

Proposed New Town Hall

Last Update 7/2/2020

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: **How long has the Town Hall/Police Department Project been discussed?**

A: The town board has been discussing rehabbing or replacing the town hall for the past 15 years. During that time there have been significant costly repairs that can not keep up with the overall decline of the 116-year-old building. The town hall was a school house built in 1903. It was purchased by the town in 1985 for municipal use, while barely able to function to accommodate government functions. The building has inadequate storage facilities for records, no space for staff support, and does not meet the state standards required to operate a police department. Meanwhile the infrastructure of the building, including heating, plumbing, black mold, asbestos, etc. is degrading, continually making this building a hazard. ADA Compliance is minimal, but non-existent in the Courtroom or bathrooms. With approval at a properly noticed town meeting, the Town Board asked Zimmerman Architectural Studios in the Fall of 2018 to evaluate the building. Their Needs Analysis Report submitted for review on March 8, 2019 pointed out that the significant need to overhaul the building for safety and function would be far more costly than to replace it. This hard copy report has been available at the town hall since this review was presented. It is also available on the Town's website: [<townofeastroy.com>](http://townofeastroy.com)

Since this report was submitted by Zimmerman Architects, the Town Board has determined a schedule to research and implement a plan to replace the old town hall with a new one. This plan has been carefully and conscientiously carried out with proper public notice and public input where possible during the past year. There is further planning and discussion about this project and it will continue to be included in public town meetings where citizens are encouraged to participate.

Q: **Who authorized the Town to proceed with the New Town Hall/Police Department project?**

A: The town citizens did at the duly noticed State mandated 2019 Annual Meeting. The official notice and agenda were **published in the newspaper 3 consecutive weeks** and posted at other required locations.

Q: **The New Town Hall project came out of nowhere, recent statements... "First I heard of it."**

A: This has been no secret. It has been on agendas 12 times. In addition to the 2019 Annual Meeting, there were 10 duly noticed workshops with the architect. I mentioned it at every meeting I was asked to attend or speak. Plans were on display during the Spring Primary Election on February 18, 2020 and more recently on the Town website. Public Comments are part of the Monthly Board Meeting Agenda and have been for at least 15 years if not longer.

Q: What is the Town's approach to project development for the New Town Hall/Police Department?

A: The Town Board has taken a very structured, deliberate and measured approach to the Project.

1. Perform a municipal needs analysis report.
2. Develop plans, specifications and estimates with the architect, staff, public attendees and Board to a high degree of accuracy. Staff includes all employees, Police Chief, Clerk/Treasurer and Judge.
3. Public input and feedback, revisions.
4. Soft cost verification (in addition to bid costs).
5. Go, No Go Decision & Financing.
6. Bid, build, move in, demolish old building & finish site.

Q: How much taxpayer money has been spent on the Project to date?

A: \$0-None. The original Needs Assessment Study was paid for by Impact Fees designated for Police Facilities and the architectural fees, soil testing, survey and well, asbestos and septic inspections were paid for with Landfill Funds. No town taxpayer money will be spent until the process is completed on #3 and #4 listed in previous question. The interest on the Landfill Fund has been used for tax relief for the last 30 years or so. What better use for part of that fund than this project.

Q: What is all the nonsense showing up on social media regarding the project?

A: Just that, nonsense. When people don't have all the facts, they draw their own conclusions and pass them off as the truth. That is a dangerous game being played over the internet.

Q: How was the building size arrived at, it seems excessive? (Answer provided by Lead Architect, Jack Blume of ZAS)

A: A combined Municipal and Police facility needs a physical separation, as the duties of each entity have distinctly separate security and public access variables. This project methodically evaluated the spaces in the program that was initially assembled during the needs study and made minor modifications during the design process as additional information was learned. The room sizes are a result of contemporary space design and are not excessive.

Specific to the needs for the Town of East Troy, the municipal portion of the building meets current needs. The number of offices serves the current staff. The Town Board Room doubles as a Court Room and can accommodate a reasonable number of persons who would attend Board meetings, Voting Day or other events. A separate conference room is a common small meeting space which any staff can use via a reservation process. There are no spaces which exceed typical civic design.

The Police Department meets a minimum standard of police space requirements for a mid-size community (3,000-10,000 population). It is a bit of an atypical Township as it has a higher population

than most Townships and is responsible for a significant water patrol. That said, it relies on a relationship with Walworth County for assistance with holding suspects. Office, reception and back of house spaces are adequate comparable to most similar sized stations. Locker/shower rooms and evidence rooms are typically not in existing police stations, but have been part of all new designs that Zimmerman has been involved in. Likewise, the garage, which doubles as a sallyport, provides indoor space for the existing car and boat fleet. Communally, there are a few storage spaces in the building. They have been sized larger than current needs. However, it has been our experience that storage needs always increase and rarely is something that can be expanded once a building is operational.

