FINAL REPORT OF THE GROTON HEIGHTS REUSE TASK FORCE

February 2012

Catherine Kolnaski, Chair
Janet Downs
Marian Galbraith
Peter Ganacoplos
Bill Hart
Mary Kelly
Dana Parfitt
Robert Peruzzotti
Archie Swindell
Ralph Whitney

GROTON HEIGHTS REUSE TASK FORCE
FINAL REPORT
February 2012

CREATION OF TASK FORCE AND SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

The Groton Heights Reuse Task Force was created by a resolution adopted by the Groton Town Council on September 18, 2007. The resolution is included as Appendix A. Appointments were made by Mayor Streeter in August 2010 as follows:

Catherine Kolnaski (Town Council)
Marian Galbraith (City Council)
Archie Swindell (RTM)
Bob Peruzzotti (Board Of Education)
Mary Kelly (City Planning & Zoning)
Janet Downs (Bill Memorial Library)
Ralph Whitney (Friends of Fort Griswold)
Bill Hart (Neighborhood)
Peter Ganacoplos (Neighborhood)
Dana Parfitt (Community at large)

The task force started meeting in October 2010. In addition to the members, meetings were attended by Groton Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham. Director of Public Works Gary Schneider was also present for the first few meetings. Two reports prepared by the Town of Groton Public Works Department were distributed: "Groton Heights Elementary School Building and Site Analysis" and "Groton Heights Elementary School Supplementary Information."

In October 2010, the committee toured the school. Boundaries were reviewed and the condition of the building noted. A meeting schedule was adopted through February 2011. Complete minutes of the meetings are included as Appendix G.

It was established that any re-use of the school will probably require action by the City Planning & Zoning Commission and that any public use would require extensive changes, since the building is not handicapped accessible. The presence of lead and asbestos will also be an issue. The cost for bringing the building up to code in the areas of fire and safety is estimated at $6 million. (This estimate dates from 2003 and does not include handicapped accessibility.)

Electricity is on and the boiler is working. There has been some minor vandalism; this is addressed immediately by Town staff, as are roof leaks and other minor repairs in order to keep the building stable. The cost for oil, utilities, maintenance and other related costs is estimated at just over $20,000 for FY2013. Although the building is currently vacant, it is used on occasion for training exercises by police, firefighters and the Local Emergency Planning Council.

The Building Site Analysis was reviewed, including boundaries and ownership. One parcel is owned by the Bill Memorial Library and was leased to the Board of Education for many years and used as part of the playground; the lease has expired at this time. The existence of a paper street called Library Street was noted. The possibility of a land exchange with the library was discussed on several occasions; the Town could offer frontage on Monument Street to the South of the library in exchange for the leased library parcel. The result would be one contiguous piece of land owned by the Town. The unique architectural and historic character of the building was noted, as was its significance to the surrounding neighborhood. The Lease and Tract Map as well as the pertinent section of the 1996 City of Groton Historic & Architectural Resources Survey Report are included in Appendix B. Also included for reference in Appendix B are the Property Card and GIS map for the property.

The Supplementary Information was also reviewed, including a 2009 appraisal which valued the property at $489,000. Asbestos and lead paint reports were reviewed, and it was noted that all playground equipment has been removed with the exception of two basketball hoops. The committee was informed that the building is "in ok shape" and that minimum maintenance continues to be performed. There are no known hazardous materials buried on the site.

At subsequent meetings, concern was expressed about the fact that the building was deeded for "educational purposes." The deed to the property is included in Appendix B. Zoning issues were discussed; permitted uses and special permit uses for the R-5.2 Residence Zone were reviewed. City Zoning Regulations are included in Appendix C. Possible uses for the property were discussed at every meeting, and those uses have been refined and are included in the section titled "Possible Uses."

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Town has had inquiries about the property from the Islamic Center, the Born Again Evangelistic Outreach Ministry, the DEP, and a local architect looking for medical office space for a client. In 2007-2008, the Town received several unsolicited calls about possible conversion to condominiums. Neither the Town nor the City has any interest in the site.

It was decided that the DEP, the CT Department of Economic Development, the City of Groton, and various educational institutions, including Project LEARN, UConn, and the University of New Haven, should be approached to determine their interest in the property. The City, DEP, University of New Haven and UConn indicated that they had no interest in the property. Project LEARN was contacted, and the committee was told that the group was looking for a new location for its multilingual magnet school currently located in Waterford. The committee was encouraged by Project LEARN's interest, but later learned that the group was, in fact, not interested in the site. Conversely, interest in utilizing space in the building was expressed by Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Riverfront Children's Center. Communications regarding interest in the property are included in Appendix D.

The members agreed that a survey should be undertaken to determine the public's preferences with regard to use of the site. The survey was mailed to property owners within a five-hundred foot radius, and was available on-line between January and February 2011 using Survey Monkey. Responses were also accepted by mail and telephone to allow for the widest possible response. The survey was not limited to Groton residents. Overwhelmingly, respondents wanted the building to be saved and there was a preference for public over private ownership. Preferred uses ranked as follows: 1. Educational 2. Recreational 3. Residential condominiums 4. Professional offices 5. Residential single family lots 6. Church/religious use. The survey form, results and analysis of data are included in Appendix E.

In consideration of the survey results, the committee was hopeful that an educational use could be found for the property. Mr. Oefinger conducted a tour of the school with Project LEARN and was assured by representatives of the group that there was still interest in acquiring the property. It was decided to suspend further meetings until Project LEARN was able to make a decision. No meetings were held between late February and mid-September of 2011.

Meetings resumed in September 2011 at which time the committee was still hopeful that Project LEARN had an interest in the property. A meeting schedule was adopted through the end of 2011.

City Planner Barbara Goodrich attended one meeting to help the members understand the zoning issues that affect the property. Adoption of a Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment to the City Zoning

Regulations was considered. Such an amendment would allow for specific desired uses and would be similar to the one adopted by the Town to allow the reuse of Mystic Academy. The Town's Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment is included in Appendix C.

In early December, a communication was received from Project LEARN that the group had no interest in acquiring the Groton Heights property.

In preparation for making its recommendations to the Town Council, the committee began compilation of possible uses for the property utilizing a matrix to lay out the various uses. The chart includes important considerations for each use, including: impact on the immediate area; financial impact for the Town; other issues associated with each use; zoning restrictions; course of action necessary to make each use possible; and the resident survey results as they relate to each use. The Matrix is included as Appendix F. The following narrative was derived from and expands upon this matrix.

POSSIBLE USES

Keep the Property - Take no action

The immediate area could be impacted under this scenario as the building may deteriorate, becoming an eyesore and a security hazard for the neighborhood. In addition, the Town would be financially impacted by the necessity of continued maintenance of the building and grounds. (The current cost of maintenance is approximately $20,000 annually. The roof is nearing the end of its useful life and the oil tank must be replaced by 2017.) Obviously, this choice involves no zoning issues and no enabling actions. Since "no action" was not a choice on the survey, the public's opinion on this possibility is unknown.

Keep the Property - Demolish the building

A park in this location could potentially improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. There would be costs to the Town for demolition of the building and construction and continued maintenance of the park. This use, while requiring no zone change, could present issues related to maintenance and security. Although the survey indicates recreational use as the public's second choice, the results were clear that the respondents would prefer to keep the building.

Keep the Property - Lease the building

Any lease would require Town Council approval and Planning Commission review under CGS Sec. 8-24. Leasing for use as **commercial or professional offices** would increase daytime traffic and may threaten the quiet character of the neighborhood. There would probably be no further expenses to the Town for maintenance under the lease and some tax revenue would be gained from the businesses, but the Town Council has suggested that it would rather not function as a landlord. A responsible developer would have to be sought, and the Town would probably have to pursue the required zone change, possibly a Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment, before offering the property for lease. The survey indicates that use as commercial or professional offices is the public's fourth choice out of six.

The building could also be leased for **community use** by a school, church or multiple non-profit organizations. Once again, there would be an increase in traffic. The Town could save the cost of maintenance under the terms of the lease, but would probably gain no new taxes. It would put the Town in the position of being a landlord, which the Council has identified as less than desirable. Organizations leasing the property would have to demonstrate the financial capability to renovate and maintain the building. The Town would not have to pursue a zone change under this scenario, since no change is necessary for use as a school, and church or other non-profit use is allowed under a special

permit. The survey identifies school use as the public's first choice and church use as sixth out of six. Use by multiple non-profits was not a choice on the survey.

Sell the Property – Residential Subdivision

Any sale of the property would require both Town Council and RTM approval including Planning Commission review under CGS Sec. 8-24.

If a decision is made to sell the property, the building could be razed by the new owner and the land subdivided for homes. A residential subdivision would increase the population density and almost certainly change the character of the neighborhood. Financial advantages to the Town include avoidance of maintenance or demolition expense, since the property could be sold "as is." Additional revenue would be realized both from the sale and from municipal taxes. However, residential units could result in both an increase in the student population and an increased demand for other municipal services. The Town would have to find a financially responsible developer. No zone change would be required, although subdivision approval would have to be granted. Use of the property as residential lots ranked low on the scale of preferred uses, ranking fifth out of six on the survey. It is worth noting again that the survey results clearly indicated a preference for saving the existing building.

Sell the Property – Commercial or Professional Offices

The property could be sold and the building converted to commercial or professional offices, or the new owner could choose to raze the existing building to make way for a new structure for this use. The impact on the immediate area would almost certainly include an increase in daytime traffic and a change in the neighborhood's character. Again, the Town would profit from the sale and additional taxes as well as from avoidance of maintenance costs, but would be impacted by an increase in the demand for municipal services. A financially responsible developer would incur the expense of either extensive renovations or new construction. Attracting such a developer would probably require that the Town pursue the required zone change, possibly a Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment, before offering the property for sale. Professional offices ranked fourth out of six on the survey's list of desirable uses.

Sell the Property – Condominium Use

Selling the building for condominium use would also require extensive renovations by the new owner and increase the population density of the neighborhood. The Town would avoid the expense of maintaining the building and gain income from the sale and from tax revenue. Location and views make the property ideal for high end development, but in order to attract a financially responsible developer, the Town would need to pursue a zone change (possibly a Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment). Condominium use was the third of the six survey choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the opinions expressed in the survey, the committee recommends <u>against</u> the following courses of action:

- Demolition of the structure. Survey respondents were almost unanimous in expressing appreciation for the unique character of the building and its relationship to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Subdivision into residential lots. This use ranked next to last on the survey. Although no zoning change would be required for this use, it would cause perhaps the greatest change in the character of the neighborhood.
- Sale of the property with no restriction on use. This caveat requires no explanation.

Finally, the committee presents the following recommendations:

- Actively solicit interest in the property for specific acceptable uses with preference given to educational use. This course of action would take into account the public's preference that the building be used for educational purposes.
- Make the zoning changes necessary to support desired uses, possibly a Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment, then market the property for defined uses including condominiums, professional offices, or space for non-profit and community organizations. Consideration could be given to offering a partial tax abatement to a purchaser who agrees to renovate and make some portion of the building available for use by non-profit groups.
- Retain the property until the economy improves, then market it.
- Retain the property and seek grants to renovate the building; rent space to non-profits and community groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are offered in response to the specific charges to the task force contained in the resolution by which it was created.

1. Statutory and other limitations include:
    - R-5.2 Residence Zone restrictions cited in City Zoning Regulations included in Appendix C
    - The existence of the paper street known as "Library Street"
    - The fact that one tract considered part of the Groton Heights property belongs to the Bill Memorial Library
    - The restriction in the deed to the building that limits its use to "educational purposes." (This restriction may not be an issue, but the committee would be remiss if it did not call attention to its existence.)
    - Requirements for Town Council and RTM approval; Planning Commission review under CGS Sec. 8-24.
2. Community needs that could be accommodated by the property were identified by the survey responses and refined into the section titled "Possible Uses."
3. Recommendations as to disposal, reuse or lease of the property are included in the section titled "Recommendations."
4. It would be premature to offer specific plans for solicitation of reuse proposals at this time.

