

From: Rick Bazzano December 12, 2008 7:49:56 AM
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Cc:

PUBLIC BUILDING COMMITTEE
Simsbury Farms Subcommittee
Public Informational and Involvement Meeting

DRAFT

Public Building Committee Chairman Ostop convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Apple Barn at the Simsbury Farms Complex.

Present: Lauren, Ostop, Patrino, Rowland

Guests: Sawitzke, Toner, Hopper, West, Ryan

Also in attendance were First Selectman Glassman and Selectmen Hampton and Hensley.

Mr. Ostop explained that the Public Building Committee has been charged by the First Selectman to select an architect to do a Needs Assessment Study of the Simsbury Farms Complex and to talk with people who have used, are currently using or may wish to use the facility. A subcommittee of the PBC and a subcommittee of the Simsbury Farms Operating Committee were established to work with Mr. Toner and members of the Simsbury Farms staff to gather the information needed. Interviews with architectural firms were held by the PBC and the firm of Schoenhardt was chosen. Both Partner Mark Hopper and the Schoenhardt firm have done previous work at Simsbury Farms. Mr. Hopper is managing this project.

Mr. Hopper commenced an in depth presentation stating that six goals and objectives have been identified:

- (1) Determine and meet current and future programmatic needs of the apple barn, the main and adjacent skating rink building and the golf course restaurant building.
- (2) Consolidate Culture Parks and Recreation offices and increase operating efficiencies thereby delivering better services
- (3) Investigate alternative fuel options, utility rebate potentials and incorporate other energy savings improvements at each of the buildings.
- (4) Investigate alternative site layouts to improve vehicular, pedestrian, service vehicle circulation while increasing parking for peak usage.
- (5) Bring buildings into compliance with building, fire, life safety, handicap and local zoning codes.
- (6) Increase revenue generating opportunities.

Mr. Hopper presented the results of the study thus far:
He addressed the apple barn spaces, current usage and constraints, noting the wide variance in the numbers and the ages of the people using the spaces at a given time. The building currently is used solely by civic and nonprofit organizations and

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Mr. Hopper stated that there may be a potential for rental space for fundraising. If the building were to be reconfigured it would have the potential to be fully used all of the time and perhaps generate income. The entranceway needs to be changed to facilitate the various usage proposal. Location of the bathrooms currently causes an access problem for multiple uses of the rooms. Code and energy upgrades need to be addressed.

Secondly Mr. Hoper addressed the main building. He explained the current usage addressing the pools, the rink, the accessory rooms, the program offices and maintenance rooms. He stated that the pool area gets major use from June through August with 175 to 500 people a day so there is a definite need to address circulation and parking issues. The skating rink also has heavy usage with skating lessons, hockey practice and public skating. The investigation has identified that the building has definite needs for summer, winter, administration and overlapping activities. There is a need for a family locker room. The guard shack and first aid station are inadequate. The warming rooms need to be enlarged. The number of adjacent toilet facilities needs to be increased and enlarged as do the hockey team rooms and the rental skate storage room. There has been an expressed wish to have a party room for skating parties. It would be desirable to have a centralized check in desk that would serve both summer and winter time use. Handicap accessibility needs to be improved between floors to eliminate the need to go outside. There needs to be a centralized concession stand to serve both seasons. Storage space needs to be increased in all buildings.

The third building to be addressed by Mr. Hopper is the golf course restaurant building . The restaurant currently serves primarily the golfers. The restaurant served 31 golf outings from April to October. This activity relies heavily on fair weather as it can only be done through the use of a tent as the dining area is small. It would be desirable to be able to serve lunches without the interruption constantly of golfers going in and out. Thus, separating lunch diners from golfers coming for a snack or beverage is desirable . Additional drive through cooler and freezer capacity is recommended as are plans to provide adequate space for a

vendor's operation. A public/private partnership is a potential.

This study will be available on the Town's website and the Culture Parks and Recreation website at simsbury-ct.gov.

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Mr. Ostop thanked Mr.Sawitzke, Mr.Toner, members of the Simsbury Farms Operating Committee and the Recreation Council for working with the PBC. He stated that there are no cost estimates at this time as the Needs Assessment Study is not yet completed.

The meeting was opened to the public and the comments were:

The SHS has recently undergone renovation and additions. Would that not be the appropriate place for some of the activities mentioned at this meeting rather than having them at Simsbury Farms?

There are no meeting rooms at the main building for swim teams and other parks and recreation groups, etc.

Mrs. Glassman thanked the PBC for their work and the public for attending the meeting. She stated that the project is an exciting one. She recommended that prioritizations should be included in the study. She also recommended studying uses of the buildings in conjunction with other town facilities, for senior usage, consideration of trees for shade and for some historic trees that used to be there. Mrs. Glassman was not currently aware of any rules preventing the Town renting the property to other than nonprofit groups but felt that that issue can be addressed if necessary. She urged consideration of alternate sources of energy and areas for going green as the Board of Selectmen is attempting to do that throughout the Town. Selectman Hampton urged consideration of intergenerational uses for the Complex.

The golf facility/pro shop area/eating facility is a wonderful area with "a fifty million dollar view" but if the Town really wants to have a restaurant be successful it would have to be able to serve at least wine and beer.

The question was raised if the men's locker room is ever used as there are no showers there. Also there is only one urinal for multiple men.

If the patio were enclosed it could be used in all weather.

The buildings should all be LEED certified.

There are no accessible bathrooms for the skating area. One must go outside and up to the next level where a small wheelchair can be carefully maneuvered through a non accessible bathroom door leaving a child without parental supervision. Mrs. Glassman stated that that problem should be a priority and the PBC should work with Mr. Toner immediately to resolve the problem without waiting for completion of the Study

Mr. Toner thanked the PBC for their work on this Study. He had two emails from people not able to attend the meeting. One recommends implementing a solar heating system during the renovations. It could serve dual purposes by providing free energy to the facility and providing heat to the pool water which is currently usually chilly rather than refreshing. The second email recommends a restaurant should be incorporated into the pool area. The suggestion is to put more money into the snack bar providing healthy options of sandwiches, salads, burgers, etc.

Selectman Hensley spoke to the importance of dissemination of information about this Study and requesting input. Mr. Toner said that he has a database of 2,800 families whom he contacts regularly. Much of the feedback thus far is similar to that heard at this meeting and what is being addressed in the Study.

Mr. Sawitzke thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He feels that the process for the Study is excellent in that they are seeking input from the public in general and from specific user groups. He will ultimately have the task of supplying the dollar figures to the recommendations.

Mr. Ostop adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Draft submitted by

Yvonne Hill, clerk

The public is encouraged to write or to email their interests and concerns.