

LUNENBURG MUNICIPAL BUILDING DESIGN COMMITTEE



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Meeting Minutes December 16, 2024 5:30pm

Members Present: Brian Lehtinen, Michael-Ray Jeffreys, Matthew Allison, Tom Gray

Members absent: David Blatt, Kristina Masaitis, Greg Roy

Town Employees: NA

Community Guests: NA

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm.

The Committee reviewed updates from the Taylor and Burns team on the new building design progress, focusing on: program elements based on prior Committee input, existing building framework, integration of components into a cohesive design matrix, proposed layout visualizations.

The presentation highlighted key aspects of the project. Lunenburg Village Center Vision: incorporation of several municipal buildings, public parking highlighted on diagrams.

Proposed pedestrian pathway connecting town hall, the new town hall addition, and surrounding areas, with a primary route running past Bad Larry's and across Route 2A to a new wing entrance. Building Naming Clarification: suggested referring to the new town hall as the *Meeting House* and the Ritter Building as the *School District Offices*. Space Allocation

Overview: The new town hall design includes a U-shaped relationship between spaces, with the Town Manager's office positioned separately. The Ritter Building program includes 2,700 square feet for the School District. Additional offices for the State Representative, Select Board, Veteran Affairs, and storage on the second floor. Structural Connections: The Ritter Building and the new town hall will be connected via an umbilical cord structure. Public access planned at the ground level of the Ritter Building, with split-level navigation between the second floor and lower floor.

Clarifications on Design and Elevation: Concerns raised regarding the connection between the Ritter Building and the new town hall, particularly due to differences in elevation. The new town hall entrance will be at sidewalk level, with a sloped corridor leading to the lower level of the Ritter Building. Access to Offices: Questions were raised about how accessible the lower level offices (e.g., Treasurer, Assessor) would be from the Town Manager's office given differing elevations. Survey Data Needs: The team emphasized the importance of precise survey data to finalize connection details between buildings. New Town Hall Entrance: Tony's concern about the new town hall entrance being accessible was addressed.

The entrance will be at sidewalk level at the corner of the library and Ritter properties. The design allows for internal floor-level transitions to accommodate elevation changes. Old Town Hall Programmatic Spaces: The first floor primarily houses programmatic spaces, with the middle corridor highlighted in yellow. The second floor is designated as hearing room space with minimal programmatic use, including cable access facilities. Site Plan Considerations: Most parking will be located at 30 School Street. The path from the parking area to the Meeting House should be emphasized. Suggestions included evaluating the possibility of a new entrance near the main road and considering a crosswalk there. Crosswalks: There were differing opinions on adding a second crosswalk near the existing one. While some saw potential in this, others expressed caution about its proximity. PACC Building: PACC was discussed as a standalone structure that should remain functionally connected but not physically integrated with the main buildings. Layout Adjustments: Color-coding improvements for the new town hall spaces were suggested. The idea of grouping Town Clerk, Treasurer, Collector, Assessor, Accounting, and Town Manager's offices on the same floor was proposed. Ritter Building Usage: Suggestions included expanding the ground floor northward to provide additional space for the Town Manager's office. Using the basement for programs like ACE and less-utilized services such as State Representative and Veterans Affairs offices. Positioning the Recreation Director and Facilities Director offices on the second floor of the Ritter. Concerns were raised about the school superintendent's office being located on the lower floor of Ritter. Suggestions included moving it closer to the new town hall or to an expanded Town Manager's office area. Structural Considerations: the design must account for the Ritter building's north wall issues, including energy inefficiency due to leaks. Expanding and possibly adding a new level to the Ritter to maximize usable space was recommended. It was emphasized that clear, accessible pathways should connect the buildings, with attention to preserving distinct aesthetics between the Ritter and the new town hall. General consensus highlighted the importance of prioritizing accessibility, functional space allocation, and energy efficiency while addressing programmatic needs. The architects were encouraged to incorporate these suggestions into updated plans for further review. Architects to revise layouts based on the feedback, especially concerning programmatic space adjustments, crosswalk considerations, and structural enhancements. Further analysis of space needs for school-related programs and updates to the proposed connections between the buildings. The committee discussed the limited space for parking, particularly at the southwest corner and along School Street for handicap spots. Tony emphasized that parking should not dominate the design, and that the available space should be better utilized for building purposes. Committee members agreed to review the parking requirements based on code. The new town hall design includes a connector to Ritter. It was discussed that the connector should be on two levels to accommodate changes in level and maintain smooth accessibility, particularly from the sidewalk into the new town hall. Concerns were raised about the need for the new building's front to mirror the current Town Hall or Ritter building, particularly to maintain the historical aesthetic of the area. Members suggested that the side entrance from the parking lot should feature architectural elements signaling "Town Hall." Robert confirmed that the elevator would be placed in the center of the new town hall's footprint. Members voiced concerns about the addition to the Ritter building, specifically that the design didn't enhance its appearance. A few members also expressed dissatisfaction with the current design of the addition, particularly the curved roof.

It was noted that PACC requires a significant amount of space for their operations. The committee discussed their growing space needs and the possibility of relocating them to a new building separate from the town hall. There was concern about the cost and feasibility of including PACC in the current town hall project due to space constraints. It was suggested that PACC should educate the public about their operations and how much space they truly need.

The committee discussed the projected cost for building out 2,700 square feet for PACC, with estimates suggesting a cost of approximately \$1.6 million. There were concerns about whether this investment would be justified, given that some members felt the community might not view PACC's studio as critical for the town's operations.

Members discussed options for shortening the connector or adjusting the number of floors in the connector and that the connector could be more cost-effective if limited to a single floor.

The committee debated whether the entrance should be on Main Street or School Street.

While Robert suggested an entrance on the narrower side facing Main Street, Tony proposed an L-shaped design that would face Mass Avenue. Some members felt the current entrance design needed to better reflect the town hall's traditional architecture.

Tony raised concerns about adding the Brooks House project to the committee's agenda, suggesting that focusing on the town hall should remain the committee's priority. Some members agreed that the Brooks House issue should be handled separately and not interfere with the ongoing town hall project.

The next meetings are scheduled for January 6th and 22nd. The committee will review revised renderings and continue refining the design. The goal is to make significant progress by mid-January.

Robert thanked the committee for their constructive input. He mentioned that they would return to the drawing board and provide updated plans for review.

Tony reiterated the need to stay focused on the town hall project and expressed hope that future meetings would bring positive responses to the revised designs.

A motion to approve meeting minutes from November 14th, and 20th and 25th 2024 was made by Tom Gray, seconded by Brian Lehtinen, approved unanimously.

Michael-Ray Jeffreys thanked all the members for their work on the committee.

Motion to adjourn by Matthew Allison at 7:34pm, seconded by Tom Gray, unanimously passed.