List of Appendices

APPENDIX A – Resolution Establishing Groton Heights Reuse Task Force

APPENDIX B – Property Records

1. Deed
2. Lease with Bill Memorial Library
3. Property card
4. GIS map
5. Tract map
6. 1996 Architectural Survey

APPENDIX C – Zoning Information

1. City Zoning Regulations for R-5.2 Residence Zone
2. Town of Groton Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment

APPENDIX D – Communications Regarding Interest in the Property

1. Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center/Boys and Girls Clubs
2. State of Connecticut DEP
3. University of Connecticut
4. Project LEARN
5. Riverfront Children's Center

APPENDIX E – Survey and Analysis

1. Survey Form
2. Analysis of Data

APPENDIX F – Matrix of Possible Reuses

APPENDIX G – Minutes

APPENDIX A - Resolution Establishing Groton Heights Reuse Task Force

Town of Groton, Connecticut

Text File

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager 860-441-6630

Introduced: 8/9/2007

Version: 3

File Number: 2007-0191

Status: Passed

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, prior to the beginning of this school year the Groton Board of Education decided that Groton Heights School Facility was no longer needed for school purposes and the building was turned over to the Town, and

WHEREAS, the Town has received a number of inquiries concerning the reuse of this building, and

WHEREAS, Groton Heights is located within a residential area and is adjacent to two institutional uses including the Bill Memorial Library and Fort Griswold, and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Town Council to make sure that the reuse of this building is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood, community needs, and in the best interest of the entire community, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council wishes the Mayor to appoint a Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force including:

1. A representative from the Town Council.
2. A representative from the City Council.
3. A representative from the RTM.
4. A representative from the Board of Education.
5. A representative from the City Planning and Zoning Commission.
6. A representative from the Bill Memorial Library
7. A representative representing the interests of Fort Griswold.
8. Two representatives from the surrounding neighborhood.
9. A representative from the community at large.

and be it further,

RESOLVED, that a Technical Advisory Board be established to assist with the necessary technical advice and assistance consisting of Town/City staff and others as necessary, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the tasks of the Reuse Task Force are:

1. To determine the statutory and other limitations that are placed on the Groton Heights property.
2. Inventory community needs that could be accommodated at Groton Heights.
3. Make a recommendation as to whether or not the property should be permanently disposed of as surplus and/or whether or not the building should be reused to meet other public needs or if the space should be leased to an outside concern.
4. If the property is to be disposed of, to recommend a plan to solicit reuse proposals for Town Council review and action.

APPENDIX B - Property Records

1. **Deed**
2. **Lease with Bill Memorial Library**
3. **Property card**
4. **GIS map**
5. **Tract map**
6. **1996 Architectural Survey**

Know all Men by these Presents, THAT I, Frederic Bill of the Town of Groton, County of New London, and State of Connecticut,

for divers good causes and considerations thereunto moving, especially for One Dollar and the interest received to my full satisfaction of the First School District of the Town of Groton, County of New London, and State of Connecticut,

have remised, released, and forever QUIT CLAIMED, and do by these presents for myself and my heirs, justly and absolutely remise, release and FOREVER QUIT CLAIM unto the said First School District and to its successors and assigns forever, all such right and title as I the said Releasor have, or ought to have in or to the two story brick, stone and steel constructed building, to be occupied by the said First School District as School House and other educational purposes, and situated on land of the said First School District, in the Town of Groton, in said County of New London, and State of Connecticut, bounded and described as follows, to wit:

Beginning in the West line of Smith Street at the Northeast corner of land of The Groton Monument Association and the State of Connecticut, thence running Westerly with said Association land Two Hundred and sixteen (216) feet, to other land of the Grantee; thence running Northerly by and with said Grantee's other land and land of the Bill Memorial Library Association Three Hundred and eight (308) feet, more or less to a street hereafter to be known as Library Street; thence Easterly with said Library Street One Hundred and Seventy nine (179) feet more or less to Smith Street, and thence Southerly by and with said Smith Street Three Hundred and twenty two (322) feet more or less, to the point or place of departure; This deed having no reference whatsoever to a certain right-of-way given to me in a deed of William A. Smith dated June 13th 1889, and recorded in the Land Records of Groton, in Book 35, on page 615.

To Have and to Hold the above described premises unto it the said First School District, its successors heirs and assigns, to the only use and behoof of the said First School District, successors heirs and assigns forever. So that neither I the said Releasor nor any other person in my name and behalf shall, or will hereafter claim or demand any right or title to the premises, or any part thereof; but they and every of them shall by these presents, be excluded and forever barred.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 18" day of February A. D. 1913.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of
J. L. Randall
H. L. Bailey

Frederic Bill (Seal) [L. S.]

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, NEW LONDON COUNTY, } ss. GROTON, Connecticut, February 18, A.D. 1913.

PERSONALLY APPEARED, Frederic Bill

Signer and Sealer of the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged the same to be his free act and deed, before me,

H. L. Bailey, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Notary Public. Justice of the Peace. Commissioner of the Superior Court for New London County.*

Received for record Feb. 18, 1913, at 8 h. m. P. M., and recorded by me,

Henry L. Bailey *Town Clerk.*

L E A S E

THE BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

TO

THE TOWN OF GROTON, ACTING BY ITS BOARD OF EDUCATION

THIS INDENTURE OF LEASE made and executed this 6TH day of March, 1989 by and between THE BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of this State, PARTY OF THE FIRST PART, and THE TOWN OF GROTON, a municipal corporation, ACTING BY ITS BOARD OF EDUCATION, PARTY OF THE SECOND PART, WITNESSTH;

The party of the first part hereby leases to the party of the second part for a term of ten (10) years from July 1, 1988; the following described premises located on Smith Street, in the City and Town of Groton:

> Beginning at a point in the westerly boundary of Smith Street, approximately three hundred and sixty-three feet (363') south of the southerly boundary of Meridian Street, said point being the northeast corner of the plot of land herein described; thence southerly by and along the westerly boundary of Smith Street one hundred and forty feet (140'), more or less, to a point designated by a granite merestone with a drill hole in the center; thence westerly by and along the northerly boundary of lands formerly of the First School District and now of the Groton Heights School of the Town of Groton, one hundred and eighty feet (180'), more or less, to a granite merestone with a drill hole in the center, said merestone being at the corner of the wire fence enclosing the Bill Memorial Library grounds; thence northerly in a line parallel to and coexistent with the easterly boundary of said Library grounds extended one hundred and forty seven feet (147'), more or less, to the center of a field-stone wall; thence easterly by and along said field-stone wall and lands owned on the north side by others one hundred and seventy feet (170'), more or less, to the point of departure.

The party of the second part agrees to pay as rent for the premises, on , 1989, the sum of Ten Dollars ($10) for the entire period of this lease, at the rate of One Dollar ($1) per year.

The parties agree that the leased premises shall be used by the lessee for school purposes; that no building shall be built thereon during the term of this lease and the lessee shall pay any taxes which may be laid by any public authority upon the premises during the term of this lease; and that the party of the second part shall protect against harm, initiated from the school property and the Library property under lease to it the grounds and buildings thereon of the Bill Memorial Library and that failing such protection this lease shall be of no effect: and furthermore, if it shall hereafter be determined by public authority to open or improve Library Street as a public highway, this lease shall not be affected by the land required and taken for that purpose.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have executed these presents this 6th day of MARCH, 1989.

WITNESSES:

Malcolm F. Brown

Stephanie Marshall

THE BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY ~~ASSOCIATION~~

by William D. Thomson
Its President thereunto duly authorized

THE TOWN OF GROTON

by Bruce McDermott
Chairman, Board of Education thereunto duly authorized

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNTY OF New London, ss. Groton, March 6, 1989

Personally appeared William D. Thomson President of The Bill Memorial Library thereunto duly authorized, and acknowledged the same to be his free act and deed, before me,

Gary G. Crowley
Notary Public

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNTY OF New London, ss. Groton, March 1, 1989

Personally appeared Bruce McDermott, Chairman of the Board of Education of the Town of Groton thereunto duly authorized, and acknowledged the same to be his free act and deed, before me,

Gary G. Crowley
Notary Public

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT GROTON, CONN.
ON 4-13-92 AT 2:12 pm
ATTEST BARBARA TARBOX Town Clerk

Commercial Property Card

Print Date: 10/6/2010

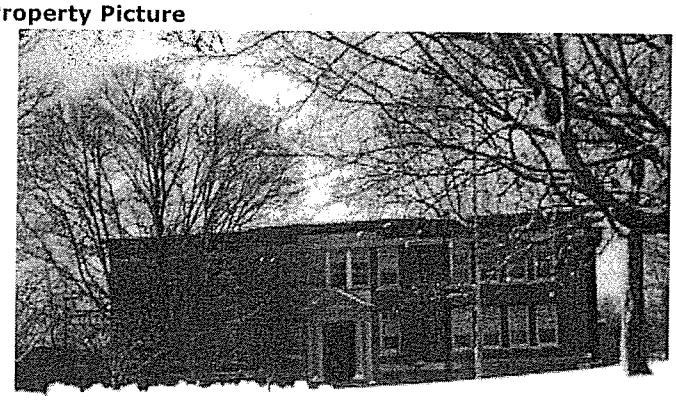
Card 1 of 1

Account	Location	Zoning	Deed Book/Page	Acres
168918412020 E	244 MONUMENT ST	R52	/	2.61
District	**Use Code**			
CITY OF GROTON	MUNICIPALITIES			

Current Owner

GROTON TOWN OF
244 MONUMENT ST
GROTON CT 06340

Property Picture



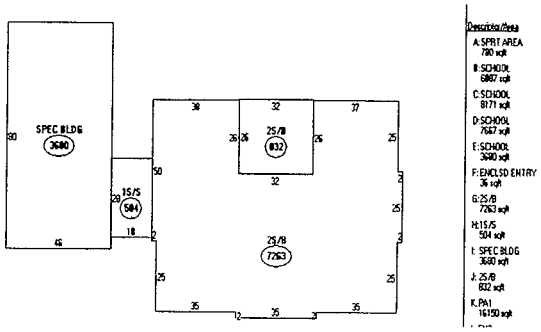
Building Information

Building No:	1
Year Built:	1912
No of Units:	1
Structure Type:	SCHOOL
Building Total Area:	27185 sqft.
Grade:	B
Identical Units:	1

Valuation

Land:	$330,100
Building:	$2,061,100
Total:	$2,391,200
Total Assessed Value:	$1,673,840

