

Cotuit Fire District
Prudential Committee
Cotuit school ad hoc subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2024

Attendees:

Mark Lynch
Carol Zais
John Havel
Jamie Jackson
Pat Lentell
Stephen O'Connor
Patty Daley

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
The group suggested several changes to the meeting minutes for the July 1, 2024 meeting. Mark promised to revise the meeting minutes and resubmit them at the July 15 meeting.

Public comments

Ralph Cicino inquired as to whether the school building could be used for housing. He indicated that the Cape has a shortage of housing and this could be an opportunity worth exploring. Stephen indicated that he was in "total agreement."

David Churbuck, a member of the Cotuit Fire District water department, indicated that the school property was on the agenda for the next meeting of the water department. He noted that the department was happy to assist in the drafting of an RFP. He indicated water quality was the primary concern of the department given the proximity of the property to one of its wells. He mentioned the possibility of innovative advanced (IA) septic systems and a permeable reactive barrier, in the event the building is reused.. He also mentioned the possibility of using permeable surfaces in the event of repaving.

Pete Prygocki Inquired as to how there could be any re-use of the building without risking water quality issues. He

wondered whether there was ever an issue with water quality previously, and why the water department had expressed water quality concerns about the town subdividing the property. David recalled that the water department had previously had E coli and "boil water" occurrences in the past (at least twice in the last 15 years) but he was not sure if those incidents related to the school property well. There was a brief discussion of the Town of Barnstable sewage project. David noted that Cotuit will not be sewered within the next 20 years. Stephen wondered whether a "site package septic system" could possibly be used for any redevelopment. The water department meeting is July 24, 2024.

In new business, Stephen, Pat and Patty indicated that they would be drafting a preliminary business plan for a Cotuit nonprofit collaboration. Stephen and Pat indicated that they had spoken with the Cape Cod Baseball League and the Cotuit Center for the Arts. They indicated that all these entities expressed interest in possible use of the school building but that they could not focus on this issue currently because they are in the height of their busy seasons.

Jamie inquired as to the remit of the ad hoc subcommittee. Mark indicated that the task before the group was to assist the Prudential Committee in drafting a request for proposal (RFP) for a study as outlined in the Special District Meeting warrant. Jamie asked whether this could be accomplished within five weeks. Mark indicated that it could, and that the goal was to have the proposed study completed and the results communicated to the public in advance of the next Annual District Meeting in May 2025.

Patty indicated that, in her view, the following issues needed to be addressed:

- 1) public outreach
- 2) physical plant plan
- 3) business plan

Mark indicated that objective #2 would be accomplished by the Prudential Committee, aided by input from this ad hoc subcommittee. The other two objectives were not the

responsibility of the Prudential Committee. He reminded the group that the Prudential Committee had recommended demolishing the school.

There was some discussion about getting citizen opinions on possible uses of a rehabilitated building. Carol indicated that the Cotuit-Santuit Civic Association has an e-mail list of approximately 800 villagers. It was also noted that a postcard survey could be conducted. The question was raised whether these activities could be conducted without Prudential Committee involvement. Mark indicated that, as private citizens, this was possible.

The group was in agreement that an analysis of any reuse option required traffic and parking analysis. All options will also require a review of sewer or septic issues. The group wanted only IA options. Jamie and John both wanted an analysis of "green practices." Patti suggested that that should be a focus of the RFP with, for example, higher scores for candidates with LEED certification. Mark noted that all options would also need an estimate of maintenance requirements for any rehabilitated building such as heating, air conditioning, landscaping, and general maintenance. John raised the issue of what he called "the minimum viable option," meaning that plans all had to comply with codes and regulations, but may not be of the most expensive approach.

The group summarized the options as follows:

- 1) Demolish the entirety of the building and return the site to nature;
 - 1a) Demolish the entirety of the building and include an active recreation possibility;
- 2). Demolish the entirety of the building with the exception of the gym, stage, commercial kitchen, lobby, restroom, the two offices on the northwest corner of the building and the storage room behind the stage;
- 3) Option 2 plus retain six classrooms and the toilets;
- 3a) Option 3, plus retain the library, mini library, conference room, and vestibule;
- 4) Keep the entire building, except the 1970s addition

(keeping authority to use the demolished square footage, if necessary).

5) Utilize the entire building for housing, including possibly 40 B (affordable).

Carol indicated that she spoke to Cape Cod Tech in Harwich. She noted that their students have worked with Habitat for Humanity on several projects.

Mark indicated that he would send out an email soliciting possible dates for a visit to review the property.

In the final public comments session, Amie Kortis-Brooks indicated that she would like to be involved in public outreach.

Pat asked whether the special district warrant mandating the study could be rewritten. Mark indicated that it could not, absent another special district meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9pm.