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Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI # 678 - O.B. Town Hall Reconstruction MVC Staff Report – 2018-09-28

NOTE: Staff Report is based on Plans submitted in July 2017 and Landscape Plan submitted Sept. 26, 2017

More information can be found on the MVC DRI 678 webpage: <http://www.mvcommission.org/dri/summary/678/53075>

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Applicant:** Town of Oak Bluffs Building Committee; Bill McGrath (Chairman); Keenan + Kenny Architects; John Lolley (Civil Engineer)
- 1.2 Project Location:** 56 School Street, Oak Bluffs Town Hall (Map 11 Lot 292, 2.02 acres). Temporary Town Hall will be across the street on Graham & Gabriel Avenues (Map 8 Lot 249 - 1.2 acres).
- 1.3 Proposal:** To demolish the existing Town Hall and construct a new 3-story 21,000 G. S.F. Town Hall (w/partial basement) on the same site. The proposal also includes a temporary town hall across the street with three double-wide trailers.
- 1.4 Zoning:** R-1 Residential. Pre-existing municipal use.
- 1.5 Local Permits:** Building Permit; Site Plan Review;
- 1.6 Surrounding Land Uses:** Residential; Library; Catholic Annex; Cemetery.
- **Project History:** Until the year 2000 Oak Bluffs town Hall had been downtown in what is now the Police Station. The building was declared “sick” so the town’s office moved to old Oak Bluffs School which had been abandoned in 1998. This move was intended to be a temporary move. The original school building was built in 1925 but all that remains of that is the foundation. There was a fire in 1948 and at some point in the 1960’s the old school was demolished and rebuilt. The existing town hall is not historically significant and is not up to state building and fire safety codes and is not ADA compliant. Town Meeting approved funding for the project.
- 1.7 Project Summary:** The existing building has two levels with a footprint of 6,355 sf for a total of about 12,790 gsf.
- The new town hall will have three (3) stories with a footprint of 6,740 sf and a total of 18,160 sf of finished space and a partial basement of 2,800 sf for a total of approximately 20,960 gsf.
 - Proposal includes a 60-seat capacity meeting/multipurpose room on the main level (Pacific Ave).
 - The Lower Level accessed from the back will have the Building and Planning, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, the Town Clerk, a shared Meeting Room and storage.
 - The Main Level includes the Accounting, Assessor, Tax Office and Collector, and the Treasurer with a three-story Lobby.
 - An Upper Level has the offices for the Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen Office, and a Planning Board Office plus a large Conference Room and approximately 650 SF of future space.
 - An elevator will provide access to all levels of the new building.
 - New footprint will be longer and narrower, set back a bit from School St but closer to Pacific Ave.
 - Entrances will be on the Pacific Avenue side; the School Street side and two in the back.
 - There will be a new off-street parking and drop off area with an entrance on Pacific Avenue with five (5) parking spaces that would exit onto School Street. Currently there are five (5) perpendicular parking spots that back into Pacific Avenue.

- The proposal includes eleven (11) diagonal parking spaces on School Street which would be accessed from the west. School Street is also proposed to be widened by 5 feet with the proposal. Currently there are three (3) parallel spots on the street on School Street.
- The town hall site has a major grade change from 41' at the NW corner to 31' at the SE corner of the new building. The low point of the property is 27' at SE corner of the library parking.
- The proposal also includes temporary town hall across the street with three double-wide trailers.
 - The temporary town hall would be on a property that the town owns across the street behind the Catholic Annex building and partially on a paper street (Gabriel Street).
 - Parking for the temporary town hall would be on an existing paved parking area on School Street behind the Catholic Annex owned by the Church.
 - Town Clerk will use the vault at the Police Station for records storage during construction.
 - The goal is to be able to move into the new town hall within two years. Trailers are rented

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs Planning Board
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 6.2 (Public Place of Assembly)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** August 28, 2017.
- 2.4 **Site visits:** September 28, 2017 at 5:00 pm
- 2.5 **Public Hearing:** September 28, 2017 at 6:00 pm at Town Hall.