Building Sketch



Recent Sales

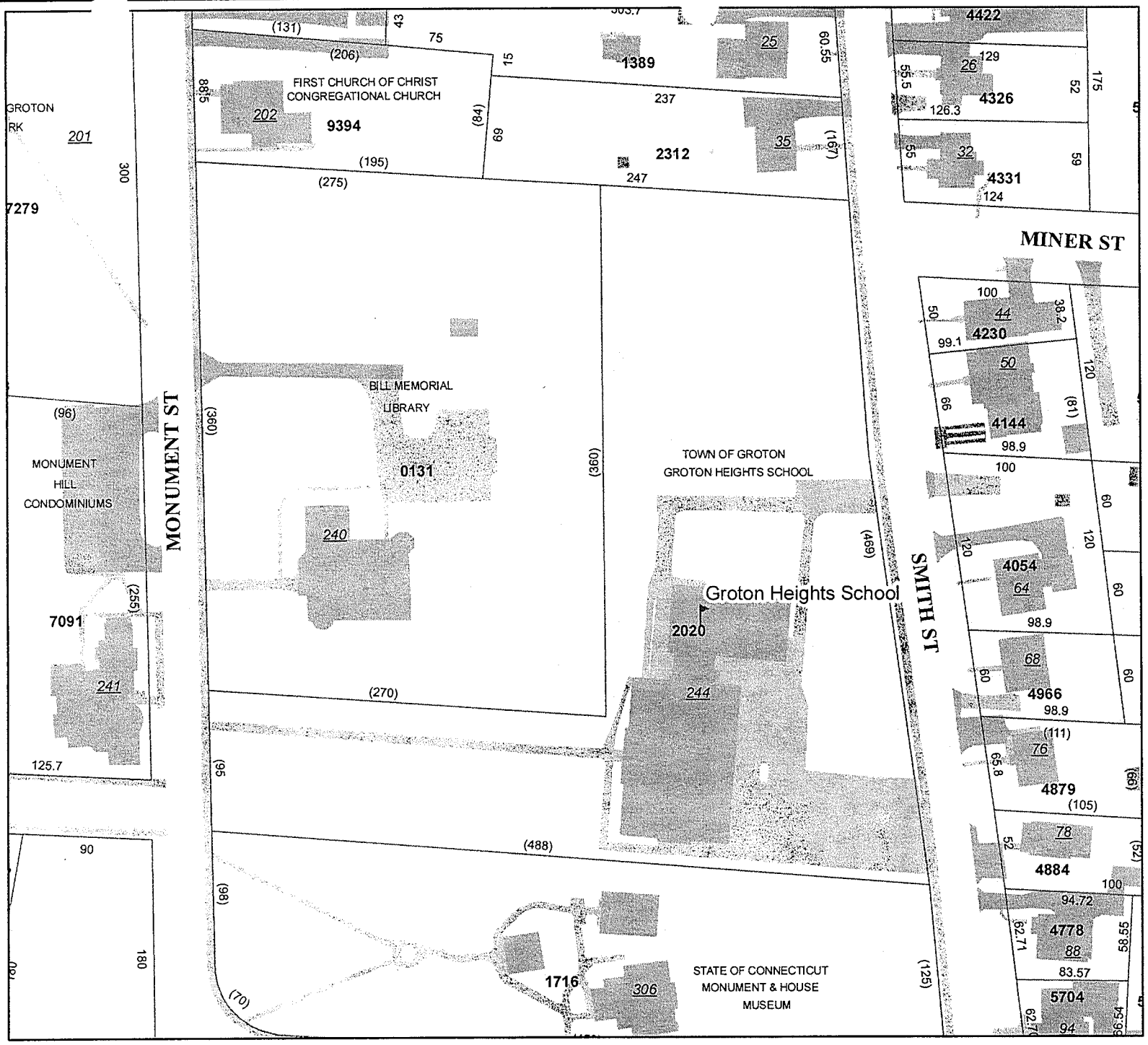
Book/Page	Date	Price

Sketch Legend

----	Main Living Area	1SMA	Masonry	GRHS	Attached Greenhouse
1FR	Frame	OMP	Open Masonry Porch	CAT	Cathedral Ceiling
OFP	Open Frame Porch	EMP	Enclosed Msry Porch	SOP	Screen Open Frame Prch
EFP	Enclosed Frame Porch	MUB	Masonry Utility	SMP	Screen Open Msnry Prch
FUB	Frame Utility Building	MB	Masonry Bay	CPAT	Concrete Patio
FB	Frame Bay	MOH	Masonry Overhang	B	Basement
FG	Frame Garage	.5MA	1/2 Story Masonry		
FOH	Frame Overhang	MP	Masonry Patio		
.5FR	1/2 Story Frame	WD	Wood Deck		
A(U)	Attic (Unfinished)	CPY	Canopy		
A(F)	Attic (Finished)				

Exterior/Interior Information

Levels	Use Type	Ext. Walls	Const. Type	Heating	A/C	Condition
B1 - B1	SUPPORT AREA	N/A	FIRE RESIST	HW/STEAM	NONE	NORMAL
01 - 01	SCHOOL	N/A	FIRE RESIST	HW/STEAM	NONE	NORMAL
01 - 01	SCHOOL	BRICK VENEER	FIRE RESIST	HW/STEAM	NONE	NORMAL
02 - 02	SCHOOL	BRICK VENEER	FIRE RESIST	HW/STEAM	NONE	NORMAL
01 - 01	SCHOOL	BRICK VENEER	FIRE RESIST	HW/STEAM	NONE	NORMAL



Town of Groton GIS Map

Disclaimer:

Planimetric and Topographic information depicted on this map was compiled by EarthData International and is based on an aerial flight performed in April 1998. In addition, the Town of Groton's GIS staff has updated limited planimetric features based on an aerial flight performed in April 2004 by the Sanborn Map Company. The 2004 aerial photography is being provided to the Town through a license agreement with SBC Communications, Inc. Real property information has been derived from recorded deeds, plats, public records, and other data. The intent of this map is to depict a graphical representation of property information relative to planimetric features and is subject to change as a more accurate survey may disclose. The Town of Groton and the mapping company assume no legal responsibility for the information depicted on this map.
IT IS NOT TO BE USED FOR THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY.

Horizontal Datum is based on North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83 Feet).
Vertical Datum is based on National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29).

N
W E
S

0 25 50 100 150
Feet
1 inch = 94 feet

Town of Groton GIS Services

Groton Heights School
TRACT IV
167
113'
TRACT V
"LEASED"
113'
40'
LIBRARY
STREET
40'
MONUMENT STREET
TRACT III
202'
TRACT I
202'
270'
TRACT II
95'
488'
SMITH STREET
PARK AVENUE

The City of Groton

HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
TOWN OF GROTON, CONNECTICUT

PHASE III ~ VOLUME III-2

AUGUST 1996

James Gibbs, Architect + Planner

Mystic Environmental Design, P.O. Box 381, Mystic, CT 06355

Town of Groton Planning Department
Connecticut Historical Commission
National Park Service

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

HIST-6 REV: 6/83

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
(203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Town No.: | Site No.: GB-201

UTM

QUAD:

DISTRICT: [ ] S [X] NR | IF NR, SPECIFY: [ ] Actual [X] Potential

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME (Common): Groton Heights School (Historic): Groton Heights School

2. TOWN / CITY: Groton | VILLAGE: Groton Bank | COUNTY: New London

3. STREET AND NUMBER (and / or location): 244 Monument Street

4. OWNER(S): Town of Groton [X] Public [ ] Private

5. USE (Present): Educational (Historic): Educational

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD [X] Yes [ ] No | INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE [X] Yes [ ] No | IF YES, EXPLAIN: School

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Beaux Arts | DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1912

8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)
[ ] Clapboard [ ] Asbestos siding [X] Brick [ ] Other (Specify) ____
[ ] Wood shingle [ ] Asphalt siding [ ] Fieldstone
[ ] Board & batten [ ] Stucco [ ] Cobblestone
[ ] Aluminum siding [ ] Concrete Type: ____ [ ] Cut stone Type: ____

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
[ ] Wood frame [ ] Post and beam [ ] Balloon
[X] Load-bearing masonry [ ] Structural iron or steel
[ ] Other (Specify) ____

10. ROOF (Type)
[ ] Gable [X] Flat [ ] Mansard [ ] Monitor [ ] Sawtooth
[ ] Gambrel [ ] Shed [ ] Hip [ ] Round [ ] Other (Specify) ____

(Material)
[ ] Wood shingle [ ] Roll asphalt [ ] Tin [ ] Slate
[ ] Asphalt shingle [X] Built up [ ] Tile [ ] Other (Specify) ____

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 | APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 107x76+add'n

12. CONDITION (Structural): [ ] Excellent [X] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Deteriorated | (Exterior): [ ] Excellent [X] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY (Location): [X] On original site [ ] Moved | WHEN? | ALTERATIONS: [X] Yes [ ] No | IF YES, EXPLAIN: Addition to rear and side.

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES
[ ] Barn [ ] Shed [ ] Garage [ ] Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)
[ ] Carriage house [ ] Shop [ ] Garden

15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT
[ ] Open land [ ] Woodland [X] Residential [ ] Scattered buildings visible from site
[ ] Commercial [ ] Industrial [ ] Rural [ ] High building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS

Setback from street, between library and state park, in residential area.

(OVER)

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (Interior and/or exterior)

Building is a conservative Beaux Arts flat roofed rectangular brick block, with slightly projecting entrance pavilions to the front and side. The front entrance is a neoclassical Tuscan portico of granite with a fanlighted double doorway.

Windows are double hung and grouped. There are granite string courses atop the basement windows and 2nd story windows. There is a simple bracketed wood cornice which projects slightly from a brick roof parapet. There is brick quoining at all corners.

SIGNIFICANCE

18. ARCHITECT: Unknown

BUILDER: Unknown

19. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

The school is significant both for its obvious historic associations and for its architecture. Stylistically, it is well proportioned, albeit conservative, Beaux Arts composition -- it is the best example of that institutional style extant in the City.

Contributes to context of historic neighborhood.

SOURCES

Groton Bank Historic District Study Report, 1977.
Date stone on building.
Beers Atlas - Groton Bank, 1868 -- shows as land of Rev. W.A. Smith.

PHOTO

PHOTOGRAPHER: James Gibbs

DATE: July 1996

VIEW: Looking NE

NEGATIVE ON FILE: GB3-10A

COMPILED BY

NAME: James Gibbs Architect

DATE: July 1996

ORGANIZATION: Mystic Environmental Design

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 381, Mystic, CT 06355

Place Photograph Here

20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

- [X] None known
- [ ] Highways
- [ ] Vandalism
- [ ] Developers
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Renewal
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Deterioration
- [ ] Zoning

Explanation

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

TOWN NO.: SITE NO.:

UTM: 18 /__ /__ /____ /__ /__ /__

QUAD:

DISTRICT: S NR: ACTUAL
POTENTIAL

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

CONTINUATION SHEET

Site #GB-201 -- Groton
244 Monument Street
Negative # GB3-10A
July 1996

APPENDIX C – Zoning Information

1. **City Zoning Regulations for R-5.2 Residence Zone**
2. **Town of Groton Historic/Institutional Reuse Amendment**

2.4 R-5.2 – Residence Zone

2.41 Permitted Uses

a. One-family detached dwellings.

b. One-family semi-detached dwellings.

c. Two-family detached dwellings.

d. Parks and playgrounds.

e. Home occupations subject to the conditions set forth in Section 4.13.

f. Family day care homes.

g. Group daycare homes to operate from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the R-5.2 zones as a permitted use subject to Site Plan approval and the requirements of Sections 4.14 and 4.35.

h. Telecommunication Antenna and Facilities, subject to site plan approval and the requirements of Section 4.19 of these regulations. (New Effective: 4/16/01)

2.42 Special Permit Uses

The following uses are permitted subject to Special Permit and Site Plan approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

a. Churches and places of religious worship.

b. Cemeteries.

c. Child daycare centers to operate from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the R-5.2 zones by Special Permit and Site Plan approval subject to the requirements of Sections 4.14 and 4.35.

d. Public or private schools.

e. Public buildings essential to safeguarding the Public health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood.

f. Public utility rights-of-way and structures necessary to serve the neighborhood.

g. Bed and breakfast establishments, subject to the requirements of Section 4.18 of these Regulations. (New Effective: 6/1/98)

h. Vocational Training Facilities for persons with physical and developmental disabilities to operate in the zone between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. by

D. A facility may provide counseling services to non-residents as well as residents in the CA, CB, DDD and OMF districts provided that the facility includes a separate waiting area and separate meeting room for such non-resident services. Parking for non-resident counseling services shall be provided in accordance with requirements of Section 7.2.

E. Residents and their dependents shall be housed in rooms and/or apartments. Each room or apartment shall have its own kitchen facilities unless the community residential counseling facility contains a common kitchen adequate to prepare and serve meals for all residents.

F. A staff member shall be on site at the residential facility at all times.

G. No more than twenty (20) residents shall be permitted in any facility.

H. No facility shall be operated without obtaining all licenses and permits otherwise required by state or federal law.

7.1-38 Historic/Institutional Reuse (New Eff: 6/1/95)

The purpose of this provision is to provide reuse opportunities for existing buildings that have historic, architectural, or aesthetic significance. These structures constitute a significant element in the visual historic character of the community and therefore priority is put on their preservation and restoration.

In order to utilize this provision, facilities need to be located on lots two acres or more in size; have historically provided educational and/or other institutional uses to the community and/or neighborhood; and which have been most recently owned by the town and/or other institutional users.

Reuse options for these facilities may be in addition to those permitted by underlying zoning classification only when it is determined by the Zoning Commission, through its special permit process, to be necessary to accomplish the objectives and intent of this section. Proposed reuse options include residential, educational,

cultural, community and/or other similar uses deemed appropriate by the Zoning Commission. The Zoning Commission may employ bulk and density standards that are appropriate to the building and site conditions. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the bulk and density standards contained in Section 5.2 of these regulations shall be applied for one-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings based upon the zoning district in which the facility is located.

In evaluating the appropriateness of the proposed new use, the Zoning Commission, in addition to the special permit criteria, shall consider the following items among others: the historic use of the site during its institutional use; the character of the surrounding area; the topography of the area; the bulk of the buildings existing on the site; and the extent of the benefit to the welfare of the community to be derived by preserving the existing aesthetic appearance of the site.

