

September 12, 2016

RFQ and Steering Committee

September/October: Issue RFQ for design teams for town hall facilities and PW facilities. Teams to include a planning and architecture firm (or separate planning and architecture firms) and parking consultant.

Concurrently with issuing the RFQ, establish a steering committee for the projects. The committee could include several commissioners, the chair and one member of the planning board, design review board and livability board, and several staff members. They will develop guiding principles for the projects, help choose the design teams, review the site master plan and architectural design work, and make periodic reports to the board of commissioners about the progress of the project.

Assessment of existing town hall

Prior to the commencement of the master plan process for the downtown facilities, so in the September/October/November time frame, we could get a thorough assessment of the existing town hall. It entails three steps, running concurrently:

- Hire a contractor to assess the building's roof, window system, and other areas of concern (like why bees are nesting inside the brick walls and lizards crawling in the light fixtures) and give us a ballpark figure on renovation. The contractor will review the information from Mary Isaacs regarding accessibility issues. We will also need to meet with Mecklenburg County to determine how large an addition we can build before requiring fire separation so we can determine the maximum size of an addition without fire separation and what additional costs we would expend of fire separation.
- Due to the ongoing issues we have with the building's HVAC and electrical systems, hire an engineering firm to do an assessment of the MEP systems in the building. They can give us a comprehensive assessment of the systems and provide recommendations and costs on expanding or replacing the systems as we renovate/expand. They can also give us ideas for more sustainable and "green" systems and determine their cost/benefit.
- Hire a structural engineer to assess whether it is possible for us to add a second floor to the existing building. This would give us the potential for build-out of the Police Department in this building. A second story also gives us options for the Fire Department. For example, if we take 2,000 square feet of the existing first floor for sleeping quarters or day room and offices, we wouldn't need to expand the building out back, and the PD would have 18,000 square feet. Coupled with training/meeting space in the front building, this should suffice for the PD well into the future.

Doing these assessments will give the board enough information to make a decision on the direction we should take regarding our existing building prior to planning the site. The steering committee will receive all the information from the assessments.

During this same time frame, we will develop options for moving the PW facilities forward.

Site Master Plan Process – Downtown facilities

Beginning in December: The team chosen from the RFQ process will develop a master plan for the town hall area, including the new building, a sustainable parking solution, and the renovation/expansion of the existing town hall building. The process will include public engagement – in the form of roundtable discussions, a charrette, or public input sessions – to keep citizens informed about the progress and to receive their input on the public areas, amenities, parking solution, and Davidson Farmer’s Market area improvements. This process could take three months – perhaps more with the holidays – but should be complete in the spring, after input from the planning board. The steering committee will meet regularly to review the progress and report to the board of commissioners who will ultimately decide whether or not to move forward.

Building Design Process – Downtown facilities

If approved by the board, the team will then move into the building design phase:

- Spring 2017:
 - Issue RFQ for Construction Manager at Risk, if appropriate.
 - Architect will produce schematic drawings for the new building, the parking deck or other parking solution, and the renovation/expansion of the existing town hall.
- Summer 2017: Complete design development drawings. Receive approvals from DRB and estimates from CMR.
- Fall/Winter 2017: Construction documents, bidding, and negotiation. Construction contract with CMR. Begin financing process.
- Spring/Summer 2018: Receive financing. Begin construction.

The steering committee will make recommendations, with input from the design team, on the phasing of the construction, i.e. whether the parking or the new building will be constructed first, or whether construction will run concurrently.