

To: Chesterfield Select Board

From: Town Office Future Committee

Date: November 1, 2008

Attached is the final report of the Town Office Future Options (TOFO) Committee.

The TOFO Committee met on 14 occasions and gathered information from the community through its members, at the Summer Town meeting and at its regular meetings. The TOFO committee did not expend any of the \$2,500 budget approved at the 2008 Town Meeting and its availability should be used to help the select board in its effort to decide a course of action for the building. Since its inception Ray Hutchins and Dutch Walsh resigned from the Committee.

The committee viewed its mission as developing and presenting options, their pros and cons and not deciding or eliminating options on their merits. We feel that was the task of the select board and not the committee.

We recommend the building be mothballed as soon as possible to keep costs down and to give the select board an opportunity to pick a course of action, get it approved at the next Town Meeting and get the selected option completed, all of which could take up to a year.

The options presented can be summarized as **Mothball and Save as Is, Preservation, Relocation, Sale and Deconstruction.**

Mothball & Save As Is:

This option would drain or protect the piping and mothball the building until 12 months from the next Town Meeting. This will allow sufficient time for community members to develop acceptable alternative uses for the property. This option has few associated costs and would temporarily preserve the building. Depending on the quality and viability of the options presented during the next year, the select board would then decide on a course of action for the property. The liability and potential deterioration of a shuttered building are offset by the benefit of allowing sufficient time for interested parties to investigate and create funded alternatives for the building.

Preservation: A number of Preservation Options are presented ranging from leasing the building at its current location, selling the property and relocating the building.

Preservation of the building at its current location by leasing it to a Non-Profit Foundation or a Cooperative that would seek financial assistance to rehabilitate the building as necessary and to operate it for a suitable or acceptable use that would fit the Town's requirements. End uses presented are "Early Childhood Development Center", "COOP", but there are innumerable others. The Town would need to evaluate any end use for water use, septic system impact, parking, traffic and compatibility on Town property

Building Relocation: This option would preserve the building by having the Town sell the building and the buyer, perhaps a Non Profit Foundation or Cooperative, responsible for moving it off site. The cost to prepare the building for relocation, preparation for moving and setting it on a new foundation would be around \$30,000 to the buyer. A cost of around \$1,000 would fill and grass over the cellar hole. Additional moving costs would depend on the distance moved. This option preserves the building, perhaps putting it on the tax rolls and opens the site for parking or green space, keeping the Town lot contiguous and it would end any cost or liability to the Town.

Sale of Property: This option envisions a sale of the property for domestic or commercial office use. It would save the building and current aesthetics, puts taxes on the rolls and the sales value would accrue to the Town and any future cost to the Town would end. A property sale would need to have parking, traffic, septic system and any zoning issues under control as well as a way to manage the Town complex water supply which comes from a well that is about 6 feet from the building. The contiguous Town land from the Library to the New Town Office building would be interrupted.

Deconstruction: This option would salvage the usable building materials for recycling and tear down and haul away the remaining material for disposal. When approached in May of 2008, Renew Building Materials and Salvage of Brattleboro indicated they would take the salvageable material giving the contractor a tax deduction for the value to help offset the demolition and disposal costs. This is a quick resolution having a cost of about \$16,000 to the Town and an additional \$1,000 to fill and grass over the cellar hole. It ends any historical or aesthetic values at the site, precludes any future use of the building and it also removes any future water use, parking and traffic issues.

Other uses that were suggested and considered were "Domicile Rental Property", "Retail Store, such as ice cream shop, coffee shop or bakery, "Professional Office" for Real Estate, Physician, Dental, Post Office, School Storage, After School Programs, Boy Scout/Girl Scout use and others.

Attached is a summary of the options and their pros and cons.

The Committee would be available for a meeting with the select board to answer any questions or to discuss the report after you have an opportunity to review it.

TOFO Committee:

Bayard Tracy

Joe Scrivani

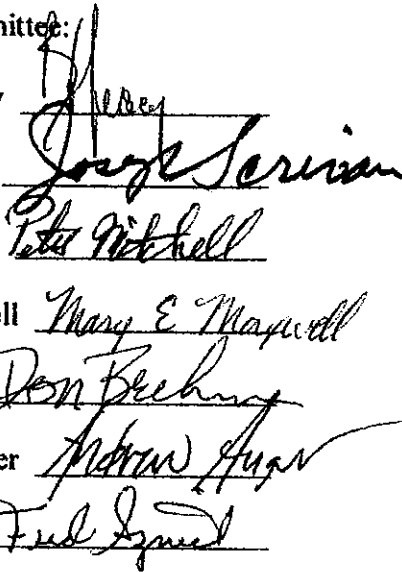
Pete Mitchell

Mary Maxwell

Don Brehm

Andrew Auger

Fred Szmit
Chairman



The image shows handwritten signatures for each member of the TOFO Committee. The signatures are written in black ink over the printed names. From top to bottom, the signatures are: Bayard Tracy, Joe Scrivani, Pete Mitchell, Mary Maxwell, Don Brehm, Andrew Auger, and Fred Szmit.