7.1-39 Self-Service Storage Facilities (Eff: 2/1/97)

Self-service storage facilities are permitted in the CA, CB, IA, IPA, IPB and IPC zones subject to the following conditions:

A. The minimum lot area on which a self-service storage facility is located shall be 2 acres.

B. Parking for single story facilities shall be at the rate of 1 space for every 100 storage cubicles or fraction thereof, located in the vicinity of the leasing office. A minimum of 4 such spaces shall be provided. Parking for multi-storied facilities shall be at the rate of 2 spaces for every 100 storage cubicles or fraction thereof and adequate loading spaces shall be provided in the vicinity of elevators and other points of access into the facility.

C. Interior drives in and around buildings shall be a minimum of 24 feet in width.

D. Building setbacks for the underlying zone as required in Section 5.2 shall apply; however as part of site plan review the Planning Commission may require a minimum setback of 30 feet from public roads, and from residentially zoned and/or residentially used property.

APPENDIX D – Communications Regarding Interest in the Property

1. **Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center/Boys and Girls Clubs**
2. **State of Connecticut DEP**
3. **University of Connecticut**
4. **Project LEARN**
5. **Riverfront Children's Center**

LIGHTHOUSE VOC-ED CENTER, INC.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

RECEIVED
NOV 10 2010
TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE
TOWN OF GROTON, CT

November 1, 2010

To: Groton Town Manager
Mark Oefinger

Re: Groton Heights Elementary School Use

The Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center and the Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Connecticut, are interested in using the Groton Heights Elementary School for non-profits to share services and resources to provide programs for children. Both agencies have a long history of service in the Groton community. We would appreciate being considered by the Groton Heights Elementary School committee. Thank you. If you have any questions, please contact either Kim Winkleman, President of the Board of the Boys and Girls Club, at kim.winkelman@citizensbank.com or Kathy Greene, Director of Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center at kgreene@lighthousevocedcenter.com .

sign _____ sign Kathryn Greene

P.O. BOX 271, OLD MYSTIC, CT 06372-0271 (860) 445-7626
www.lighthousevocedcenter.com
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

File: Groton Heights School Reuse

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

RECEIVED
MAY 19 2011
TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE
TOWN OF GROTON, CT

May 17, 2011

Mark Oefinger
Town Manager
Town of Groton
45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340

RE: A-11-07 Reuse Offer for Groton Heights School

Dear Mr. Oefinger:

The State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has evaluated your offer to acquire the former Groton Heights School building and property. We applaud your efforts to identify an alternative use for it, but because DEP's mission is to conserve land and provide recreational opportunities, we typically focus on acquiring vacant land. Therefore, our only interest would be to acquire the vacant southwest portion of this property to incorporate into adjacent Fort Griswold State Park.

Thank you for the opportunity to evaluate this offer. Should you have any questions regarding this decision, I may be reached by telephone at (860) 424-3016 or by mail at the address below.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Brothers

Elizabeth A. Brothers
Assistant Director
Land Acquisition & Management Division

EAB:SB:jra

Mark

University of Connecticut
Office of the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Office of University Planning

Alexandria Roe
Director

RECEIVED
JAN 18 2011
TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE
TOWN OF GROTON, CT

January 14, 2011

Ms. Holly Kolnaski, Chair
Town of Groton
Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force
45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394

Re: Former Groton Heights Elementary School Inquiry

Dear Ms. Kolnaski:

Thank you for your letter of December 13, 2010, inquiring about the University of Connecticut's possible interest in acquiring the Groton Heights Elementary School facility located in the Town of Groton.

The University is appreciative of the efforts made by the Town to contact us with regard to this property. After reviewing the enclosed information, the University is not interested in acquiring the former Groton Heights Elementary School property.

Thank you again for your efforts with regard to the reuse of this property.

Very truly yours,

Alexandria Roe
Director of University Planning
University of Connecticut

AR/mf

An Equal Opportunity Employer

31 LeDoyt Road Unit 3143
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3143
Telephone: (860) 486-4418
e-mail: alexandria.roe@uconn.edu

Bresnyan, Nicki

From: Oefinger, Mark
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2011 6:15 PM
To: Bresnyan, Nicki
Subject: FW: Facility Use Information

FYI

From: Oefinger, Mark
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2011 6:14 PM
To: 'LeBlanc, Jean-Paul'
Subject: RE: Facility Use Information

Hi Jean-Paul – I don't believe West Side would be available under any scenarios that are currently being considered by the BOE/Town. Mark

---

From: LeBlanc, Jean-Paul [mailto:jleblanc@learn.k12.ct.us]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2011 6:07 PM
To: Oefinger, Mark
Subject: Facility Use Information

Hi Mark,

I thought an update had been provided on our site visits to the two vacated Groton schools (Groton Heights and Noank) for potential use for our DL&AA program. We have reviewed those locations and although both carry potential the program does not support a potential move and construction project or renovation expense. We had hoped to grow the program however funding and district transportation expenses resulted in a number of students withdrawing and the numbers have remained at about 80 students. At the moment the current location is supporting the program and the program has adapted to it therefore the plan is to stay as is.

We have heard about the potential closing of the school located just up the street from the MarSci facility and I can imagine our need for a supplemental location for program expansion, like a second campus since there is no means of expanding the MarSci facility. We have more than 400 applications for only 75 freshman seats and the open application process is not half complete. Everyone is chatting about expanding the program and the proximately of the West Side School has been noted. Does that look to be a reality on the table that could be added to the discussion table? Thanks.

Jean-Paul

Jean-Paul LeBlanc
Director Business/Finance
LEARN
44 Hatchetts Hill Road
Old Lyme, CT 06371
(860) 434-4800, extension 130
(860) 434-4820 (fax)

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc.

November 17, 2011

Dear Catherine Kolnaski,

I am writing this letter to the Town Council Subcommittee working on the repurposing of the Groton Heights Elementary School building. I am writing on behalf of The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc. located at 476 Thames Street in Groton. We are a non-profit child care and education program that has been operating in the City of Groton since 1983, first as YWCA and now incorporated separately as Riverfront. We officially would like to be considered in the repurposing discussions around the Groton Heights Elementary School building. Up until it closed, Riverfront used the outdoor space, gymnasium, and bathrooms as a licensed school age summer program each year serving up to 50 children from the town of Groton. We have requested to use the space after the closing of the school to continue our school age program as the need is so great, but the space is currently being used as storage. We are operating out of a small indoor space at Riverfront that allows us to only serve 17 total children.

We as a non-profit business do not have the financial strength to purchase the building, or pay to maintain the full building on our own. What we are requesting is that if the building stays in the control of the town or city, or if a partner agency takes over the building and is willing to share the usage of the space with Riverfront, we would like to be considered for the spaces we mentioned to run a licensed school age program for Riverfront for Groton families in the summer. We would also consider expanding that program to full year before and after school care if transportation of children could be provided by the schools to and from the site. The need in Groton for before and after care that is educational, safe and nurturing is very great. We feel we could work together with the City, Town or other agencies to the benefit of Groton's children and families if the Groton Heights site were made available.

As members of the Children First Groton table, and the Children First Groton City of Groton Neighborhood Group, we know that residents and businesses are interested in the usage of schools like Groton Heights for historic purposes, educational and care purposes and as community centers. We hope that these repurposing uses will be strongly considered as you move forward in your work to decide upon a final use of the school.

If you have any questions about our proposal, please feel free to contact myself or Kimberly Dole our Executive Director at 860-445-8151.
Sincerely,

Susan Corrice

Rec'd 11/21/11

APPENDIX E – Survey and Analysis

1. **Survey Form**
2. **Analysis of Data**

Groton Heights School Reuse Survey

The Groton Heights School Reuse Task Force has been charged by the Town Council with recommending a use for the former Groton Heights School property.

The Task Force is seeking opinions from neighbors of the school and others in the City and Town of Groton to help make this important decision.

This survey is completely ANONYMOUS. It is being given on-line and on a paper form. Please DO NOT complete the survey more than one time.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

1. Was a copy of this survey mailed to your home?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

2. Where is your primary residence?

- ◯ Groton Heights School neighborhood (within a few blocks)
- ◯ Elsewhere in City of Groton
- ◯ Elsewhere in Town of Groton
- ◯ NOT in the Town of Groton

3. Do you want the existing building to stay?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ No Opinion

Groton Heights School Reuse Survey

The two questions below ask you to PRIORITIZE your responses.

Please rate the choices in order of preference. Make only ONE SELECTION IN EACH COLUMN. Column numbers refer to First Choice (1), Second Choice (2), etc.

(NOTE: If you do not make a mark in a particular row, that means you do not favor that choice AT ALL.)

4. Who do you think should own and maintain the property?

	First Choice 1	2	3	4	5	Last Choice 6
Private Owner	○	○	○	○	○	○
State of Connecticut	○	○	○	○	○	○
City or Town of Groton	○	○	○	○	○	○
Non-Profit Organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
Church or Religious Organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
No Opinion	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

5. What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?

	First Choice 1	2	3	4	5	6	Last Choice 7
Government Use	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Educational Use	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recreational Use	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Church/Religious Use	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Professional Offices	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Residential Condominiums	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Residential Single Family Lots	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

6. Other Comments

GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL RE-USE SURVEY RESULTS.

Archie C. Swindell, Ph.D.
Quantitative Services, September 21, 2011

A survey of Groton, Connecticut, residents was administered between in January and February, 2011, to determine public opinion about the re-use of the Groton Heights School building and property. The survey was available on-line using SurveyMonkey.com® and on paper. About 24% of respondents completed the paper survey, the rest on computer.

Respondents were asked to complete the survey only one time. Multiple entries from a single ISP address were permitted, to accommodate more than one member of the same household, or to permit entry from a central computer facility (e.g., public library). Of surveys entered on-line, there were seven instances of more than one entry per web address (2-3 entries, and two sites with 6-7 entries). There was no evidence of consistency of multiple entries to suggest that the survey was "hacked" or results compromised.

Tables 1-5 give results of Questions 1-5 of the survey, both numbers of respondents and overall percents. The paper survey was mailed to households in the immediate vicinity of Groton Heights School. Fewer than 10% of respondents had their primary residence outside the Town of Groton, and several of those indicated in Comments that they own property and pay taxes in the Town. A large majority of respondents felt the building should be retained, not demolished.

Questions 4 and 5 asked respondents to score the possible choices, from First to Last, as to who should own and maintain the property, and what use would be best suited to it. Complete results are shown in Tables 4 and 5. In Tables 6 and 7, numbers of respondents selecting the indicated choice first or second on each of the questions are given. The percentages sum to 100% for each column. For example, 37.7% of respondents who live in the Groton Heights School neighborhood chose Education as their first or second choice for use of the property, an opinion that was similar (35.0%) for all Groton resident respondents (Table 6). The order of choices of usage are Education > Recreation > Residential Condominiums > Professional Offices > Residential Lots > Religious or Church Use. Similar information on choices on ownership are given in Table 7.

Of the 143 respondents, 57 offered written comments to questions of ownership, usage, or in general. Full text of comments are presented (Table 9), sorted according to the first choices of respondents, as coded in Table 8. Comments from each respondent are presented within the same row of the table, for the sake of interpretability.

Table 1.

Q1. Was a copy of this survey mailed to your home?	Number	Prevalence
	count	%
No	92	65.2
Yes	49	34.8
answered question	141	
skipped question	2	

Table 2.

Q2. Where is your primary residence?	Number	Prevalence
	count	%
Groton Heights School neighborhood (within a few blocks)	65	46.1
Elsewhere in City of Groton	39	27.7
Elsewhere in Town of Groton	25	17.7
NOT in the Town of Groton	12	8.5
answered question	141	
skipped question	2	

Table 3.

Q3. Do you want the existing building to stay?	Number	Prevalence
	count	%
Yes	115	81.6
No	10	7.1
No Opinion	16	11.3
answered question	141	
skipped question	2	

Table 4-1.

Q4. Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	Choice Number (counts)						Total Responses
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Skipped	
	count	count	count	count	count	count	count
Private Owner	40	8	10	3	16	17	94
State of Connecticut	9	15	21	17	15	13	90
City or Town of Groton	67	25	9	8	2	6	117
Non-Profit Organization	20	35	22	11	5	6	99
Church or Religious Organization	2	8	17	20	8	20	75
No Opinion	2	6	2	4	9	22	45
Comments							18
Total Responses	140	97	81	63	55	84	
						answered question	135
						skipped question	8

Table 4-2.

