



Public Safety Building Committee Site Selection Document



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PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Public Safety Building Committee was established by the Selectman on May 30, 2019 and charged with the following:

- Identify potential sites
- Site study (survey, geo-tech, etc.)
- Scope to include siting potential new facility with turning radius for apparatus
- Scope to include determination of Finish Floor Elevation (FFE) for proposed structure
- Scope to include schematic site plan and identify permitting constraints

Committee Members:

David Turcotte – Chairman – Citizen at Large
Von Salmi – Vice Chairmen – Citizen at Large
Christopher Mossman – Secretary – Citizen at Large/Hager Park Commission
Jim Desile- Board of Selectmen
Lisa Rocheleau – Advisory Board
Keith Harding – Capital Planning
Peter Normandin – Advisory Board
Mark Hawke – Town Administrator
Ralph LeBlanc – Police Chief
Kyle S. Butterfield - Fire Chief
David Monty – IT/Fire Department
Paul Blanchard – Building Commissioner
Kerry Koskinen – Citizen at Large/Energy Advisory Commission

EXISTING PUBLIC SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS

- The current Public Safety Building sits on a 4-Acre parcel of land shared between Public Safety, Town Hall and Town Basket Ball Courts
- The Site Offers 2.8 Acres Usable space, which includes the site of the Town Hall, Public Safety Building and Basketball Courts.
- The Public Safety Portion is 1.6 acres before factoring wetlands and setback.



(Highlighted Space is Usable Space)

- The remained 1.71 acres are occupied by the Town Hall and Basketball Courts
- Original Building (1958) - Masonry block exterior and wood framed floor and roof
- Addition (1995) - wood framing, truss roof and vinyl siding.
- For a detailed view of deficiencies, please click the following link. https://www.westminster-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1431/f/uploads/psb_feasibility_study_2019.pdf

Pre Addition – Mid 1990's and During Construction in Mid 1990's



Photo 1: Original 1958 Building



Photo 2: First Floor Woodframe (1995 Addition)



Photo 3: Wood Roof Truss Construction (1995 Addition)



Photo 4: Current public safety building

SITE CRITERIA

The following criteria was selected as a the most advantageous site criteria.

Land Costs – Whether municipally owned or privately owned.

Site Constraints - Level, Adequately Sized, Previously Undeveloped, Multiple Vehicle Access Routes, No restrictions, clean title or deed

Accessibility – With in one mile of center of town, no hindrances to response times and vehicle travel

Expansion – Does the site provide for future growth

Utilities – All utilities existing within the public way and accessible.

Political/Legal – Political and legal concerns for use for Public Safety. No/Limited Neighbors, No previous hazardous materials identified no pre-existing buildings.

SITE SCORING MATRIX

Sites have been evaluated based on their land costs, construction constrains, accessibility, utilities and political issues.

Rating system

5 = Favorable

4 = Somewhat Favorable

3 = Neutral

2 = Somewhat Unfavorable

1 = Unfavorable

* wetlands, slope, size, etc.

** comments for
favorable and
unfavorable found
in the descriptions
of sites

7 SOUTH ST – CURRENT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The current Public Safety Building has served in some capacity since 1958. The police department currently occupy the original building that is of masonry construction. In 1995, the Fire Department portion was constructed as an addition to the existing building. This portion of the building was constructed with wood framed, truss roof system and vinyl siding.