Q: If the overall schedule is on hold, how come the Town is still incurring architect charges?

A: The Project needs to complete the public comment and input stage before proceeding to any type of go/no-go decision and bidding. The architects work mostly ended in May, but assistance was required in zoning and open house activities. Billings also occur a month or two after services rendered.

Q: What are the tax implications on the current estimated costs?

A: The Board feels the cost estimates are high in relation to similar recent projects. Using 2 possible 20-year loan amounts, the property tax implication is as follows:

\$3.5 Million = \$33.99/ \$100,000 of Assessed Valuation

\$3 Million = \$29.14/\$100,000 of Assessed Valuation

Q: The first open house was only scheduled after questions were asked by the public.

A: That is an incorrect statement. An Open House or Houses, were always a part of the process. Note that on the March 9, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes, the tentative date of March 24, 2020, from 3-6PM was set. Then along came COVID-19 which ultimately delayed the event until June 11, 2020. There were also preceding delays in January and February while reliable cost estimates were being sought.

Q: Please explain the Project Development process in more detail.

A: The Board considered all Project delivery types, including design/build, and chose the standard and proven design, bid, build process. The planning process can follow two paths:

1. Separate focus groups for every user group and building grounds with architect leadership.
2. Develop plans concurrently in their entirety with all users, the architect and the Board.

My experience with the first process is that it is much more costly and at completion, it will be changed anyway. Using the second process, a building that will meet the needs of all users can be presented to the public for consideration. Revisions were always planned on. The building that is being presented to the public is not the "Gold Package" or "Taj Mahal," but in the middle of the road. A 50-year municipal

building should not be a pole barn, or a prefabricated structure or an addition to a non-functional antiquated facility. The Town Hall location is also set.

Q: If this building was not a done deal, why were bids taken on a new septic system?

A: Bids were not taken on a new septic system. It has not even been designed.

Q: If this building was not a done deal, why were variances and zoning changes requested from the Town and County?

A: The zoning has to be changed no matter when the Town Hall is built. The variance request was needed to determine if the size of the building needed to change. That question is now moot as the public input to date has consistently requested a smaller structure. The variance request has been withdrawn.

Q: There is reference to a “need based on growth?” Where do you see the Town of East Troy in terms of growth?

A: The general answer is in the Town of East Troy Comprehensive Plan. According to that document, the Town of East Troy population in 2035 will be 5102, or about 1035 higher than today. It is hard to predict, but some SEWRPC models show growth slowing or stalling within 15 years. It is important to consider the growth that has already occurred that is driving the need. The Land Use Plan does show a range of population by 2035 of 4488 to 5378.

Q: Some believe it is reasonable to consider a future combined Town/Village Police Force or county policing.

A: This has been studied, researched and discussed 3 times over the last 20 years. This would be a great deal for the Village and a very bad deal for the Town. The Town residents have overwhelmingly stated that they want their own Police Force. Either one of these suggestions would spell the end of the Town autonomy regarding policing. In addition, the Town has no responsibility to assist the Village with funding their over-sized Village Hall. This can be studied for the fourth time if the electors so desire.

Q: There is continued confusion as to the physical location of the Town of East Troy’s Courtroom. Would it be logical to combine the Town and Village Courts? What do the judges think?

A: There is no confusion as to the location. According to the Town Judge Heidelmeier, there’s no confusion or problem with current setup and is opposed to combining. According to Village Judge Cotter, he has been a longtime advocate of merging or combining the Police Departments and Courts.

Q: Further, a quote from the ETT May 15 article said “It is in the Preliminary Planning stage”, which seems confusing (given your “stage 2: develop plans, specifications and estimates with high degree of accuracy”), and so any clarification would help.

A: The ETT May 15, 2020 article says the project is still in the planning stages, not “Preliminary” planning stage That is still the case. It will remain in the planning stage until the public comments and revisions are complete. As was stated from the beginning, gather DETAILED information on all costs. The Annual Meeting is the third structured opportunity for public input.

This same article has an erroneous statement, “The Town Board commissioned a needs analysis last year because the current Town Hall doesn’t meet the needs of the VILLAGE or the Police Department, ...Klarkowski said.” The ETT took my word TOWN and stated VILLAGE! There is a huge difference!!!

The current project status is at the Public Input and Feedback stage. Soft Cost Verification continues. The Board is carefully weighing the needs of the citizens while facing the ongoing degradation of the current Town Hall. The overall schedule has been affected, in doubt and on hold since the onset of the recently overturned “Safer at Home” Order that was instituted in response to COVID-19.

Please submit a request regarding any other questions you may have about the Town Hall Building Project to Town Chairman Joe Klarkowski at jklarkowski@townofeasttroy.com . We will add to the list as soon as possible.