Q4. Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	Choice Number (percent of column)					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Skipped
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Private Owner	28.6	8.2	12.3	4.8	29.1	20.2
State of Connecticut	6.4	15.5	25.9	27.0	27.3	15.5
City or Town of Groton	47.9	25.8	11.1	12.7	3.6	7.1
Non-Profit Organization	14.3	36.1	27.2	17.5	9.1	7.1
Church or Religious Organization	1.4	8.2	21.0	31.7	14.5	23.8
No Opinion	1.4	6.2	2.5	6.3	16.4	26.2

Table 5-1.

Q5. What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Choice Number (counts)							Total Responses
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Last	
	counts	counts	counts	counts	counts	counts	counts	counts
Government Use	1	5	21	21	11	11	8	78
Educational Use	47	39	6	6	5	4	2	109
Recreational Use	38	34	19	9	6	4	4	114
Church/Religious Use	0	4	15	14	14	13	10	70
Professional Offices	12	13	19	14	13	7	5	83
Residential Condominiums	24	7	7	6	6	11	14	75
Residential Single Family Lots	5	9	5	3	6	11	28	67
Comments								25
Total Responses	127	111	92	73	61	61	71	
							answered question	132
							skipped question	11

Table 5-2.

Q5. What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Choice Number (percent of column)						
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Last
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Government Use	0.8	4.5	22.8	28.8	18.0	18.0	11.3
Educational Use	37.0	35.1	6.5	8.2	8.2	6.6	2.8
Recreational Use	29.9	30.6	20.7	12.3	9.8	6.6	5.6
Church/Religious Use	0.0	3.6	16.3	19.2	23.0	21.3	14.1
Professional Offices	9.4	11.7	20.7	19.2	21.3	11.5	7.0
Residential Condominiums	18.9	6.3	7.6	8.2	9.8	18.0	19.7
Residential Single Family Lots	3.9	8.1	5.4	4.1	9.8	18.0	39.4

Table 6. First or Second Choice of Use

Use	Primary Residence of Respondent				
	School N'hood	City of Groton	Town of Groton	All of Groton	Outside Groton
Education	40 37.7%	21 30.9%	14 35.0%	75 35.0%	9 81.8%
Recreation	32 30.2%	22 32.4%	11 27.5%	65 30.4%	5 45.5%
Residential Condos	13 12.3%	13 19.1%	4 10.0%	30 14.0%	1 9.1%
Prof. Offices	10 9.4%	7 10.3%	5 12.5%	22 10.3%	3 27.3%
Residential Lots	7 6.6%	3 4.4%	4 10.0%	14 6.5%	0 0.0%
Government	4 3.8%	0 0.0%	2 5.0%	6 2.8%	0 0.0%
Religious	0 0.0%	2 2.9%	0 0.0%	2 0.9%	2 18.2%

Table 7. First or Second Choice of Ownership

Preferred Owner	Primary Residence of Respondent				
	School N'hood	City of Groton	Town of Groton	All of Groton	Outside Groton
City or Town of Groton	44 39.3%	30 41.7%	9 24.3%	83 37.6%	8 40.0%
Non-Profit Organization	21 18.8%	19 26.4%	10 27.0%	50 22.6%	4 20.0%
Private Owner	21 18.8%	15 20.8%	9 24.3%	45 20.4%	2 10.0%
State of Connecticut	16 14.3%	1 1.4%	4 10.8%	21 9.5%	3 15.0%
Church or Religious Org.	10 8.9%	7 9.7%	5 13.5%	22 10.0%	3 15.0%

Table 8. Codes for Sorting Comments

Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	Code for Table 9
Private Owner	1
State of Connecticut	2
City or Town of Groton	3
Non-Profit Organization	4
Church or Religious Organization	5
What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	
Government Use	1
Educational Use	2
Recreational Use	3
Church/Religious Use	4
Professional Offices	5
Residential Condominiums	6
Residential Single Family Lots	7
Other	8

Table 9. Comments

First Choices		Comments on Ownership	Comments on Uses	
Owner	Uses	Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Other Comments
1	2	I know that Project Learn is interested and that would be a good solution.		I attended Groton Heights and love the historic building, but it will take a lot to maintain/upkeep and I think that Project Learn would be the most likely fit.
1	2			Florida resident with residences on Smith St. and Park Ave since 1952. 3 generations of Rabataille's attended GHS, hate to see demolished. Part-time resident, taxpayer.
1	6	mixed use, e.g. Subvets and offices		First priority should be to increase tax revenue
1	6	sell to private owner. residential property only.	1 or 2 could be swapped. looking for best plan. Residential only. NO LOW INCOME HOUSING	Quiet historic residential neighborhood and we want to keep it that way. Resident taxpayers deserve this.
1	6	revenue generating owner is first choice- City or Town don't need to be landlords.		Town should transfer ownership and limit impact to nearby residents and education budget
1	6	Whoever owns it must maintain it. Neither town or city should be a landlord.	small hotel/ B&B, any thing that will put it on the tax roll.	
1	6	Make it a tax paying property.	Government use by state as a park.	
1	8	sell it	anything except the Government!!!	Stop closing schools so you can build new ones! Stop spending! Lower taxes!! NO gov run preschools
1	6		I would rather see the building demolished before it is used by town, city or state govt.	Sell it or give it away, if necessary, to any developer that will use it to increase tax base
1	6		Only owner-occupied upscale condos or building lots. No low-income housing or public buildings. Increase tax base, vested interest in property. No B&GC.	
1	6			Does not want "disturbed" children in neighborhood.
1	6			it should be used in some manner that will generate tax income
2	1		Support for Fort Griswold or Groton history.	
2	2	State could take ownership, extend Ft. Griswold, historic/educational facility.	A welcome area to local historic features; museum for artifacts & text; coordinate local historical societies; advanced research; gymnasium	Auditorium for performances, expositions, lectures, workshops; Lawn area for picnics, art sales; add elevator for handicap access. School & grounds irreplaceable.
2	2			Complete control & maintained other town & city.
2	2			Would make a good visitors center for Fort Griswold

Table 9. Comments, continued

First Choices		Comments on Ownership	Comments on Uses	
Owner	Uses	Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Other Comments
2	3	BULIDING SHOULD BE USED FOR THE CHILDREN IN THS COMMUNITY!		
2	3			Parking and picnic area for Fort Griswold.
2	3			The GH school should absolutely NOT be used for private or religious purposes. That space is a prime location for a much needed social/educational space (in Groton City. It is very important that it not be restricted by religion, or private ownership. We have a vibrant neighborhood in this area and the Groton Heights school should be used for the greater good.
2	8		Complete removal and restore landscape.	
3	2	Town Probate Court / /Children's Rec Center / Town Social Center / Rent Rooms to Non-Profits		Building should be utilized by the City or Town of Groton only.
3	2		Support Bill family request to use property only for educational purposes.	1. place for youth (e.g. YMCA), 2. training place for police, firefighters, EMTs, 3. museum, extend Bill Lib. or Ft. Griswold.
3	2		Dedicate it to the arts/music	It would be a shame to tear down the original structure
3	2		Local history visitor center, research facility; accommodate local organizations.	Maintain historic building, ensure maintenance. Best use community-oriented, next best condos, successful elsewhere. Demolishing or ignoring historic and communal significance = tragic loss, waste.
3 3	2 2			Building stays. NOT used as any sort of residential property. Children's museum would be nice--. Center for teens. City needs a place for them to enjoy.
3	2			Do not favor use by non-profits unless there is a lot of money to restore and maintain the building. Use by Project LEARN would be ideal.
3	2			I used to work in the building when it was Groton Heights School. It is a beautiful building and it would be a shame to see it get sold to a private buyer who would have the rights to do what they wish with it. It is a historical building, a part of the neighborhood, and a part of the town of Groton. I would love to see it be put to good use - in a way that would allow the townspeople to enjoy it.
3	2			repeat entry of Florida, Rabataille

Table 9. Comments, continued

First Choices		Comments on Ownership	Comments on Uses	
Owner	Uses	Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Other Comments
3	2			The building appears to be sound, and should be reused!
3	2			The Groton Heights School and the existing building have been an important part of the Groton community for over a century. It holds a special place in the hearts of many residents. To demolish the building and to sell the property for profit would demonstrate that our history and our roots are unimportant. A building of that era is irreplaceable and should be restored and maintained properly. It should be used in a way that benefits the greater good of the Groton community as the building was intended when it was initially constructed.
3	2			This is a beautiful, well-built building. Anything built now would not be as good. We should do everything we can to preserve it.
3	2			This is a vital piece of property sandwiched between two historical landmarks. Groton should make all efforts to keep this property and blend it's use with the two neighboring properties.
3	3	Community Center / Boys & Girls Club	Community Center / Boys & Girls Club	Community Center / Boys & Girls Club
3	3	Youth or Health Community Center	Youth or Health Community Health Center	
3	3		why can't we develop it into a building for community lessons & fitness?	no way we need more condominiums
3	3		Tear down and extend park.	
3	3		I would want school to used for community purposes only	
3	3			Consider community rec dept. with community activities like Friday night dances, events for all ages.
3	3			Fenced dog park nice to install in the playground area.
3	3			The city of Groton needs some type of place where children can go and do things. Sacred Heart School needs gym time for basketball and if there was a recreational place that offered to rent the basketball court this would be very helpful. Also my kids need a place to go to have fun as we are not military and don't have a place that the kids can go like a recreational center
3	3			The worst use would be condominiums, residential single family homes, or any option that would require demolishing the building and building something else. Groton Heights is quickly losing its identity/charm of old houses with character.

Table 9. Comments, continued

First Choices		Comments on Ownership	Comments on Uses	
Owner	Uses	Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Other Comments
3	3			Would be nice to use it for Groton City Parks& Rec. for use as an all day recreation center for adults as well as children.
3	5	Conference Rooms for public use		
3	7		A homeless shelter for families would be a good item to have in the city.	
3	8		Board of Education Offices	move Board of Ed and sell Flanders Rd property
3	8		Any use that retains the look and feel of the building and historic value to the City of Groton	
4	2		Non Profit offices? But mostly school or city recreation.	This building should be saved as it would be a waste to raze it. DO NOT WANT residential lots.
4	2		community arts/after school program; music, fine art, theatre, etc.	
4	2			As a proud graduate of Groton Heights, class of 1964, I would like to see it used again as an after school place or even as a senior center. I did not agree with the closing of the school as Groton effectively destroyed an icon. If the school is kept for educational use, please consider naming the rooms after former GH teachers such as Mr. John "Jack" Thompson and Mrs. Mary Wilson. Connecting the use of the building to the Bill library would be great, too. Please keep the neighbors and former grads informed. Have you thought about forming an alumni association that could help fundraise for the building? Are any of you GH grads? Only a grad could know how much that school meant to those of us who attended the school.
4	3			Boys and Girls club or YMCA type of center
4	6	LEARN being the non-profit or sell it and turn it into beautiful apartments or condos and make some money off of it and tax dollars as well.		Beautiful building, historic, save it and use it for the uses previously stated. We have too many unused schools in town. Those used by Park and Rec are dirty and unsightly and I do not think we need more of that. .Land around these unused buildings could be turned into garden plots like over by human services and either raised for private use or non-profit groups could raise and donate/use the produce.
4	8	Boys and Girls Club	Youth activities	
7	2	Magnet or private school		Find use for land in front of building. Provide land to Bill Memorial Library

Table 9. Comments, continued

First Choices		Comments on Ownership	Comments on Uses	
Owner	Uses	Who do you think should own and maintain the property?	What uses do you think would be best suited to the property?	Other Comments
7	2			I have always believed that Mr. Bill wanted to leave the property for EDUCATION!! I hope lawyers won't be deceitful and work it so that it is used for something else. Shame on the board for closing it in the first place.
7	8	How about an adult education center	an adult education center	How about "The City of Groton, Adult Education Center"
7	8	1. Friends of Fort Griswold	1. Museum for excess artifacts of Fort Griswold and other Groton related historical items	I thought the Bill family stipulated the building couldn't be torn down or used for commercial purposes!!!!