The current building is past its usable life as a public safety building. The cost constraints to modify the existing building to serve as a public safety building is cost prohibitive due to building code required upgrades. Tecton Architects identified that the current site could potentially serve as a Police Station. To accomplish this the current building would require the demolition of most of the current building. With construction requiring phases while building a new Police Station. This site would offer a Police Station that is not expandable for future growth. This site would require a Fire Station to be built at another location prior to the start of construction/demolition.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | - | - | - | <u>Potential</u> | - | <u>Issues</u> | - |
| South Street | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 19 |

Favorable:

- The site is municipally owned
- The site has municipal water and sewer
- The site will not have any effect on the Police Departments response times

Unfavorable:

- The current building does not meet Class 4 Critical Use Facility specifications prescribed by the Building Code. The current building cannot meet a Risk Category IV and will need to be demolished with a new building either Fire, Police or Combined in its place.
 - *Risk Category IV, the highest risk category, includes buildings and structures that, if severely damaged, would reduce the availability of essential community services necessary to cope with an emergency. Risk Category IV buildings and structures include hospitals, police stations, fire stations, emergency communication centers, and similar emergency facilities, as well as ancillary structures required for the operation of these facilities during an emergency, and facilities containing extremely hazardous materials that would threaten the public if released (ASCE 2010, IBC 2012).*
- This site is too small to accommodate both Fire and Police Departments
- The site offers extremely limited future growth to the building for either Police or a Fire Department
- Site constraints include wetlands and poor soil conditions



(Potential Police Station on Existing Site and Existing Public Safety Building)



Town of Westminster

11 SOUTH STREET
MASSACHUSETTS 01473
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
mmarro@westminster-ma.gov
Phone: (978) 874-7413 • Fax: (978) 874-7411

□

September 30, 2019

Michael Macdonald, Chief
Westminster Police Department
7 South Street
Westminster, MA 01473

Re : Expansion of Current Public Safety Building

Dear Honorable Chief,

Thank you and my thanks to the Fire Chief for meeting with me regarding your needs for expansion. As I expressed, it is my opinion based on site logistics and state wetland regulations, the current site is not suitable for expansion for the following :

1. Almost the entirety of the current undeveloped site is wetland as defined under DEP regulation 310 CMR 10.00. As such, filling under said regulation is limited to 5000 square feet. In the case of this property, a variance from the commonwealth would be required, which adds on many layers of government permitting and likely would not be granted as there would be a lack of overriding reason under state regulation that would allow the EEOEA Secretary to allow the variance.
2. The stream on the property is subject to the rivers protection portion of the regulation (310 CMR 10.58). This would actually increase development standards that would likely not be met in part due to the reasons stated in the above paragraph. Culverting the stream requires wetland replication and would trigger a mandatory wildlife habitat evaluation. This poses further hindrance to using the current site.
3. Wetland replication would be required on site by law. Under current law, you cannot replicate off the property. This also places a further hindrance on the use of the site.

I hope this summary has provided useful information in your decision making process.

Sincerely,

Matthew S. Marro,
Conservation Agent
Cc: File, BOS, Con Com

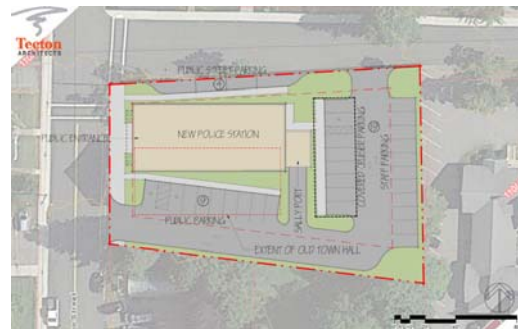
(Conservation Commission Letter regarding the existing site)

3 BACON STREET – OLD TOWN HALL

The Old Town Hall building has been vacant since 2006 due to the construction of a new Town Hall located at 11 South St. The original building dates to c.1837 serving as a community Grange, later being converted to a function hall and finally as a Town Hall in the 1950's. The current building is structurally deficient, has only a crawl space basement and is in need of major repair. In order to transform this building to a public safety use it will have to be razed and a new structure built in its place.

