Town Hall Reuse Committee

The following people served on the Town Hall Reuse Committee this past year: Betty Aveni, Beth D'Onfro, Barbara Friedman, Walter Haney, Beverly Lothrop, Doug Sargent, Joe Serio, and Cathy Pisaruk.

The Committee remains committed to:

- Preserving the building for public use or through selling it with a deed restriction for private development.
- Fulfilling its original charge set forth on the 1/04/03 Special Town Meeting "to plan for the preservation and reuse of the present Town Hall."
- Following the recommendation of the June 2006 Westminster Reconnaissance Report (Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory) "to work with Selectmen and Planning Board to include historic preservation criteria when reviewing the Town Hall RFPs for the reuse of this building which requires flexible zoning and creative planning."
- Upholding the principles for sustainable development set forth by the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD) which states: "REDEVELOP FIRST. Support the revitalization of community centers and neighborhoods. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas. Give preference to redevelopment …preservation and reuse of historic structures…

The following is a summary of events and actions taken by the committee during the past year:

01/10/07: Deadline date for submission of second RFP issued for the reuse of Town Hall.

01/17/07: One response to the RFP was received for office space on the first floor and preservation of the exterior structure. With the criteria of the RFP not fully met, the Committee continued to explore options.

2/07: The Town Hall facility (3 Bacon Street) was vacated by the town government.

03/19/07: Vote taken to recommend the provisional acceptance of the response to the RFP and to further explore interest from the Council On Aging.

03/30/07: Vote taken "To recommend we preserve the building for future public or private use and recommend that Board Selectmen authorize the present committee to further explore the Town's building needs."

04/30/07: The Committee met to discuss possible uses for the building including interim space for the library, public safety storage or office space, teen center, community and performance center.

5/30/07: Alicia Altieri presents information to Board of Selectmen to request Special Town Meeting for feasibility study for the use of the Town Hall as a new Senior Center. Seniors and Selectmen propose 69 West Main Street as site for new Senior Center.

11/22/07: The Committee votes to recommend that the Town Hall not be demolished but be maintained either for town use or to be sold with a deed restriction.

11/24/07: Selectmen discuss article for Special Town Meeting to "dispose of the Town Hall" and agree to wait in case the library will need it as temporary space.

At the end of the year, the Town Hall Reuse Committee proposed reissuing an RFP with a more flexible business approach and broader marketing. A letter was sent to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Historical Commission asking them to vote on whether they support the preservation of the old Town Hall and if they agree with requirements of the new Request for Proposals.

Respectfully Submitted by Beth D'Onfro