APPENDIX F – Matrix of Possible Reuses

Groton Heights Reuse Committee
Information Matrix

	No Action	Raze			Sell Building		Lease Building	
		Keep Property	Sell Property		Commercial	Residential	Commercial	Community
Possibilities		Park	Subdivide for homes	Professional office building.	New owner to renovate for professional or commercial use.	New owner to renovate for multifamily use.	Professional office building	Schools Ex. LEARN, church, multiuse for various charitable organizations .
Impact on immediate area	Potential for building to become eye sore.	1. Improve quality of life by having park in neighborhood.	1. Increase in population density. 2. Change in character of neighborhood.	1. Increase in day traffic. 2. Change in character of the neighborhood.	1. Increase in day traffic. 2. Change in character of the neighborhood.	1. Increase in population density. 2. Change in character of the neighborhood.	1. Increase in day traffic. 2. Change in character of the neighborhood.	1. Increase in day traffic
Financial impact for town	1. Continued cost of maintenance of building	1. Cost to town for demolition. 2. Cost to town for building park. 3. Cost of Maintenance.	1. Sell as is, cost avoidance. 2. Increase in tax revenue. 3. Increase in city services. 4. Increase in student population.	1. Sell as is, cost avoidance. 2. Increase in tax revenue. 3. Increase in city services.	1. Increase in tax revenue. 2. Income from sale. 3. Cost avoidance.	1. Increase in tax revenue. 2. Income from sale. 3. Cost avoidance	1. Tax revenue. 2. Town government would prefer NOT being a landlord. 3. Avoid cost of maintenance	1. No taxes? 2. Town government would prefer NOT being a landlord. 3. Avoid cost of maintenance
Issues	1. Security issues.	1. Security 2. Maintenance	1. Financially responsible developer.	1. Financially responsible developer.	1. Financially responsible developer.	1. Financially responsible developer.	1. Financially responsible developer.	1. Organization(s) would have to demonstrate financial capabilities.
Zoning Restrictions	NA	No zoning change	No zoning change	Zone change	Zone Change - possible historic reuse amendment.	Zone Change - possible historic reuse amendment.	Zone Change - possible historic reuse amendment.	1a. School - no zoning change 1b. Church and other groups - special permit.
Course of Action to make decision possible.	NA		1. Subdivision zoning approval.	1. Preapproval prior to attracting developer.	1. Zoning change before marketing. 2. Town Council and RTM approval. 3. 8-24 planning referral.	1. Zoning change before marketing. 2. Town Council and RTM approval. 3. 8-24 planning referral.	1. Zoning change before marketing. 2. Town Council and RTM approval	
Groton Residents Survey*	NA	*Survey indicates park as second choice, public would prefer to keep building.	*Survey indicates this as fifth choice, public would prefer to keep building.	*Survey indicates this as fourth choice, public would prefer to keep building.	*Survey indicates commercial offices as fourth choice.	*Survey indicates condominiums as third choice.	*Survey indicates commercial offices as fourth choice.	*Survey indicates: School - first choice. Church - sixth choice. Multiuse charitable organizations - not included in survey.

*Survey indicated that the order of choices of usage are Education (1), Recreation (2), Residential Condominiums (3), Professional Offices (4), Residential Lots (5), Religious or Church use (6)

Final Version - 12/5/2011 - submitted by Mary Elaine Kelly

APPENDIX G - Minutes

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Town Manager Mark Oefinger followed by introduction of members and staff.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Mary Kelly, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney.
Members absent were Nancy Barnhart, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart and Catherine Kolnaski.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Public Works Director Gary Schneider and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

Two reports prepared by the Town of Groton Public Works Department were distributed: "Groton Heights Elementary Schools Building and Site Analysis" and Groton Heights Elementary School Supplementary Information."

II. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Organizational meeting
a. Purpose of Committee
Mr. Oefinger identified that the purpose of the task force is to make a recommendation to the Town Council for use of the Groton Heights School building.
b. Membership
Membership is specified in the Town Council resolution which established the task force.
c. Meeting Schedule
By consensus, the meeting schedule was established as every Monday at 5:30 p.m.
Mr. Oefinger noted that the task should probably be completed within three to four months and that unnecessary meetings can be canceled. He cautioned that any re-use of the school will probably require action by the City Planning & Zoning Commission and that any public use would require extensive changes, since the building is not handicapped accessible. The presence of lead and asbestos will also be an issue. He added that interest in the building has been expressed by developers, non-profit organizations, and the State. Neither the Town nor the City has any interest in the site.
Mr. Peruzzotti added that the cost for bringing the building up to code in the areas of fire, safety and handicapped accessibility is estimated at $12 million.
2. Schedule a Walking Tour of Groton Heights School
By consensus, a tour of the building was set for Monday October 25, 2010 at 5:00 p.m..
3. Other
Mr. Schneider informed the members that electricity is on and the boiler is working. Minimum heating of the building consumes about 7,200 gallons of fuel at a cost of approximately $20,000 per year. He added that there has been some minor vandalism; this is addressed immediately by Town staff, as are roof leaks and other minor repairs in order to keep the building stable.
Mr. Schneider reviewed the Building Site Analysis, including boundaries and ownership, adding that one parcel is owned by the Bill Memorial Library and noting the existence of a "paper street."
The Supplementary Information was also reviewed including a 2009 appraisal which valued the property at $489,000. Asbestos and lead paint reports were reviewed, and it was noted that all playground equipment has been removed with the exception of two basketball hoops.
Mr. Schneider added that the building is "in ok shape" and that minimum maintenance continues to be preformed. He knows of no hazardous material buried on the site.

The meeting schedule of Mondays at 5:30 p.m. and the building tour on October 25 at 5:00 p.m. were confirmed. Election of a chairman was postponed to a future meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Bill Hart, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Members absent were Nancy Barnhart, Catherine Kolnaski and Dana Parfitt.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham, Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds for Education Wes Greenleaf, Mayor Jim Streeter, RTM Representative Archie Swindell, Boys & Girls Clubs representatives Paul Duarte and Kim Winkelman and Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center representative Kathy Green.

II. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Walking Tour of Groton Heights School
After introductions, Mr. Schneider began the tour by showing the members the boundaries of the school property as well as the location of "Library Street" and property owned by the Bill Memorial Library.

After the tour of the building, Ms. Winkelman noted that the Boys & Girls Clubs and the Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center are interested in the facility.
Mr. Oefinger explained the function of the committee and suggested that the interested parties contact the Town Council. Mayor Streeter recommended that a letter of interest be submitted to the committee.
The Town Manager stated that at this time, the Town has no interest in keeping or maintaining the property. Interest has been expressed by developers, church groups and a doctor's office. He added that the Town was hoping for interest by community groups, but cautioned that any re-use would almost certainly require changes to City zoning regulations.

2. Approval of Meeting Schedule
A motion to approve the proposed meeting schedule was made by Ms. Downs, seconded by Ms. Galbraith.
A motion to amend by eliminating the November 1 and December 27 meetings was made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Ms. Downs.
The vote on the meeting schedule as amended carried unanimously. (Amended schedule is attached.)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF October 18, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2010 was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Ms. Kelly.
Mr. Peruzzotti noted that he misspoke when he cited $12 million as the estimated figure for bringing the building up to code. The correct figure for the 2003 estimate is $6 million, which includes bringing the facility up to code in the areas of fire and safety, but does not include handicapped accessibility.
(No correction will be made to the minutes, since they contain an accurate reflection of what was said, although the actual information was incorrect.)
The vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

IV. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES
Mayor Streeter noted that Nancy Barnhart is unable to attend meetings on Mondays and is therefore will not be serving on the task force. Mr. Streeter appointed Archie Swindell to serve in her place.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Ms. Kelly and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Bill Hart, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski, Dana Parfitt, Archie Swindell, and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent was Bob Peruzzotti.
Also present were Public Works Director Gary Schneider and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
This item was addressed later in the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF October 25, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Ganacoplos, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Building and Site Analysis
Mr. Schneider answered members' questions about the cost of oil and utilities, square footage, the electrical system, bathrooms, roof leaks, the general condition of the building, and the possibility of providing handicapped access. He will check on what modifications are necessary to bring the building up to code.
The members discussed possible problems that may arise from the fact that the building was deeded to the Town "for educational purposes." Also discussed was the possibility that the area in front of the building might be split into building lots. City zoning requirements for "flag lots" were discussed, but there was uncertainty as to what those requirements are.
2. Identification of Potential Reuses
Members suggested various uses for the property, including

- Town/City uses
- Corporate uses (meeting rooms, displays, presentations) by EB, Pfizer, SubBase
- Visitors' center
- Non-profit uses by Boys & Girls Clubs and others
- Educational uses by magnet or charter schools or universities
- State uses (extension of Monument House Museum)
- Residential uses (development as apartments or condominiums)
- Business/medical uses (doctor's offices)
- Mixed uses

The possibility of the Town retaining ownership and leasing out space was discussed. It was noted that the State should probably be contacted to determine whether they would have an interest in acquiring the property, although concern was expressed about the ability of the State or non-profits to restore and maintain the building.
3. City Zoning Considerations
Zoning issues were discussed; it was noted that most uses would require either a special permit or a variance. A copy of Sections 2.41 and 2.42 of the City Zoning Regulations (R-5.2 Permitted Uses and Special Permit Uses) was distributed by Ms. Kelly who also serves on the City Planning & Zoning Commission.
4. Other
Members discussed how to determine what individuals or organizations may have an interest in the property. Possible contacts cited were:

- Association of Realtors
- Chamber of Commerce
- Groton Business Association
- Contractors/developers (as identified by the Town Manager as having expressed interest)
- State of CT Economic Development
- Town of Groton Economic Development
- Project LEARN

Also discussed was the possibility of either a press release or a public survey to solicit ideas for uses for the property. Ms. Galbraith noted that a survey may be able to utilize the same account as the survey for the Thames Street rehabilitation project.

Suggestions for next week's meeting agenda included identification of questions to include on a possible survey; evaluation and refinement of the committee's list of possible uses; identification by the Town Manager of parties who have expressed interest in the property; identification of individuals or organizations to bring in to present ideas for use of the property.

The committee recognized Mike Zieminski, 121 Mitchell Street, who noted that he would prefer that the Groton Heights property be used for a public purpose, preferably a school. He cited the property's location among other public buildings, adding that private use would change the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Zieminski cautioned the committee against issuing any notice resembling a request for proposals.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Ms. Kelly and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Catherine Kolnaski, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Dana Parfitt and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Public Works Director Gary Schneider and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
1. Letter from Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center
Members discussed a letter from Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center and Boys & Girls Club expressing interest in use of the building. The letter does not specify whether the organizations wish to buy or lease, but Mr. Oefinger noted that the Town has no interest in being a landlord.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 8, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Ms. Galbraith and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Evaluation and Refinement of Potential Uses
Mr. Oefinger reported that the Town has had inquiries about the property from the Islamic Center, the Born Again Evangelistic Outreach Ministry, the DEP, and a local architect looking for medical office space for a client. In 2007-2008, the Town received several unsolicited calls about possible conversion to condominiums. The Town Manager suggested two approaches to the reuse issue: 1.solicitation of ideas from outside sources and 2. identification of the committee's preferences for reuse with consideration given to the wishes of neighbors. He recommends the second approach, adding that it is probably advisable to present any agreed-upon use to the City Planning & Zoning Commission for approval before any recommendation to the Council, since most uses would require a change to Zoning Regulations.
Mr. Schneider distributed a chart titled "Order of Options to be Established by Committee" which includes reuse possibilities identified at previous meetings.
It was decided that the DEP, the CT Department of Economic Development, the City of Groton, and various educational institutions, including Project LEARN, UConn, and the University of New Haven, should be approached to determine their interest in the property. Initial contact may consist of a simple phone call to be followed up by a formal letter.