In early 2020, Tecton Architects was commissioned to do a test fit for a potential Police Station only at the site of the Old Town Hall. Their conceptual drawing created a three story police station with similar architectural characteristics of the existing Old Town Hall.

| SITE | Land Costs | Site Constraints | Accessibility | Expansion | Utilities | Political/Legal | TOTALS |
|---------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| Old Town Hall | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 15 |



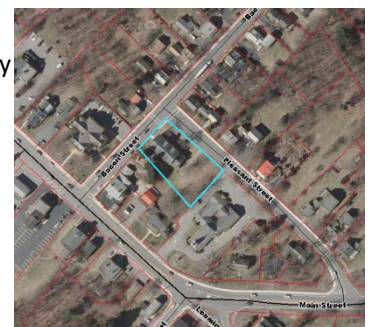
(Tecton rendering of potential Police Department at the Old Town Hall Site and Architects Site Layout)

Favorable:

- The site is Town owned
- Has municipal water and sewer
- Reuse would resolve the issue that has existed regarding a vacant municipal building

Unfavorable:

- The site will accommodate a Police Department only
- The site offers extremely limited future growth to the building for the Police Department
- The buildings condition requires a complete demolition of the existing building and a new building to be built in its place
- The site is located in a densely populated residential neighborhood
- The site offers no solution for the Fire Department outside of the current facility



HAGER PARK ROAD – TOWN OWNED LAND

This site is a portion of Town owned land on Hager Park Road that is 6.5 Acres of undeveloped space. Located 0.9 miles from the current site, a relocation here would not significantly affect response time.

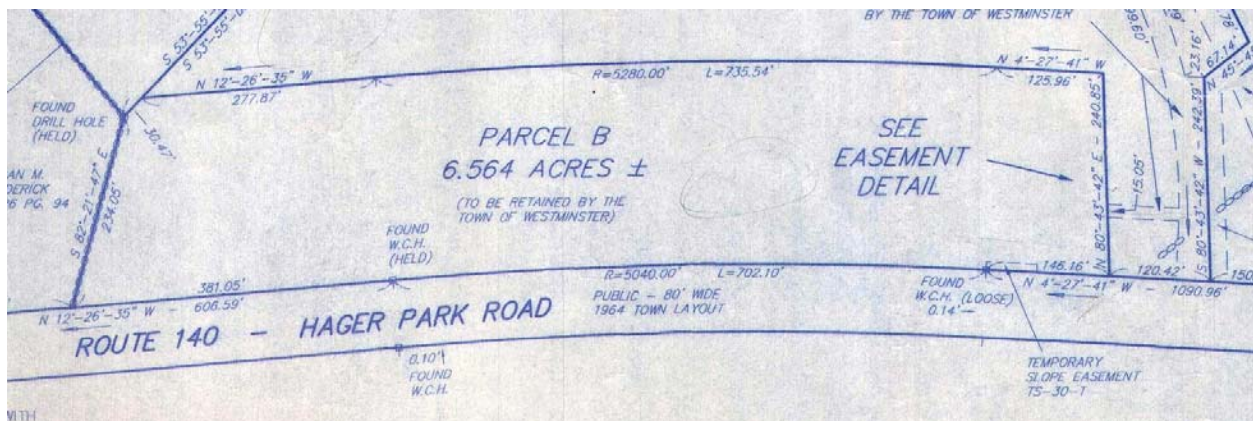
| SITE | Land Costs | Site Constraints | Accessibility | Expansion | Utilities | Political/Legal | TOTALS |
|-----------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| Hager Park Road | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 24 |

Favorable:

