

Town of Princeton, Mass. – July 17, 2017 – 3:30 PM

Joint Meeting Minutes: Board of Selectmen –

Princeton Center Mgmt. Cmte.

At Princeton Center for inspection tour

BOS Chair Jon Fudeman, Richard Bisk, Edith Morgan plus TA Nina Nazarian

3:30 PM Jon F. opened meeting on 1st floor meeting room. Bruce Dean, Terry Thompson and Christine Nichols from the P.C. Mgmt. Cmte. and P.C. manager Linda Farineau in attendance. F.D. Dep. Chief Tim Kelly with Bldg. Insp. Rich Breagy led the tour and presentation with Phil Connors. Advisory Cmte. members present were Bill Lawton and Judy Dino. Also, several building tenants and Phil Grancewicz.

Rich B. previously reported his assessment of the building's condition and the problems are obvious and problematic—it doesn't meet building code or public safety requirements for an occupancy permit for its current uses. Any process for getting an (annual) occupancy permit would begin with the necessary testing—for mold, lead paint, asbestos, PCBs etc.—at a price approaching the cost of demolishing the building.

Tim K. described the fire alarm system as not connected and the hardware beyond repair. Emergency lighting was old and not working, exit signs were not lit and ancient smoke (heat sensor) alarms in ceilings, installed in the 1940s, were never maintained or tested. The handicap-access door seemed unusable, and whenever vehicles are parked, the perimeter of the building lacks the 18' width required for fire apparatus. He said he has sent letters outlining public safety issues and failures.

Rich noted that water has been penetrating the cedar shingled siding which is unlined, and there is discernable mold in attic and likely throughout exterior walls. Structural and support beams under roof are rusted out and daylight can be seen under eaves. Rodents, birds and bats have free access to attic and have been observed nesting. Bottom line: roof and siding not sound, and Phil C. mentioned the ongoing problem of significant ice-dam leaks.

The two inspectors pointed out an electrical panel closet with the alarm equipment, noting exposed wires tucked upwards. An alarm company in Gardner is supposed to receive notice if a detector is tripped in building, but evidence points to a disconnect in the system. The group moved to the basement where the boiler room has pipes wrapped in asbestos and rust stains on surfaces, although the actual boiler (working parts) is only 5-7 years old. Floor tiles and mastic may contain asbestos as well. A men's room sink had leak stains on the floor and around a waste line in the hall. Wall paint all over the building showed paint flaking from water infiltration. Rich said making the exterior sound and weather tight would preclude any repairs/upgrades to the interior.

The upper hallways were dark, even during the day, and dangerous in the event of a power outage and no operational emergency lights.

Tim was concerned about the building's studios and larger community spaces being rented to privateers and non-profits (currently numbering 12), as the original use was "educational" which in the building code means only K-12 classes. When the use changes, all the newest codes must be enforced. He explained that if codes aren't being met, the Fire Dept. under the state fire code has a provision for a "fire watch." This involves an individual who monitors the building by patrolling all communal space on a regular schedule whenever the building is being

occupied, and warning all occupants if there is a problem. He also suggested that a fire watch should log people in as they enter/exit the building, to know exactly who is where.

4:35 PM The group re-convened on the first floor and Jon F. noted that even for temporary use new safety equipment such as lighting, exit signs and fire alarms were required. Rich explained a complicated formula for how egress doors—number and position—were calculated in a public building. He was concerned that the first floor only had the two front doors (one handicap) next to each other and engineering more outlets was not feasible.

The town has appropriated some funds for building repairs, and Nina outlined the available funding, and the stipulations around each source, where applicable. The group also discussed the architectural firms and building committee studies that have been provided over recent years. Nina noted that the Facilities Steering Committee is focusing on town functions/uses in the future and they will meet July 25.

While the building inspector can close a building for safety failures at any time, the group agreed that the selectmen should be involved, and any decision include both.

5:45 PM Selectmen voted all in favor to close Princeton Center after midnight of July 31; until then, allow occupancy from 7 AM to 7 PM; ban children below age six from entering building unless testing for lead paint is completed; and, institute a fire watch, with help of tenants and others volunteering, to be in place whenever the building is occupied, using the log sign-in, a working cell phone and walk-around inspections.

The group then came up with a volunteer fire watch schedule for Tuesday and agreed on immediate notification of all tenants.

5:50 PM Selectmen then discussed outstanding issues around the cable TV franchise and communications with Mass. Broadband Institute Chairman Peter Larkin. The issue is that the state is not reimbursing Princeton for its ‘make-ready’ work, with over \$1 million spent by the town, while other of the 43 towns in the “Last Mile” effort are receiving grants for make-ready work. Town officials had been counting on a grant from MBI for just under \$1 million, and that grant is now going to the cable operator—Charter Communications. Jon F. speculated about possible reasons for the disparity, although an MBI official has asked for copies of the towns expenditures to Verizon for the make-ready and related costs. The group felt that some reimbursement might result.

6:05 PM The board voted all in favor to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted, Marie Auger, admin. assist.

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