Town Office Future Options

Mothball & Save As Is

This option would mothball and save the building in its present condition until other options were clarified and could be pursued to fruition. The building would be drained and anti freeze added for freeze prevention and except for periodic inspection would sit as is with the fire alarm active. A time limit of a year form the next Town Meeting would seem to be an appropriate time for other options to develop.

Pros

**Saves building for future use
Current aesthetics preserved
Little to no cost to Town
Allows time for better options to surface**

Cons

**Potential further deterioration such as mildew and mold formation.
Liability of fire or vandalism
Delay of other options probably adds to cost of those options**

Town Office Future Options

Preservation

As A Childhood Development Center

This use envisions a Non-Profit Foundation that would seek funding to preserve the building for use as a Childhood Development Center run by or in conjunction with the School System. The building would have to be rehabilitated for the use, brought up to code and the lead paint problem mitigated. The number of children and staff would have to have limitations to accommodate the availability of water and the septic system at the site. Early Childhood Development is not currently in the School Board plan.

Pros

Saves Building.

Current Aesthetics Preserved.

Fills a need in Town.

Builds Community Spirit.

Cons

Building Rehabilitation costs are unknown, estimates range from \$330,000 to \$390,000.

Traffic Issues need to be understood.

Early Childhood Development not currently in School Board Plan

Cost to run program unknown.

Parking could be an issue.

Water use needs to be compatible with availability.

Impact on Septic System needs to be evaluated.

Town Office Future Options

Preservation

As A Community COOP

This use is generally described as a Community COOP run by a nonprofit Foundation or Cooperative that would lease the building for a nominal sum from the Town. The agreement would need to protect the Town from liabilities and the Foundation or COOP would be responsible for any rehabilitation required and on going operating costs. With the "Change in Use" some building rehabilitation may be required to meet building codes. The expected use would be to sell locally grown produce and other goods such as art work that would relate to the community in a central, easily reached location for the benefit of the community.

Pros

**Preserves the Building
Current Aesthetics Preserved
Saves Building for Future Use
Builds Community Spirit
Supports Local Economy
No cost Option for Town**

Cons

**Building Rehabilitation costs to the Foundation or COOP are unknown
Water use needs to be established and acceptable
Traffic Issues need to be identified and managed
Reduces Town Control over site
Parking could exceed availability**

Town Office Future Options

Preservation

Relocate Building

This Option preserves the building structure by relocating the building as is to a different site. The aesthetics of the Town complex would be altered and whether this is for better or worse is in the eye of the beholder. The buyers cost would be approximately \$30,000 to prepare move and reset the building on a foundation. The buyer would have the new foundation cost and a cost to move the building which would depend on the distance moved.

Pros

Ends building cost liability to the Town

Opens space for more parking

Quick resolution, done in a few weeks.

Ends concern about water supply

Ends concern about traffic issues

Opens space to other use

May put value onto tax rolls

Sales proceeds used to:

**fill the foundation hole, grade and grass over the site estimated at \$1,000*
and to deal with the in ground septic system.**

Cons

Precludes future use of the building by the Town

Changes the aesthetics of the Town Complex

Historic value affected

Needs a nearby location and willing owner

*** Town Highway Department filling and grading the cellar hole.**

Town Office Future Options

Preservation

Private sale of Building and Lot

This Option would have the Town sell the building for private occupancy on the existing site. This option preserves the current aesthetics, puts taxes on the rolls with any sale value accruing to the Town. The Town would need to be assured that uses would be compatible and that parking, water consumption and the loss of control over the property would be acceptable. The 2008 Town Reassessment shows this building at \$159,300 and with one acre of land it would have a total value of \$259,000.

Pros

**Sale value to the Town
Saves historic building
Maintains current aesthetics of the area
Puts value into tax rolls
Could be limited to summer use**

Cons

**Water source for the complex needs protection
Adds water use to overall site
Zoning issue on lot size
Need to find a buyer
Parking /Traffic issues
Rental would require capital improvement
Code enforcement issues on change of use
Needs lot line adjustment for tennis court
Must limit use in deed or rental agreement
Sale results in loss of Town Complex land continuity
Loss of Town control of the use of the property**

Town Office Future Options

Deconstruction

This Option would salvage usable building material and tear down and haul away the remaining structure. The cost estimates are likely to change with disposal cost escalation. The building could be removed and the site leveled and seeded in about 4-6 weeks.

Pros

**Ends building cost liability to Taxpayer
Quick resolution, done in 4-6 weeks
Ends concern about water supply
Opens space to other use**

Cons

**\$16,000 Town Cost for removal
Ends any Historical Value of Building
Changes the aesthetics of the Town Complex
Adds to landfill burden
Precludes any future use of the building
Cost to fill, grade and grass over cellar hole estimated at \$1,000*
Cost to deal with the in ground septic system unknown.**

*** Town Highway Department filling and grading the cellar hole.**