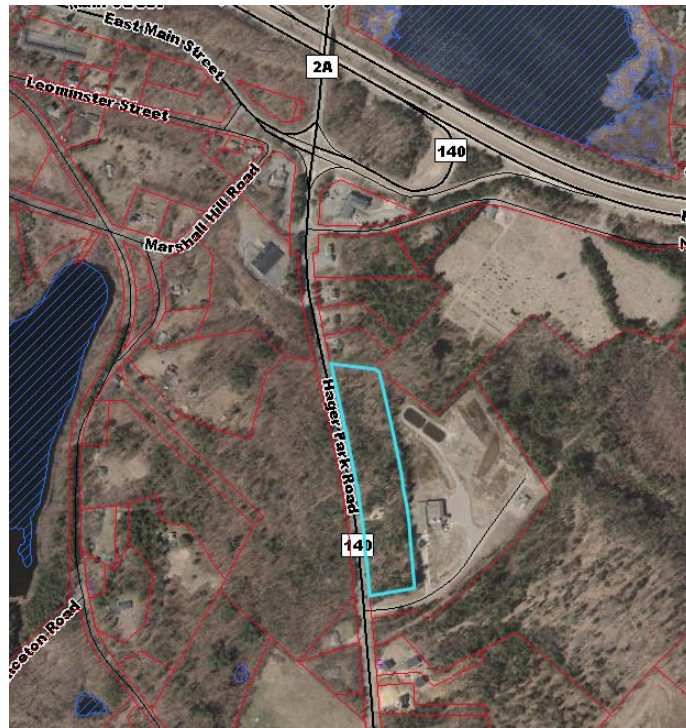
- The lot area meets the criteria for adequate space for both Police and Fire Departments
- The site provides for future space for growth for both Police and Fire Departments
- The site is Town owned
- Immediate access to major highways with minimal impact to local traffic

Unfavorable:

- The site requires a portion of Hager Park that is currently forested to be cleared and developed



(Tecton Architects Potential Site Layout at Hager Park)



13 ACADEMY HILL ROAD – THE UPTON BUILDING

The Upton Building served as a school to the community from 1912 until the mid-1990's. In 2010, it was turned over to the Westminster Historical Society. The building is of brick and mortar construction with wood framing. Structurally the building is sound however due to multiple levels on each floor the current configuration is not ADA compliant. The reuse of the building would require the interior of the building to be demolished and a new ADA compliant floor plan. This site would allow for a Police Station only and not solve the Fire Station problem.

In mid-2020, Tecton Architects were commissioned to create a perspective layout and rendering for the construction of a new police station at the Upton Building. The current state of the building allows much of the existing shell and foundation to be re-used.

| SITE | Land Costs | Site Constraints | Accessibility | Expansion | Utilities | Political/Legal | TOTALS |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | - | - | - | <u>Potential</u> | - | <u>Issues</u> | - |
| 13 Academy Hill Road | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 20 |

Favorable:

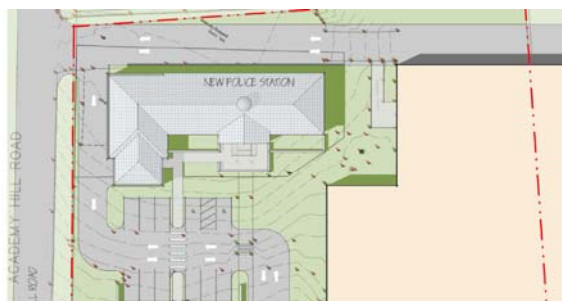
- The re-use of this building for municipal use would retain a historic building
- Municipal water and sewer is available

Unfavorable:

- Site would accommodate a Police Station only and would not provide for future expansion
- With a standalone Police Station, the issue of where to place the Fire Department still exists
- Site would require additional land from the regional school district
- The School Committee voted against transferring additional land to the Town for Public Safety purposes (12/8/2020)
- The site is located in a densely populated residential neighborhood



PERSPECTIVE – POLICE STATION – UPTON SCHOOL



CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN – POLICE STATION – UPTON SCHOOL

(Tecton rendering of a Police Station at the Upton Building and potential layout)



(Current Upton Site Layout)

3 EATON STREET – THE VFW

The ballfield behind the Westminster VFW was identified as a potential site for a Public Safety Building. After engaging members of the VFW, they notified the committee that they were not interested in engaging in discussions regarding a sale or swap. Due to the nature of their events, the VFW frequently uses the field for the betterment of their organization.

