

Village of Scotia Municipal Facilities Project - Public Process Grouped List of Summarized comments from Meeting # One

Issue: Defining the Problem/General Comments

Need for Municipal Services

- Village services are important
- It is good to have a comprehensive plan and vision for these issues

Is there a need/how was it determined?

- Do we really want a new facility? Do we really need more space? Are we really ok just as is?
- We need to do something. The facility is out moded. But what we do needs to be more cost effective
- What are the consequences of doing nothing?
- Make sure police and village office needs are considered as much as fire

Can we meet space needs by methods other than building?

- Consider equipment needs - how many fire trucks do we really need?

Issue: Process & Outreach

Process for Selecting Consultants

- What was the purpose of hiring a New York City firm?
- What was the selection process for the architect
- Were there other proposals for architectural services
- How were the dollars in the architects fees spent?
- Did we look at other facilities built recently in the region and discuss their experience and the contractors/consultants they used?
- The process for selecting the professionals should be transparent
- Sense that architects tried to shove things down our throats. They had a big city attitude and did not respect the intelligence of locals.

Timeliness of Information

- Information about the project was not given early enough

- Answers to questions should have been made available earlier
- Process of education and vote seemed rushed

Level of Community Understanding

- Need to ensure that everyone understands that this plan was not just for the fire house
- Information was available, and after the study it became clear that logical decisions had been made. Process needs to be more readily available
- Reason the bond was defeated is not just voter ignorance - cost and location really mattered

Specifics of the Voting Process

- Should consider splitting the vote into two parts: 1) location and 2) money
- Need to have more than one polling place. People should vote in the places they are used to voting like the schools.

Issue: Location

Site Selection Process

- What sites were on the short list and why weren't they chosen? Are they still available? Are there others that are now available
- The village is built-out and can't be compared to communities with lots of green space

Existing Building Options

- Use an addition to the building to expand, expand the existing building onto adjacent property even if it means buying/condemning Village Point
- The current location is difficult due to cars parking on the street
- Considering the existing building, private money not public money should be used for rehabilitation
- Can village offices be sited at an open or vacant site?

Location of Proposed Firehouse

- The location on such a small street was a concern

- Sirens at night impact the neighborhood
- Didn't like the location of the planned firehouse on a one way street
- Property adjacent to the Corporate Park is available and for sale and should be considered

Response Time Issues

- Was there/could there be a study of where most fires are?
- Should pick a location closer to the schools and other facilities of high fire risk/demand
- The building (fire house) could be located anywhere. District is only a three minute drive time for fire department. No location will impact response time. Need to revisit the site matrix with that in mind

Issue: The Avenue/Business Issues

Protect Existing Businesses

- Sites should not displace existing businesses.
- Elimination of local businesses will leave us with nothing but big boxes
- The avenue needs parking to support businesses. Thinking of removing the new parking facility is ridiculous
- Businesses have synergy. Eliminating village paint will impact other businesses
- Master plan identified village paint as an institution

Tax Roll Issues

- Keeping businesses on the tax roles should be a priority
- When considering location we should consider the tax implications
- Village paint is a large tax contributor and business in general is important to the community.

Impact of Existing Building Reuse on the Avenue

- What will happen to the existing building?
- Renovation is expensive, but it's not appropriate to abandon the building
- We need to make sure that the building is used

Historic/Character Issues

- Using existing building contributes to the village character
- We must keep historic character of existing building. We don't have a lot of historic buildings left.
- The Village Master Plan called for preserving historic structures

Issue: Cost

Too Expensive for Small Community

- The project was simply too big at estimated \$7.1 million for a community where taxes are already too high.
- The project was larger than the village could manage
- Other communities are building fire stations for a lot less
- The services must be scaled to the community both in terms of cost and personnel

Building New vs. Rehab

- Is it less expensive to build a new police station rather than rehab?
- Will all of the facilities be in the same building or will there be multiple buildings? And what is the impact on the cost of the single site/multiple site decision? (Was this issue publicized enough)

Cost of Predevelopment/Architectural Services

- Too much money was spent on pre-development costs
- Some pre development money was spent to get the answers to these questions
- Cost and the location (from NYC) of Architects is a concern
- Initial planning money was NOT lost especially the site selection process and the space/design/needs identification
- We spent too much (architectural fees) on a project that was soundly defeated
- The plan should stick to the simple approach and Avoid unnecessary expensive aesthetic or cosmetic elements

Revenue/Financing

- Fire Protection District Four needs to be considered in terms of financing
- Make sure the full cost is understood - including bonding fees and interest - with interest this was a \$15 million dollar project
- We need the Fire Protection District Four commitment and long term contract as revenue stream to support this project.

Issue: Consolidation

Was it considered?

- Village can't continue to have all municipal services that we have had. Taxes are too high and rising and driving people out. Must eliminate or consolidate.
- How seriously was consolidation considered?
- Consolidation should have been considered more thoroughly.
- Should include the county in consolidation discussions

What to Consolidate

- Maybe consider combining non-emergency functions only?
- Especially combining fire with the City of Schenectady and/or the Town of Glenville?
- What about combining police or clerk function with Town of Glenville?

Shared Facilities

- Shared facilities - e.g. using school as a location for village meetings should be considered