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Some Key Issues

- **Drainage:** The plan adds a significant amount of impervious surfaces to the small site at the top of a street with flooding issues.
- **Parking:** The plan includes eleven (11) diagonal parking spaces on School Street which require backing into the School Street travel lane near to traffic exiting the new parking lot and cars entering from Pacific Avenue.
- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Access:** Pedestrian access is geared to the building not to the street.
- **Construction schedule:**
 - During construction where will all building materials and equipment be stored?
 - How will noise, dust, and traffic be mitigated during construction process in order to minimize possible impacts to the surrounding town library and residents?
- **Temporary Town Hall Trailers:**
 - Detailed plans for the trailers have not been reviewed. There could be some drainage issues where the trailers are proposed to be sited.

3.2 Environment

- **Vegetation:** The site is currently mostly grass with a few street trees. The plan would replace a significant amount of pervious surface with building and paving.
- **Landscaping:** A landscaping plan was submitted on Tuesday September 26, 2017.
 - Two street trees (Maples) on School Street would be removed and replaced with one Red Maple on the corner and three Red Maples between the new diagonal parking on School Street and the building.
 - The northwest corner of the building would be planted with Hydrangeas.
 - The northeast corner of the building near the entry to the Library parking lot would be planted with Hydrangeas, Viburnum and Shadblow.

- The rear of the facing the Library parking lot would be planted with Hydrangeas, Viburnum and Red Maple.
- A Spruce tree and a Maple tree on the lawn off of Pacific Avenue would be removed.
- A total of eight (8) Red Maples would be planted on the site.
- **Habitat:** This is not an NHESP habitat area.
- **Open Space:** The plan would decrease open space by replacing pervious surfaces with building and paving. The site is currently about 40% impervious. The proposal will result in the site being about 65%-70% impervious.
- **Lighting:** Plans have not been reviewed.
- **Noise:**
 - The construction of the town hall could increase noise for neighbors.
 - The temporary town hall in trailers will be closer to residential neighbors.
- **Energy/Sustainability:**
- **Waste Management:**
- **Water Source:** Town water.
- **Wastewater / Stormwater:**
- **Nitrogen Loading:**
 - The site is in the Oak Bluffs Harbor Watershed.
 - The Town Hall and Library are connected to the Oak Bluffs Wastewater Facility.
- **Storm water:** Review based on plans submitted July 12, 2017. Revised plans expected.
 - The plan adds a significant amount of impervious surfaces to the small site at the top of a street with flooding issues.
 - The site is currently approximately 40% impervious surface. The proposal would result in the site being approximately 65%-70% impervious surface.
 - There are current drainage issues with storm water being directed into the street.
 - The low point of the whole town hall and library property is in the southeast corner of the site. Storm water appears to spill off the site in the southeast corner during heavy storm events.
 - The MVC Water Resource Policy calls for a design goal of handling the 25 year return storm on site and requires that storm water does not leave the site.

3.3 Transportation

- **Access:**
 - The site is presently accessed by a shared public library driveway on School Street, with perpendicular street parking on both Pacific Avenue and School Street.
 - Town-owned roads, varying in width. Pacific Avenue is 25' wide and School Street 20' wide.
- **Parking:**
 - The existing site has 48 parking spots, 18 of which are in closer proximity to the library in the shared parking lot. Unpaved, unmarked parking also routinely takes places alongside the cemetery, directly across Pacific Avenue.
 - The Proposed Site Plan shows a total of 60 parking spots including the library parking lot. The Proposed Site Plan includes eleven (11) diagonal parking spaces on School Street which require backing into the School Street travel lane
The Proposed Site Plan includes a new parking lot on the corner of Pacific Ave and School St. with 5 parking spots and drop-off area. These replace 5 spots that pull in from the road.