Due to this no further exploration was continued with this site.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| 3 Eaton St – VFW | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 18 |

Favorable:

- The site is adequately sized for a Public Safety Building.
- Municipal water and sewer are located on site.

Unfavorable:

- Site is not for sale thus not an option for Municipal use.



(View of ballfield space Mid-2020)



(Overview of the VFW site layout)

45 WEST MAIN ST – AUBUCHON PROPERTY

This site is located behind 45 West Main St. and offers 10.97 acres of undeveloped space. In the Spring of 2019, the site was toured and evaluated as a potential site for a Public Safety Building.

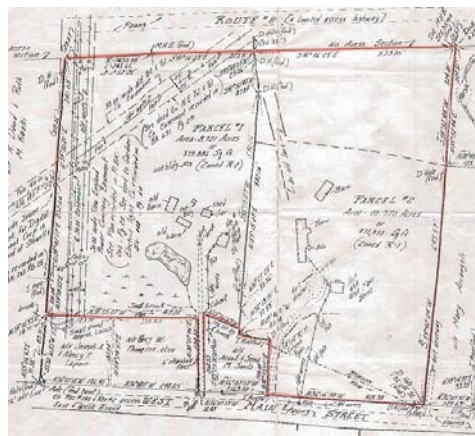
| SITE | Land Costs | Site Constraints | Accessibility | Expansion | Utilities | Political/Legal | TOTALS |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| 45 West Main Street | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 19 |

Favorable:

- Municipal sewer and water are available on site
- Site is adequately sized for a Public Safety Building and provides room for future growth

Unfavorable:

- Site is owned privately and would require the town to purchase the property
- Site access is very expensive as site requires roadway development and wetland crossing



(45 West Main St site layout and street view)

REAR OF SOUTH ST – BEHIND THE WELLINGTON HOUSE

This site was explored as potential space for a Public Safety Building. The site offers 16 acres of land set back off of Meetinghouse Road near the Wellington House Apartments. The majority of the site is located on wetlands and offers approximately six acres, non-contiguous developable land. Due to the cost of crossing the wetlands to access the developable land, this site maybe cost prohibitive.

Chris Landry the resident at 33 South St. offered to sell a portion of his property that abuts the Rear South Street parcel. The same challenges are found at the site utilizing this property.

