about the character of the City. Mr. Almeida also stated that they were aware that Art Speak might want to be involved at some point and that they welcomed that working relationship.

Ms. DeStefano pointed out to the committee that the colors reflected on the printed plans were not an exact representation of the colors of the materials proposed.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Almeida walked the committee through a slide presentation of the various schemes. He presented images of other parking garages that he thought were successful designs. Scheme 1 was a brick scheme. He said that this was presented to City staff and the feedback was that less brick and more iconic features were desired. Mr. O'Leary asked for clarification that using less brick had not been decided upon yet. Mr. Almeida agreed and added that this was just feedback and that he was going to show the committee several schemes for their consideration. He pointed out that on the south elevation of scheme 1 was a very large glass stair tower. There would be flex space on the first floor, projecting out about 5-6 feet. The brick would go up the sides and would be capped off with precast concrete.

Mr. Almeida moved to scheme 2, called the bird's nest concept. He said that this scheme showed less brick with more defined features. The material across the top of the garage was a metal screen, meant to be more inviting. Ms. DeStefano pointed out that this is a building that will be seen from a distance so that by using a different material at the top it might draw pedestrians down into that area. Mr. O'Leary asked where one might see the building from. Ms. DeStefano said as they further develop their design, they will walk through the community and find those vantage points and present those views to the committee. Mr. McNabb stated he was having difficulty with the various colors on the drawings and wondered if a particular color was representative of ventilation. Mr. Brennan replied no and confirmed that it would not be a mechanically vented garage but an open garage with the exception of the flex space on the bottom level. He added that the basic rule for parking garages is to have openings along 40% of the perimeter and 20% of the overall wall area around the perimeter.

Mr. Almeida showed the committee a metal screens concept which simplifies the crown and uses a more simplified and elegant screen. This concept introduces trees which he said may be hard to do in this location. He explained that a root ball of any size would have a hard time spreading out and Mr. Rice added that there will also be electrical conduits below the sidewalk that would add to the problem. Mr. Almeida pointed out that landscape architect, Robbi Woodburn, is on the team so they will rely on her expertise with regard to landscaping. Ms. DeStefano stated that with this scheme, the entry corner piece starts to get larger and has more presence on the approach. She said that the metal screens could give opportunity to do something green vertically.

The last scheme presented was the most recent one developed and was called the gears and precast scheme. Mr. Almeida stated that the sculptural elements over the main entrance were strong features of the building. The colors selected were based on

natural stones and their textures as well. Planters were placed along the flex space with potential for plantings on the roof of the flex space. He added that they were looking to explore this design further.

Mr. Almeida said that today they would like feedback with discussion on the potential next steps to consider. Lighting schemes would need to be discussed as well.

Mr. McNabb commented that they might want to explore more artwork around the garage instead of forcing landscaping that may not survive. The community likes artwork. He added that he liked the glass tower a lot. He pointed out that if solar were on top of the tower, it would make a statement and would support the technology. He went on to say that he thought they had too much glass on the storefronts of the flex space. If it is retail use, he thought they should go with what they've got. If it will be office, then it needs to be friendlier. Finally, Mr. McNabb stated that he liked the different materials and did not mind departing from brick. He liked quality materials and simplistic planes of the last scheme.

Councilor Spear stated that he agreed with Mr. McNabb's comments. He said that seeing the progression, the design has improved each time and he liked the direction that it is going. He then offered a creative idea to the team. He said given the size of the building, it could be used to their advantage by breaking up segments of the building with specific design features possibly depicting a theme(s).

Mr. O'Leary stated that whatever is built there needs to fit into its surroundings. He disagreed with Mr. McNabb about the glass tower and said he wasn't too excited about it. He explained that he had a concern about putting in elements like glass and wanted to know what it did to construction and to maintenance and whether it would lose its luster over time. Mr. O'Leary also stated a concern about lights being projected into the neighborhood. He wants to make sure that they are respectful of the people who are living nearby.

Everett Eaton commented that he liked the progression but he particularly like some of the themes in the December 7th renderings. He said he thought he liked it because it did not look like a parking garage. Mr. Brennan said that it was a design they could work with but they would have to open it up more for natural ventilation. Mr. Eaton wondered if there was a way to bring some of the depth, contrast, and interest from that rendering into some of these latest designs. He added that perhaps awnings above the activated retail space would add more interest.

Councilor Pearson stated that they recently sat through an extensive presentation from Deer Street Associates whose proposed buildings followed the industrial theme. She felt they were off on right foot with continuity of the neighborhood. She thought it felt compatible. She commented that she liked the "gears" features on the last scheme but wondered if there could be a safety hazard because people might be tempted to climb them. Mr. Almeida explained that they have thought about that and have designed it so

that it would not be possible. Councilor Pearson suggested more of the “gearing” on the north elevation to make it more impactful.

Project Schedule

a. CM Selection Process

Mr. Brennan informed the committee that the Request for Quote went out and they received three responses. Soon they will put out a Request for Proposal to the three respondents in February. He said they would like to have the CM on board on or before design development to help with cost control measures and to facilitate the civil/site work. He said they want to get the garage in operation as soon as practical so that the City can pursue the needed repairs to the High Hanover garage.

b. Design

Mr. Brennan said that the goal was to get a draft report before the committee by the end of January that puts a lot of the information together. They will have more progress on the architecture and design process as well as updating the cost estimates. Then it will be on to the design development phase, which will take about 6-7 weeks. At the end of design development they will begin bidding certain packages. It is the goal to be in the ground by late March or early April. Mr. Brennan explained that they would coordinate the processes so that it is more cost effective.

c. Construction – start late March. Completion of August Sept 2018.

Mr. O’Leary had concern about how to handle construction costs along with contingency costs. Mr. Rice explained that that was part of Ransom’s contract and they will be on top of that.

4. Other Business

a. Next meeting – Suggest January 26, 2017

Mr. Brennan stated that they would plan to deliver a draft version of the schematic design for the committee to review for the next meeting.

At 4:50 p.m., Council Lown adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good, Acting Secretary

These minutes were approved at the January 26, 2017 meeting.