Zoning Requirements:

- Number of parking spaces required for institutional/government use in the R-1 District is undefined in the town's zoning by-laws.

- **Circulation:**

- Currently there are 3 parallel spots on School St and 5 perpendicular spots along Pacific Ave and 40 in the joint parking lot with the Library off of School Street.
- Potential new vehicular circulation conflicts:
 - The 11 diagonal parking spaces on School Street require backing into the travel lane.
 - The top spots are close to traffic exiting the new parking lot.
 - As these spots descend down the street smaller cars will have more difficulty seeing if cars are coming down School Street as they back into the travel lane.
 - Cars exiting the new parking lot turning right to Pacific Avenue do not have room.

- **Sight Lines:**

- The sight lines are not optimal.
 - Vehicles backing out of the diagonal parking spaces along School Street will regularly have limited visibility entering the travel lane.
 - Vehicles exiting left from the new parking lot towards Pacific Avenue do not have much room to get to the corner.
 - There is an existing sight line problem on the street with cars driving up School Street. At the corner of Pacific Ave there are perpendicular spots in front of the Catholic parish hall that block the view of cars driving up School Street.

- **Trip Generation:**

- Trip generation is not expected to increase dramatically with the reconstructed building.
- Some scheduling should be considered when planning events at the Library conference room and the new Town Hall conference room..

- **Mass Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian:**

- The Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) provides bus service along New York Avenue with transit routes 7, 9, and 13 providing year-round service. New York Avenue is just over a ¼ mile from the Town Hall.
- There is a sidewalk presently found on the north side of School Street and a partial sidewalk on the south side of School Street.
- There is a bicycle rack located on Pacific Avenue between Town Hall and the Library.

- **Traffic Summary:**

- In terms of overall traffic operations and parking issues, on-site parking supply should be adequate with the exception of those times when large meetings are simultaneously held at the meeting rooms at Town Hall and the Library.
- Trip generation is not expected to increase dramatically.

- **Possible Mitigation:** The following are suggested traffic control devices that could enhance the safe movements of pedestrians and vehicles in and out of the site:

- Consider eliminating some or all of the diagonal parking spaces proposed along School Street. The spots closest to the exit to the new parking lot in particular.
- Consider a long term arrangement with the Catholic Church for parking on the existing paved lot that will be used to the temporary town hall trailers.
- Consider having employees to park off-site when events are planned at Town Hall and the Library simultaneously.

- Consider a sidewalk along Pacific Avenue to improve pedestrian connectivity.

3.4 Affordable Housing: MVC does not apply the Affordable Housing Policy to municipal projects.

3.5 Economic Impact

- The New Town Hall Project is estimated to cost \$9,880,753. The funding was approved at Annual Town Meeting and by ballot in April 2017.
- There are approximately 20 employees, not including volunteers, at the current Town Hall.
- The hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. It is not anticipated that the hours of operation will change.
- The potential impacts to municipal services are as follows:
 - Impacts to Police and Fire Services are likely to be minimal since the proposed project is located within the Town Hall/Library Campus area and is replacing an existing building.
 - The impact on Fire Services should be positive because all new municipal construction will have fire safety and code compliance.
 - It is not anticipated that there will be any impact to schools.
- The demo and re-development of the New Town Hall will create a number of new temporary jobs in the construction and professional services industry sectors.

3.6 Scenic Values

- **Streetscape:** The new building will appear as a long two-story building from the public ways.
- **Building Massing:** The building will appear somewhat larger than the existing.
- **Architectural Detailing:** Building has been designed by architects with Vineyard experience.
- **A.D.A. Accessibility:** The building will be A.D.A. accessible.

3.7 Local Impact/Abutters: There should be minimal impact to abutters as a result of the reconstructed town hall. There may be some impact on abutters during construction due to construction and the temporary relocation of the temporary town hall closer to residences.

4. CORRESPONDENCE – NO CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AS OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2017