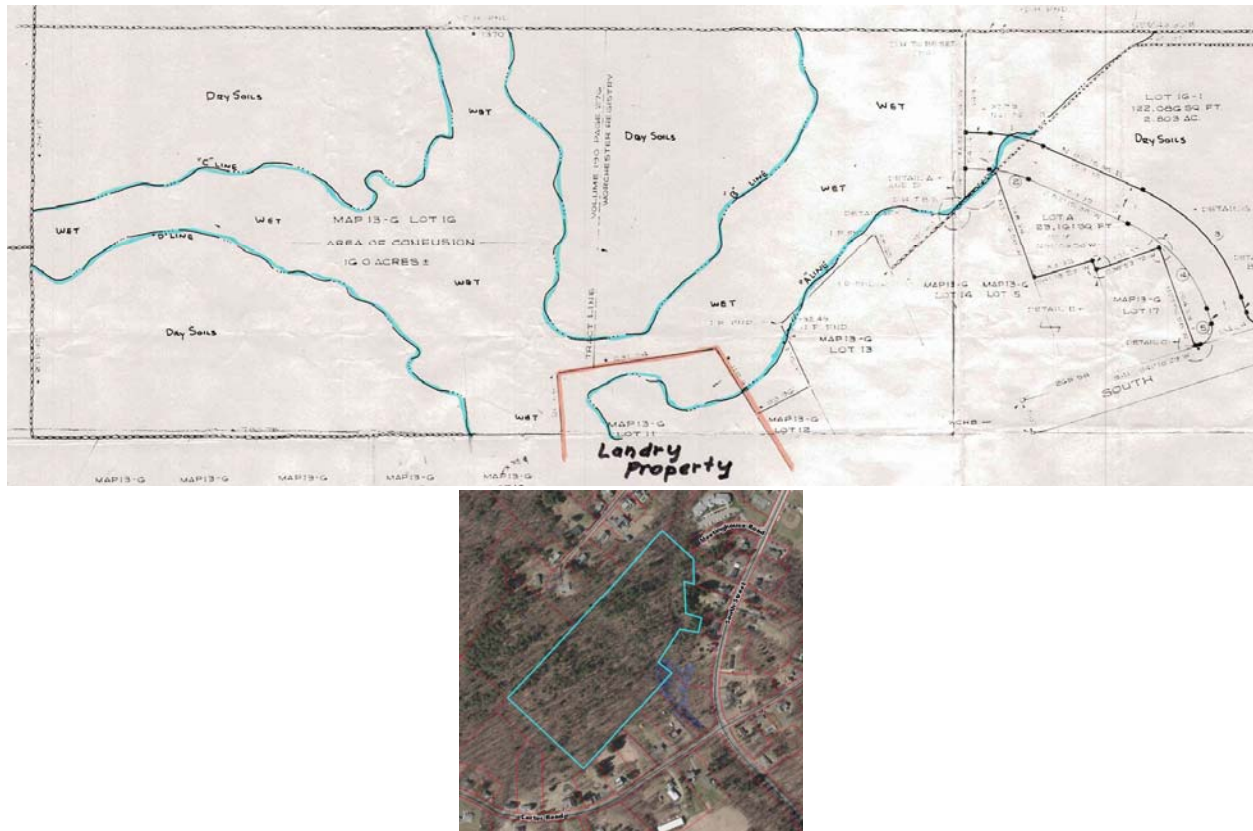
| SITE | Land Costs | Site Constraints | Accessibility | Expansion | Utilities | Political/Legal | TOTALS |
|---------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| Main St. Rear | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 20 |

Favorable:

- Municipal water and sewer are available
- Property is Town owned.

Unfavorable:

- Site has significant wetland crossings
- Developable land is not contiguous therefore restricting future development



(1990's site survey and Rear South St. Layout)

SOUTH STREET – TOWN OWNED LAND

The Town owns 22.96 acres of property off of South St. which abuts the rear of private residences on Carter Road. This site is an undeveloped sloping piece of property that is a mix of wooded forests and fields. Access to the site would be gained from South St. requiring a wetland crossing. The site offers significant slope challenges for development.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| South St | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 19 |

Favorable:

- Site is Town owned.
- Municipal water is available on site.

Unfavorable:

- Accessing the site requires the crossing of wetlands to reach developable land.
- Site's topography may be unsuitable for a Public Safety Building Complex
- Within the water shed of the Meetinghouse Reservoir



(Street view of Town owned land and site layout)

SOUTH STREET - BALLFIELDS

The ballfields located on South Street were identified as a potential site for a public safety building. The fields are controlled by the Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District. These are the only centrally located sports fields available in the community. The site also has wetland concerns and concerns with peat moss that would need to be excavated in order to create a usable foundation.

| SITE | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| South St. Ballfields | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 18 |

Favorable:

- Site is Town owned.
- Site provides municipal water and sewer.

Unfavorable:

- Using this site would require the ball fields to be relocated within the community.
- Site has wetland and soil concerns that would need to be explored further.



(Street view of the Ballfields)



(Ballfields layout)

1 LEOMINSTER STREET – WESTMINSTER CRACKER FACTORY BUILDING

The Cracker Factory site was evaluated as a potential use in conjunction with the current Public Safety Building. However it was quickly identified that using the site in conjunction with the current building would not meet the needs of public safety.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| 1 Leominster St. | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 15 |

Favorable:

- Sewer and Water are available

Unfavorable:

- Site would be too small to be either a Police or Fire Department as lot size is 26,000 sq ft
- Site development would alter a historical landmark
- Privately owned



(Westminster Cracker Building circa 2012 and site layout)

WHITMANVILLE ROAD SUB-STATION

The Town owns a 1.46 acre piece of property located at intersection of Whitmanville Road and South Ashburnham Road. The piece of property was obtained for use for a future Fire Substation should the need arise in town for a second fire station. The site is a sloping undeveloped site that has been previously disturbed but currently has no buildings on it.

