

**TOWN OF CHESTER**  
**BUILDING COMMITTEE**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

*April 21, 2020*

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Julie Hance, Matt Wilson, Dan Cook, and Rick Cloud at the Town Garage via video link, Lee Gustafson via video link.

**Others Present:** Cathy Hasbrouck, Recording Secretary via video link.

**Citizens Present:** Kevin Racek and Lauren Ingersoll via telephone, Scott Wunderle, Courtney Venable, and Patrick Jarvis via video link, Amanda Silva at the Town Garage via video link.

**Call to Order**

Scott Wunderle hosted the meeting. He turned the meeting over to Lee Gustafson for some housekeeping items. Lee called the meeting to order. Julie Hance, Rick Cloud, Dan Cook and Matt Wilson watched and participated from the training room at the town garage.

**Agenda Item 1 Approve previous minutes: April 7, 2020**

Dan Cook moved to accept the March 17 and April 7, 2020 minutes. Rick Cloud seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A Vote was taken and the minutes were accepted as written.

**Agenda Item 2 Citizen Comments**

There were no comments from any citizens.

Kevin Racek of Centerline Architects had an update on progress for the committee and Lee Gustafson gave him the floor.

Kevin Racek said that last Wednesday (April 15, 2020) Centerline Architects presented about 25 24" x 36" drawings and 85 pages of foundation and site work specifications to Russell Construction. Russell Construction bound the drawings and sent them out to 40 - 50 site work contractors for bids on Friday April 17, 2020. It is hoped that 4-6 site work contractors and 3 concrete contractors will bid on the project. The bids will be due on May 1, 2020, unless an unexpected delay becomes necessary.

Kevin said the project is currently on schedule. The next package to be released is the permit set. It will be released on April 22, 2020. The Fire and Safety permit application with a check and the package will be sent to Springfield for review, probably by the end of the week (April 24, 2020).

Kevin reviewed the status of permits. The construction and erosion control permit and local permits have been obtained. VTrans is reviewing the permit application sent to them during the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>, slightly delayed by COVID 19. Since VTrans has been consulted frequently during the development process, no one expects any delays with that permit. The wastewater permit has been reviewed and the potable water permit is in process. Those two permits are

issued together. Kevin said the permit engineer from de Wolfe expects to have all the permits in hand in 3 weeks, which is on schedule.

Kevin said the final bid package will be complete May 15, 2020. He will send out a drawing set to the committee on Friday April 24. There were no questions for Kevin.

### **Agenda Item 3 Review Site Plan recommendations from Terrigeneous**

Scott Wunderle reviewed the revisions made in light of the feedback obtained at the April 7, 2020 meeting. He began with the original proposal, and reviewed the changes requested. He listed the changes, including removing the plantings in front of and behind the building and giving suggestions for a memorial on the front of the lot nearest the border with Pleasant Brook Apartments. Scott showed the revised plans with the plants around the building removed. He noted that Julie Hance had requested typical lawn in their place.

Scott described the changes to the area toward the back of the building on the Springfield side, where the Police sally port and the propane tanks will be. He noted that an evergreen tree had been added to mix with deciduous trees on that side of the property and offer some screening for propane tanks from that side of the lot. The tree will be far enough back so as not to interfere with the sally port or space for the dogs to exercise.

Low growing plants were suggested along the guard rails on that side of the building, mixed in with a few taller plants for variety. The plants will be tolerant of shade and snow. The slope under the guard rail will be steep and the plants suggested will not need trimming or mowing. The goal is to use plants, especially native plants, that can tolerate the conditions and, which, once established, will not need maintenance. Scott asked that the knotweed growing in the piled up fill on the property be entirely removed before the fill is redistributed on the site and the knotweed invades all the lawn and bed areas.

In the front of the lot on the Springfield side, Scott indicated one six-foot bench that will be sited facing the building. This could function as an outdoor waiting area for the Police Department and gives a sense of welcome to visitors. Scott noted that he kept the original parking lot design which was preferred by the department heads. The two parking spaces in front of the Police Department that face the street will be screened by some tall ornamental grasses. Behind the bench would be a combination of flowering and ornamental shrubs with some native meadow plants mixed in.

Four maples were proposed as street trees along the front of the parcel. Scott proposed a type of tupelo tree that grows in a columnar form to be planted at each end of the islands that separate the parking lot from the road and along the wall of the building that faces Pleasant Brook apartments. It will allow the grass to grow under it on the island. Scott showed the memorial he had sketched in as a place holder for the memorial that will be chosen at a later date. He suggested native lilacs be planted along the Pleasant Brook driveway near the memorial site.

Lee Gustafson said the town has a granite sign of some type and wondered where it could be placed. Scott said he would need to see it before he could make any placement suggestions. Lee said he thought it was at the water treatment plant. He thought there was a picture available and the stone was 3' x 4' or 2' x 3'. He believed the inscription on the stone was exactly what was wanted for the project. Scott said the stone might be too small to put by the road, and he could think of a couple of other places it would be appropriate.

Under the columnar tupelos to be planted along the Pleasant Brook side of the building, Scott proposed beds with a variety of plants to provide seasonal interest and bio-diversity. He proposed some 5-foot tall grasses and some lower plants in the front. The grasses would wrap around a planned sitting area near the personnel door at the back of the Fire Department. The sitting area would have two benches facing each other. A disease resistant elm tree could be planted behind the benches at the base of the bank. Elm roots seem to give off a toxin that prevents plants from growing above them, therefore the tree would not be planted on the bank itself, which will need plants to hold the soil in place.