2. Identification/Survey of Community Interest
Content and delivery method of a possible survey were discussed, as was the area to be covered. It was decided that Ms. Downs will draft a survey in the form of a letter to be mailed to residents of the area surrounding the school (bounded by Broad Street, Mitchell Street, Baker Avenue and Thames Street). The draft survey, which will ask residents to indicate their preferences from among the committee's identified uses, will be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Other
Members decided that due to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, the November 22 meeting will be canceled.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Catherine Kolnaski, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Dana Parfitt and Ralph Whitney.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 15, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Peruzzotti, and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Draft Survey of Community Interest in the Property
Mr. Swindell feels that uses outlined in the survey should be more general and noted that certain uses are not possible. He suggested that it is too soon for a survey and that the committee should be responding to proposals.
Ms. Galbraith responded that she would like to get a sense of what the neighbors would prefer.
Mr. Peruzzotti has contacted Project LEARN; they are not interested in the property at this time.
There was consensus to remove the specific uses in parentheses; "Residential use" will be eliminated and the three examples will become separate categories.
Mr. Swindell mentioned a suggestion made by Ken McBride that the building be used by a consortium of non-profit organizations. This raises the question of who would own and maintain the building under this scenario.
The desirability of surveying the entire Town was discussed, as was the possibility of including questions about preferences for keeping the existing building and public or private ownership.
It was noted that this survey will not be the only opportunity for public input.
Ms. Bridgham reported that she and Mr. Schneider have contacted DEP, UNH and UConn to determine their interest. UNH has just signed a contract with Mitchell College and is not interested in the property at this time. UConn would like more information. It was decided that Ms. Bridgham will send a letter, based on a draft distributed to the members, to UConn and DEP along with the Building and Site Analysis.
Ms. Bridgham noted that in response to a question about the possibility of subdividing the property, the Town engineer has prepared a map showing a subdivision of nine lots. The map was distributed to the members.
Mr. Oefinger suggested approaching the Bill Memorial Library board about the possibility of trading lots 8 and 9 for Tract V which is now owned by the library.
It was suggested that once the survey is distributed, information on the property, including the Building and Site Analysis and the Supplementary Information, should be available at City Hall, Town Hall and the library.
Mr. Oefinger noted that he will post this information on the Town's web site. He added that two church groups have expressed interest in the property.
Mr. Swindell would like to see an economic analysis showing taxes generated by each use.
Mr. Oefinger responded that six to eight residential condominiums would probably generate the most in taxes.
It was decided that the next agenda should include discussion of the revised survey and the area to be included.
Members discussed the value of a visitors' center or a small business incubator. The Town Manager will contact UConn to determine if there is any interest in the incubator concept.
The members recognized Betsy Gibson, who suggested that the survey should include a larger area of the City than is currently proposed.
Mr. Oefinger offered to provide a map at the next meeting so that this can be discussed.
There was discussion of putting the survey on-line. Ms. Downs will send the revised survey to Mr. Swindell who will put together an on-line survey.

2. Other
Members decided that due to scheduling conflicts, the December 6 meeting will be canceled. The next meeting will be held on December 13.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Ms. Galbraith and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski, Archie Swindell and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt and Bob Peruzzotti.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
Robert Price, 19 Park Avenue, suggested that if Boys & Girls Clubs is allowed to take over the school, an impact study should be done. He is concerned with maintaining the character of the neighborhood.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 29, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Downs. The motion carried 4 in favor, 3 abstentions. (Abstaining: Ganacoplos, Kelly, Whitney.)

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Revised Draft Survey of Community Interest in the Property
Mr. Swindell passed around the draft survey that he adapted for on-line use. Members discussed how notice of the survey would be given. Public notice can be placed in the Groton Times.
Ms. Kelly suggested that a category be added for recreational use.
There was consensus to allow citizens to complete the survey on-line as well as by mail. The form will be identical for both. Mr. Swindell will set up a special survey to be accessed on public terminals at the Bill Memorial Library to allow multiple responses from the same pc.
Mr. Swindell reported that he has communicated with Dr. Seccombe at Project LEARN who noted that an existing magnet school in Waterford will be losing its location and will be looking for a new site. Groton Heights seems to be the correct size for the school which serves approximately two hundred elementary school students. Wes Greenleaf will be contacted to work with the State to investigate this issue. Mr. Oefinger noted that putting a magnet school in Groton Heights may involve a five percent contribution not be covered by the State.
Members discussed the timing of the survey; it was agreed that it should be mailed after the holidays. The accompanying letter should indicate that the survey may be completed on-line and should be mailed back within one month. Links to the survey will be provided on both the City and Town web sites.
Mr. Price requested that the survey be mailed to the immediate neighbors. He added that he would like the Town to receive as much as possible for the property, noting that he favors high-end condos, since this would guarantee that the property would be well-maintained.
Mr. Oefinger addressed Mr. Price's questions about the size and value of the property.

2. Areas to be Covered by the Survey
Members discussed whether the mailing area should be identified by street or be limited to properties lying within a certain distance of the school.
A motion was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kelly to mail the survey to owners of properties within five hundred feet of the Groton Heights property line. The motion carried unanimously.
A motion to make the survey available on-line was made by Mr. Swindell, seconded by Ms. Galbraith. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Other
It was agreed that items for next week's agenda should include the revised survey, the revised letter, a review of the list of properties to receive the survey by mail, and a report on possible interest in the property by Project LEARN.
Ms. Bridgham will be sending letters to UConn and the DEP this week to inquire about their interest in the property. There was consensus that a similar letter be sent to Project LEARN.

Mr. Price asked whether environmental studies had been done on the property, specifically to determine the presence of lead and asbestos.

Mr. Oefinger responded that there are no recent studies and that abatement would likely be the responsibility of the new owner.
Mr. Whitney questioned whether the elimination of the 40' right of way ("Library Street") would make the property easier to sell.
Mr. Oefinger replied that this is probably not a concern, but that it would depend on the specific use of the property.
It was noted that the subject of a possible land-swap with the library will be broached at the library's January board meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM

In the absence of Chair Catherine Kolnaski, the meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Task Force member Janet Downs.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Bill Hart, Catherine Kolnaski, Dana Parfitt and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF December 13, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Revised Survey and Potential Distribution List
The letter has been revised to include several suggestions made at the last meeting. In addition, it was suggested by Ms. Kelly that an option should be included for those who do not receive a letter and would like to participate in the survey, but choose not to do it on-line. Mr. Oefinger noted that a phone number be included so that individuals can complete the survey over the phone. The letter will be revised to include this suggestion.

Mr. Whitney inquired why the survey includes a question about Town or City ownership of the property when both have indicated that they have no interest in owning the property.
Mr. Oefinger responded that the survey is intended to gauge the preferences of neighborhood residents and that some may have strong feelings about Town or City ownership of the property.

Members reviewed the proposed distribution list for the letter which includes 137 parcels. Mr. Oefinger explained how the list was compiled.

2. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property
Ms. Bridgham indicated that there have been no responses to letters sent to UConn and DEP and that a letter has not yet been sent to Project LEARN.
Mr. Oefinger reported that on December 22, Project LEARN will be touring both Groton Heights and Noank Schools. They are looking for both office space and a new site for the multilingual magnet school now located in Waterford. He speculated that a decision may need to be made soon and that Groton Heights would probably be the more desirable location. Should Groton Heights prove suitable, the Town may retain the land and offer a long-term lease. He added that there would be significant costs to the tenant for upgrading the building.

3. Other
The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for January 3, 2011.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Peruzzotti and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti, Archie Swindell and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent was Peter Ganacoplos.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
Several members reported that they had inquiries about the tour of the school that was conducted by the Town Manager for Project LEARN. The Mystic River Press and Groton Patch have both expressed interest in the progress of the task force.
Mr. Oefinger reported that at the tour, he got the impression that LEARN officials would prefer Groton Heights to Noank School because of the condition of the building and the proximity to I-95. He believes that they may have two years left on their current location in Waterford, but that due to heating problems, they may be interested in moving earlier. LEARN has scheduled a meeting for January 4, 2011, and Mr. Oefinger has asked for any information to be relayed to him as soon as possible. He added that the program consists of middle school grades 6-8. The Town Manager described how LEARN obtains funding for its magnet schools. He added that if they decide that Groton Heights is suitable, the Town would probably retain ownership and enter into a long-term lease with LEARN in an arrangement similar to the Eastern Point School lease. He noted that LEARN's time-line should be clearer after tomorrow's meeting and added that the State will certainly have input into any decision that is made.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF December 20, 2010
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Peruzzotti and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Review of Revised Letter
It was agreed that the survey will be available on-line on January 10, 2011. Printed copies of the survey will be mailed to neighborhood residents on the same day. The deadline for returning the survey will be revised to February 10, 2011 and the letter will indicate that the survey will be available at the Bill Memorial Library. Mr. Swindell will contact BML Director Hali Keeler to make those arrangements.

2. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property
No response to the task force's letter has been received from either UConn or DEP. It was noted that a new commissioner will be taking over at the DEP and that it may be worthwhile sending a new letter once new leadership is in place.

3. Other
Ms. Bridgham reported that Public Works Director Gary Schneider has been contacted by the Groton City Police Department with a request to use the Groton Heights building for a three-day training exercise in February. The property was used for a similar exercise last year with no problems.
Since the request falls outside the area of responsibility of the task force, Mr. Oefinger will contact Mr. Schneider about this issue.
Mr. Hart reported that he has been questioned about a rumored offer from the Boys and Girls Club to buy the property. Mr. Oefinger responded that he knows of no such offer.
It was decided that since the task force needs the results of the survey to proceed, the next meeting will be scheduled for February 7, 2011. The agenda will include an update on the survey response.
At the suggestion of Ms. Galbraith, Mr. Oefinger agreed that he will make arrangements for a press release regarding the survey to appear in the Groton Times.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Peruzzotti, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
Chairman Catherine Kolnaski called the members' attention to a letter from Audrey Heard, 94 Smith Street, which was included in the agenda packet for this meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF January 3, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property
a. Letter from University of Connecticut Dated January 14, 2011
Mr. Oefinger noted that the above letter indicates that UConn has no interest in the property at this time.
2. Review of Survey Responses
a. Summary of Responses Received by Mail
The Town Manager reported that approximately 130 surveys were mailed to neighboring property owners and nineteen responses were received by mail with five returned as undeliverable. He summarized the results of these nineteen responses; most of the nineteen live in the immediate neighborhood; they would like the building to stay and would prefer public ownership of the property. Education and recreation are the preferred uses, followed by professional offices or condos.
Ms. Downs added that one survey was received over the phone from a resident of the neighborhood who would like the building to stay and be transferred to private ownership for use as residential condos.
Ms. Kelly voiced her concern that if further responses are not received, the survey results will be skewed due to the fact that all responders are immediate neighbors.
Mr. Oefinger noted that the survey was posted on both the Town and City web sites, a notice appeared on Channel 2, and it was announced at Town Council meetings. No ad was placed in the newspaper.
The Town Manager reported that the architect and the project manager for Project LEARN are collecting information on costs, etc. associated with using Groton Heights, but added that it may be some time before a decision is made.
b. On-line Responses
Mr. Swindell has the results from the on-line survey, but is not present tonight.
c. Other
Members discussed the letter from Audrey Heard which made many of the same suggestions already considered by the committee, including use by various local organizations. Mr. Oefinger recommended that the committee consult with some of these groups to see if a group or coalition of groups may have the interest and the means to take over the property. He added that Project LEARN has a good chance for funding, and that if they do take over the property, they may make space available to local organizations.
Mr. Oefinger reminded the members that the survey runs until the end of the week. He added that public reaction may be different after a proposal is actually made.
3. Other
Ms. Downs reported that the possibility of a land swap with the Bill Memorial Library was raised at the library's Board meeting in late January, although no formal response was given by the Board.
The members discussed the possible disposition of the various parcels that make up the property, including "Library Street."
In light of the public's preference for public ownership of the property, Mr. Whitney expressed concern that the State is not taking good care of the properties it already owns, and this fact should be considered before the property is turned over to the State.

Mr. Oefinger suggested that the committee should analyze the rest of the survey results and put together some preliminary recommendations. He noted that the worst situation would be for the property to sit vacant; the Town's maintenance costs amount to $50,000 to $60,000 per year. He added that the Project LEARN magnet school seems to be the preferred use and would have a minimal impact on the neighborhood. He described the arrangements between LEARN and the Town regarding the Eastern Point School property.

