

Hinesburg Selectboard
10632 Route 116
Hinesburg, Vermont
05461

August 19, 2014

Greetings,

I am writing in support of not demolishing or selling the former police station until the following can be clearly established.

We are in the midst of a Capital Planning process, which will have to address the need for increased office space for the town. This will in turn put more pressure on the existing Town Hall meeting spaces for the groups that now use it such as town committees, local associations, clubs, political parties, condo associations etc. As well, the use by the Recreational Department and general public for activity spaces will be impacted.

If the team working on the capital planning process does concur with the apparent need for increased office space without impacting the other existing uses of the Town Hall, then this structure must be considered along with other options.

Any final decision on the demise of this structure should not be made until the following has been established:

- Whether the town had insurance on this structure and whether the water damage, and possibly other damage, that occurred last winter would be covered.
- The cost of renovation of the existing structure as compared to other options for more Town space. The previous public investment into this structure, which would be lost, should also be considered as well.
- Whether the capital planning process for the town finds that the structure is either unnecessary or financially impossible for future public use.
- Whether the master planning process for this area supports the demolition of this structure because the green space has much more value to the town.
- If it is wise to privatize existing town public property in this central location.

The following is relevant to this discussion:

- Parking will be available not only in future parking areas that must be established for other uses in this area but also along Farmall Drive and 116 in the on street parking spaces open to the public which are only 150 to 200 feet distant.
- As a pre-existing public structure the permitting process may be relatively easy.

- The structure itself would lend architectural variety and some historical elements to what otherwise could really become “anyplace USA” which the town plan specifically says should be avoided.
- As a town owned structure all the spaces surrounding it could be used as town common land – we lose relatively little common space. For example it could be the “anchor” for a Farmers market, providing electrical and water connections etc. to vendors near it.

In the interim the building will have to be protected from further deterioration and be maintained so that doesn't appear as an abandoned eyesore. It is in no danger of collapse, and with the electricity turned off and the plumbing etc. properly drained and turned off, relatively minor exterior care would achieve this. Volunteer help may even be available to accomplish this.

The continued existence of this structure for the immediate future is not simply an attempt at preservation or fear of development. There are fiscal issues and decisions that have not yet been addressed and demolition or sale at this time would eliminate any possibility of addressing them.

Please allow time for this to happen.

Regards,

Peter Erb.