This site could house a small substation that is not staffed and used for storage. This could reduce the size needs of a fire station.

The best overall plan would incorporate that use of this station with staffing as a second station to reduce response times to the North Side of town. This plan does not solve the immediate needs of the Fire Department.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | <u>Potential</u> | | <u>Issues</u> | |
| Whitmanville Road | -5 | -1 | -1 | 1 | -1 | 3 | -12 |

Favorable:

- The property is municipally owned
- The station will cut down on response to the north side of town in conjunction with a centrally located fire station

Unfavorable:

- No town water or sewer on site
- Site is too small to accommodate a Police or Fire Station
- More than 1 mile from the current Public Safety Building



(Site layout and Streetview)

8 WORCESTER ROAD

While researching sites that met the acreage requirements for a Public Safety Building site a parcel on 8 Worcester Road was identified. After a brief review of the site it was determined that it was located residential neighborhood and has significant topography challenges that take away area from the overall site. Due to these concerns contact was not made with the owners to further evaluate the property.

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | - | - | - | <u>Potential</u> | - | <u>Issues</u> | - |
| 8 Worcester Rd | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 |

Favorable:

- Located near the center of town
- Town water is on site

Unfavorable:

- The site is privately owned
- There is no town sewer on site
- Significant topography challenges reduce usable space
- Due to existing road conditions and gradients response times would be increased



(Site lay out and street view of property From Worcester Road)

SITE SELECTION MATRIX

| SITE | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints*</u> | <u>Accessibility**</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | - | - | - | <u>Potential</u> | - | <u>Issues</u> | - |
| South Street (existing facility) | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 19 |
| South Street (ball fields) | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 18 |
| 3 Bacon St (Old Town Hall) | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 15 |
| 13 Acadmy Hill Road (Upton Building) | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 20 |
| 3 Eaton St (VFW) | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 18 |
| Hager Park Road (part of Hager Park) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 24 |
| 45 West Main Street (Aubuchon Property) | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 19 |
| Main St. Rear (Wellington House) | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 20 |
| South St (Open Land) | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 19 |
| 1 Leominster St. (Cracker Factory) | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 15 |
| Whitmanville Road (Substation) | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 12 |
| 8 Worcester Rd | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 |

MOST FAVORABLE SITE

Hager Park Road was chosen as the most favorable site by the committee. After the selection of this site, the committee will complete the following tasks to be completed through the Spring and Summer of 2021.0

- Site study (survey, geo-tech, etc.)
- Scope to include siting potential new facility with turning radius for apparatus
- Scope to include determination of Finish Floor Elevation (FFE) for proposed structure
- Scope to include schematic site plan and identify permitting constraints

| <u>SITE</u> | <u>Land Costs</u> | <u>Site Constraints</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>Expansion</u> | <u>Utilities</u> | <u>Political/Legal</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | - | - | - | <u>Potential</u> | - | <u>Issues</u> | - |
| Hager Park Road | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 24 |

- Land Costs – The site is owned by the Town and under the control of the Hager Park Commission.
- Site Constraints – The site is previously undeveloped and provides future space for both the Police and Fire Departments.
- Accessibility- The site is located less than one mile from the center of town and provides access to major routes through town.
- Expansion Potential – The site provides future space for both the Police and Fire Departments.
- Utilities – The site provides municipal water to the site. A septic system will have to be installed on site.
- Political Legal Issues – The site is neutral with regards to disturbing neighbors and it is not located in a residential district.