It was decided that the next meeting will be held on February 28, 20011. Agenda items will include on-line survey results; the Town Manager will try to get more information from Project LEARN, and preliminary recommendations can be compiled.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Whitney, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Catherine Kolnaski and Archie Swindell. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF February 7, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Responses to Solicitations of Interest in the Property
Mr. Oefinger had no responses to report.
2. Review of Survey Responses
Mr. Swindell distributed the results of the on-line survey which he closed out earlier in the day. There were 119 on-line responses as well as 21 by mail and three by phone.
Members reviewed the responses which will be compiled by Mr. Swindell and included in the minutes of the next meeting.
Mr. Oefinger answered questions raised by the members, noting that most uses would require a zoning change and that there are no significant deed restrictions on use of the property.
3. Information from Project LEARN
Project LEARN is still looking at the property for use as a magnet school, but is waiting to hear from the State about funding. They will probably not be able to give the Town an answer until May after the State deliberates on its budget. The governor is considering reducing the State match to 80 percent, which may cause difficulty.
It was decided that Mr. Oefinger should invite representatives from Project LEARN to report to the task force at the next meeting.
Ms. Kolnaski suggested that task force members might assist Project LEARN to obtain funding by contacting their State legislators. Mr. Oefinger replied that this issue will be brought up when the Town Council meets with Groton's State legislators on March 8.
4. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations for the Property
Members decided that before any recommendations can be made, the survey results must be analyzed and more information received from Project LEARN.
5. Continuation/Adoption of Meeting Schedule
There was agreement to wait to schedule further meetings until representatives of Project LEARN are able to attend, possibly March 21 or March 28.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Downs, seconded by Ms. Galbraith and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Mary Kelly, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
Mr. Oefinger noted that copies of a letter from DEP were sent with the agenda for this meeting. The letter states that DEP has no interest in acquiring the school building, but would be interested in acquiring the southwest portion of the property to incorporate into Fort Griswold.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review/Summary of Survey Responses
Mr. Swindell is compiling the responses from the survey and will send the results to Mr. Oefinger by the end of the week.
2. Project LEARN – Update
Both Mr. Oefinger and Ms. Galbraith have spoken with Jean-Paul LeBlanc from Project LEARN who assured them that there is still interest in acquiring the property. Mr. Oefinger added that LEARN is still looking for a new location for its Waterford school, but that construction of the magnet school at Eastern Point and uncertainty about State funding have delayed a decision on this issue. He believes that there is still money in the State budget for magnet schools and that it is probably worth waiting for LEARN to make a decision.
3. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations for the Property
Members decided that before any recommendations can be made, the survey results must be analyzed.
Mr. Oefinger noted that the Town Council has asked for an update which will be provided after the survey results are compiled. The update will also state that the task force is still waiting for a decision from Project LEARN. Ms. Galbraith added that at a previous meeting, the task force expressed a preference for investigating uses that would be consistent with current zoning before considering uses that would require a change.
Mr. Oefinger will provide an update to the Council at a future COW meeting.
Mr. Whitney suggested that the Town may want to get an estimate from a builder on the cost of converting the building to other uses.
Members discussed the fact that although the building is in excellent condition, a 2003 estimate put the cost of bringing it up to code at $6 million, excluding handicapped access.
4. Continuation/Adoption of Meeting Schedule
There was consensus to continue meeting on the first and third Mondays of each month through the end of the year with the next meeting on October 3, 2011.
5. Other: None.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Archie Swindell. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham, RTM Representative Dana Semeraro and Richard Semeraro.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Downs.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Ms. Kelly).

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review/Summary of Survey Responses
Mr. Swindell reviewed the responses, noting that there seems to be a clear preference for public ownership, although many of the comments indicate a desire to see taxes paid on the property. He cautioned that the survey does not represent a random sample and that a judgment must still be made about use of the property. A Project LEARN magnet school would clearly be preferred, but transportation is an issue with magnet schools.
Mr. Oefinger recommended that Project LEARN be invited to address the task force soon, after which a preliminary report should be made to the Town Council.
Alternatives were discussed including use of the property by police and fire departments, other schools and community groups. Also discussed were use as a visitors' center and sale to a private party.
Mr. Swindell suggested that it might be useful to put the property on the market to get an idea of its value.
Ms. Galbraith reminded the group that it would be desirable to make any zoning changes first in order to encourage acceptable uses.
Ms. Kelly suggested that the task force make a list of possible uses and the requirements for each use; the list could then be presented to the Town Council.
Mr. Oefinger confirmed that tax credits may be available, since the school is a historic building. He added that the Town adopted institutional re-use regulations in connection with Mystic Academy and suggested that the City may want to adopt similar regulations.
Mr. Oefinger has been approached about the property by a number of churches and by a group looking for a location for doctors' offices. He also believes that private developers would be interested. He concluded that the task force should get a time line from LEARN and then decide how to proceed.

2. Other
There was consensus to put City zoning regulations on the agenda for the next meeting and to invite City Planner Barbara Goodrich to attend that meeting.
It was decided that the October 17 meeting will be canceled, since Chairman Kolnaski is unavailable on that date. Project LEARN will be invited to address the group either at a special meeting on October 24 or at the regularly scheduled meeting on November 7. Barbara Goodrich will also be invited and discussion will include City zoning regulations and possible adoption of institutional re-use regulations.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Downs, seconded by Mr. Swindell and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham and City Planner Barbara Goodrich.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kelly.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried 5 in favor, 1 abstention (Mr. Whitney).

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Zoning with City Planner Barbara Goodrich
Ms. Goodrich reviewed the property's current R5.2 zoning which allows single family or duplex residential units, parks and playgrounds, as well as a few non-residential uses. Uses requiring a special permit include churches, vocational training and day-care centers, and would typically have a greater impact on the neighborhood. She reviewed the permitting process, noting that if the committee prefers a non-permitted use, it should pursue a zone change that favors that use prior to marketing the property. Ms. Goodrich described the processes for obtaining a variance and for changing the Zoning Regulations by map or text amendment.
Mr. Oefinger reviewed the Historic/Institutional Re-use amendment to the Town Zoning Regulations adopted in 1995 to allow re-use of Mystic Academy. He added that Project LEARN continues to express interest in the property, but has not been willing to address the committee. Some time ago, the Town was approached by groups interested in using the building variously for condominiums, medical offices and a religious center. Remediation of the site would probably be required for any use that would make modifications to the building.

2. Development of Recommendation to Town Council
Mr. Oefinger suggested that the committee start putting together its recommendations, adding that it could even start the application process with Planning & Zoning for a Historic/Institutional Re-use amendment if it recommends selling the property to a developer.
The committee would prefer an educational use for the property; almost any other use would require a zone change. Survey results indicate that the public wants to keep the building, but the committee feels that a new owner should be required to demonstrate the financial capacity to maintain the structure.
Use by police, fire and emergency services groups was discussed, as was a previously discussed "land swap" with the Bill Memorial Library. The committee could also recommend no action on the property for the time being due to the difficulties with the economy. Also discussed was the possibility of attracting a developer who could take advantage of historic restoration tax credits.

3. Other
The next meeting will be held on November 21, 2011. The committee will compile the survey results, map out the various scenarios, enumerate possible zoning changes, and set forth its recommendations.
Ms. Goodrich offered to provide flip charts and other supplies for the meeting.
Ms. Kelly volunteered to work on a skeleton matrix to provide a structure for the group's recommendations.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

COMMITTEE REPORT
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Four members were present at 5:40 p.m.

Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Mary Kelly and Catherine Kolnaski. No quorum was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti, Archie Swindell and Ralph Whitney.
Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

Town Manager Oefinger reported that he has contacted Project LEARN twice since the last committee meeting, but has received no response.

Despite the lack of a quorum, the members decided to review scenarios and enter data on the "Raze Section" of the information matrix provided by committee member Mary Kelly. (This section, including the data entered by the committee, is attached.)

The next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

The members disbanded at 6:23 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

December 5, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski, Archie Swindell and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, and Bob Peruzzotti.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

Responding to a question from Mr. Swindell, Town Manager Oefinger replied that he has made a number of calls to Jean-Paul LeBlanc at Project LEARN, but has received no return call. Mr. Swindell stated that he will call Mr. LeBlanc to try to determine LEARN's interest in the property.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 7, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Swindell.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Compilation of Survey Results
Mr. Oefinger noted that the task force has received a summary of the survey results from Mr. Swindell. These will probably be an addendum to the final report to the Town Council.
2. Review of Scenarios
The members reviewed possible scenarios and entered data in the information matrix provided by Ms. Kelly. The matrix covers three possibilities: raze, lease and sell. Ms. Kelly will compile the results in the master matrix and distribute it to the members. Ms. Downs will put the results in the form of a narrative to be reviewed at the next meeting. The survey summary, master matrix and narrative will then be used to formulate the task force's recommendations to the Town Council.
3. Possible Zone Changes
This item was included under the review of scenarios.
4. Recommendations to Town Council
The formal recommendations of the task force will be prepared at a future meeting.
5. Other
There was consensus that the next meeting will be a special meeting on Monday January 9, 2012.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Downs, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham.

The Town Manager received emails from Dana Parfitt and Bob Peruzzotti stating that they are unable to attend Monday meetings. Ms. Parfitt noted her intention to resign from the committee.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
1. Letter from Riverfront Children's Center Inc. Dated 11/17/11
In a letter to Chair Catherine Kolnaski, the Riverfront Children's Center expressed interest in utilizing space at Groton Heights.
2. E-Mail from LEARN Dated 12/8/11
The email from Jean-Paul LeBlanc to the Town Manager made it clear that Project LEARN is not interested in the property at this time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2011
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kelly.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Scenarios
The members reviewed the Narrative of Possible Uses prepared by Ms. Downs. Agreed upon changes to the content and organization of the material will be made and presented at the next meeting.
Continued use of the building for fire and police training was discussed. Ms. Galbraith will make some calls to determine the interest in continuing to use the property for this purpose. The possibility of charging for this use was discussed briefly.
2. Recommendations to Town Council
Mr. Oefinger suggested that the committee might make the following recommendations to the Town Council: explore educational uses for the property; make the zoning changes necessary to support desirable uses, then market the property; retain the property until the economy improves, then put it on the market.
Consideration should be given to whether the property should be sold or remain a community asset.
A possible land swap with the Bill Memorial Library was discussed, as was the appraised value of $400,000 to $500,000.
Ms. Kelly suggested that if a decision is made to market the property, the Town could waive a portion of the taxes if the new owner agrees to renovate a portion of the building and make it available for use by non-profit and community organizations. The tax break and potential rental fees could make the property more attractive to buyers. It was noted that this use would require a zone change.
Another recommendation would be that the Town keep the property; it could apply for grants to renovate the building and rent out the space to police, non-profits and community groups.
Mr. Oefinger noted that a reasonable next step might be a solicitation of interest in the property for specific acceptable uses.
Ms. Downs will reduce the above recommendations to writing for the next meeting.

3. Other
There was consensus that the next meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday January 23, 2012 in Room C8 at the City Municipal Building.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM C8

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2012
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kelly.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Scenarios
Ms. Galbraith reviewed current use of the building by local firefighters, police and LEPC.
Ms. Kelly raised a concern about the acceptable level of change to the character of the neighborhood.
It was decided that demolishing the building or subdividing the property for residential lots would cause an unacceptable level of change. It would also be risky to sell the property without any restrictions on its use. It was agreed that the report will make clear that these three scenarios are not recommended by the task force.
2. Recommendations to Town Council
Members discussed recommending a historic/institutional reuse amendment.
Ms. Kelly feels that "mothballing" the building would be a mistake.
Mr. Oefinger responded that the building is not being abandoned; maintenance is being done, and any recommendation to "mothball" would not be for an indefinite period, but would most likely be until a specific use is found or the economy takes a favorable turn.
The Town Manager added that the recommendations could be two-fold. The first layer of recommendations could incorporate what has been learned as well as long-term goals for the property. A second series of recommendations would include what should be done with the property in the immediate future until those goals can be realized.
Further discussion centered around specific recommendations and incorporated elements of Ms. Downs' narrative as well as comments made by Ms. Galbraith. Recommendations in the report to the Town Council should include: seeking the necessary zone change, then marketing the property for professional offices or residential condominiums; marketing for educational use (no zone change required).
Ms. Downs will prepare a draft report to the Town Council for the next meeting.
3. Other
There was consensus that the next meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday February 6, 2012 in Council Chambers at the City Municipal Building.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Whitney, seconded by Ms. Downs and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL
Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Bill Hart, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Ralph Whitney. A quorum of members was present.
Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Archie Swindell.
Also present was Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 23, 2012
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Kelly.
Vote on approval of the minutes carried unanimously.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
1. Review of Draft Report to Town Council
Members reviewed the draft report and recommended several changes.
A motion to accept the report including the changes made at this meeting was made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Ms. Galbraith and so voted unanimously.
It was agreed that Ms. Downs will make the agreed upon changes and give the report to the Town Manager's office for reproduction and distribution to the Town Council. There was consensus that Ms. Downs should present the report at a future Committee of the Whole meeting, probably on February 28, 2012.
2. Other
The members agreed that there is no need for further meetings.

V. ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Whitney and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member