The back side of the building would have tall shrubs instead of trees, more grasses similar to those used along the side of the building and one lower-growing plant for the front of the border. A low-growing dogwood with a group of wild roses beneath it is proposed for the rear corner on the Springfield side of the building. The wild roses would also be added to the vegetative buffer between the lot and the parcel next to it on the Springfield side.

Along the side of the lot next to the Pleasant Brook Apartments, under the existing pine trees, woodland shrubs would be planted to fill in the gap left by the dying lower branches of the pine trees. The shrubs will screen the sweep of headlights from the volunteer firefighter's parking lot across the apartment windows. Scott suggested spruce trees for the gaps in the line of pine trees on that side of the lot. This would also block access to the foot path that crosses the lot now. When the Police and Fire Departments begin using the field for training and helicopter landings visitors to the field will not be welcome.

Scott then showed the site plan in combination with the first-floor design of the building's interior. He pointed out that most of the areas abutting the building itself were to be grass and the plantings are confined mainly to the edges of the lot. In a series of slides Scott highlighted each area to be planted and showed photographs of the plants suggested for the area.

Beginning with the area on the Springfield side of the lot, back from the area next to the road, along the bank below the guard rail, low growing plants with white flowers and grasses were proposed. Scott said an area wide enough for a mower will be left at the bottom of the bank, near the granite posts. A spruce tree was chosen for the area between the propane tanks and the edge of the parking lot. A low growing ground cover with pale yellow flowers was also chosen for the area. A white-flowering sumac that turned orange and yellow in the fall was recommended for the area further back along the Springfield side of the lot.

At the front of the lot, between the bench facing the Police Department and the road, Scott suggested white lilacs, more of the pale-yellow flowered ground cover, white sumac and another shrub with white flowers, with ornamental grasses closer to the bench. These plants would provide seasonal blooms and screening.

For the islands separating the parking lots and driveway from the road, Scott displayed a picture of a 6-inch tall grass that would not require mowing and pictures of the columnar tupelo tree he would like to plant on either side of the curb cut. Scott said that he selected plants that would turn orange and red in the fall which he felt would be appropriate for the fire station.

Scott displayed a photograph of a witch hazel bush that would be used in combination with spruce trees to fill in the gaps under and beside the pine trees that grow on the Pleasant Brook side of the property. Scott discussed the likely direction the snow would be pushed on the volunteer fire fighter's parking lot and was somewhat concerned that witch hazel could not

tolerate a heavy snow load. Courtney Venable said the witch hazel would not be severely damaged by snow.

Scott showed photographs of the grass, tupelo tree and a third plant to be placed along the side wall of the Fire Department. The tupelo tree and third plant will turn orange and yellow in the fall, making a vibrant display against the red of the siding. These plants would also wrap around the back of the sitting area by the personnel door with the two benches facing each other.

Scott pointed out that the gap in the pine tree row at the edge of the Pleasant Brook Apartments, which will need to be filled in, could have pine trees from other part of the lot moved there for very little cost, just before construction starts. This would help to meet the bylaw requirement of landscaping to buffer incompatible uses.

The back of the building would have an elm tree, yellow flowering dogwood, white and pink wild roses, ornamental grass and a mounding plant that would look something like blackberry bushes. Scott acknowledged that the town may not want to spend money on plants behind the building, but he wanted to show how the building could potentially look “settled in” to the site.

Scott showed photographs of the local stone which lends itself to cutting into flat slabs and could be used to line the two proposed sitting areas, laid in a running bond pattern. Scott showed pictures of a model of bench that has been used for the pocket park at the foot bridge on School Street and in front of the Whiting Library. He suggested the same model be chosen for the Emergency Services Building, even though other the originally suggested bench harmonizes better with the architecture of the building. This would tie the building in with other civic buildings in town. He noted that other metal used in the project has a mill finish and this bench is not available in that type of finish. For that reason, the original bench may be preferred.

Scott went over the notes he included with the proposal, at least partly because some of the work listed in the notes is best done immediately. The first issue was controlling the Japanese knotweed which could end up spread over the entire site everywhere that is not mowed. Many of the suggestions were cost-saving measures, such as using the boulders now present on the site to build a retaining wall for the sitting area outside the Fire Department personnel door. It also identified trees that will eventually need to be removed. Removing the trees before construction begins will save money and effort and trimming the maples after sugaring season will prevent copious sap bleeding. The notes suggested Biomat as a covering on the slopes as it works as well as the plastic netting called for and breaks down better.

Scott said his proposal is an effort to integrate this huge building, which is a symbol of the Fire and Police Departments and the Ambulance Service into the Chester community by surrounding it with plants, shrubs and stone that are also a part of the Chester landscape. He said the building is not simply a collection of mechanical systems, it is a manifestation of the citizen’s care and concern for each other as they dedicate resources to keeping each other safe and helping in times of disaster.

Lee Gustafson assisted in unmuting Julie Hance and the other department heads in the Fire Department training room. Julie said the department heads would like to know if the trees planned for the bed along the sidewall of the Fire Department section would damage the siding in any way. Kevin Racek said he appreciated the fact that the plan addresses the huge bare wall. He did not think the plants would hurt the siding or cause deterioration.

Courtney Venable said it was difficult to accurately portray how the plants will look in context. She said the Tupelo tree is not very dense and the wall will be seen through the branches. She said they can be pruned if needed and thought the stark wall will be softened by the trees.

Scott said the widest branches will be at the bottom of the tree and they will be easy to prune from the ground. Lee Gustafson asked if there was sap that could drip on vehicles parked near it. Courtney said the tree does not drip sap. She said it also doesn't have the quantity of leaves that maple trees do.

There being no more questions, Lee Gustafson thanked Scott and his crew for his time and effort. Dan Cook moved to adjourn the meeting. Rick Cloud seconded it. A vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned.