

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Southborough Board of Selectman

FROM: Municipal Facilities Committee

DATE: July 11, 2005

RE: Municipal Facilities Plan

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## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Selectman created the Municipal Facilities Committee in 2004 for the purpose of assisting the Board and the town in developing a long-term plan for improving Southborough's municipal buildings (excluding schools). The Committee is pleased to report that it has completed the first two stages of its assignment: (1) an assessment of the town's current municipal facilities; and (2) the development of a recommended plan for improving and expanding those facilities to meet the current and future needs of the town. The Committee is now ready to assist the Board and the town in implementing the plan.

To accomplish the first two tasks of this project, the Committee worked closely with town department heads, other town employees, Southborough residents, and consultants from the Cecil Group. With the Committee's assistance and guidance, the Cecil Group has prepared the attached *Southborough Facilities Plan* dated June 2005. The Committee adopts the findings and recommendations set forth in the *Southborough Facilities Plan*, with one important exception regarding Fayville Hall discussed below.

The need for a comprehensive, long-term plan for the town's municipal facilities stemmed from the widely-held perception that while the town's population has grown significantly over the past twenty years, the size of the municipal facilities serving our growing population has remained roughly the same. The first task of the Committee and the Cecil Group was to inspect the facilities to determine whether that anecdotal evidence was accurate.

Our investigation not only confirmed the accuracy of those reports, but also led us to conclude that the need for additional office and storage space is even more acute than we had originally thought. We have also concluded that the severe shortage of space in our municipal buildings has created a difficult working environment for some of our town employees, affects the efficiency with which the town delivers some services to the residents of Southborough, and limits the scope of activities and services that the town can provide. Even more importantly, the space shortage raises safety concerns, especially with respect to the police and fire stations.

It is the Committee's firm belief that the town needs to begin investing now in improvements to its municipal facilities. The current municipal (non-school) facilities in Southborough occupy approximately 85,000 square feet. Over the next fifteen years, the Committee recommends that the town increase the size of its facilities by 15,000-20,000 square feet, for a total size of 100,000-105,000 square feet. The Cecil Group estimates that this building program will cost approximately \$17-\$20 million over 15 years. Although this investment is significant, it is the Committee's opinion that this investment is necessary to meet the current and future demands on town government, that it will enable the town to offer a broader range of services to its residents, and that it will increase the efficiency and reliability with which the town delivers those services.

The following is a summary of our findings and recommendations, which are set forth more fully in the attached *Southborough Facilities Plan*.

### **THE PROBLEM**

- Over the past 15 years, the population of Southborough has increased 52%, from 6,384 in 1990 to 9,737 today.
- The size of the municipal government has also grown during that timeframe, but the size of the municipal facilities has not. Southborough has not conducted a significant expansion of its municipal (non-school) facilities in the past 15 years.
- There is a severe shortage of office and storage space for most town departments.
- The town's public buildings are busy and productive, but crowded. The facilities with the most pressing current and future needs are the Town House, the Police Station, the Fire Station, Recreation Department, the Public Works Building, Fayville Hall, the Library, and Cordaville Hall.
- The Police Station, which was viewed as a "temporary fix" many years ago, needs a new facility.
- The Fire Station needs to be expanded. The Fire Department does not have enough garage space to house all of its emergency vehicles. Public and private uses of the Fire Station are conflicting, as public visitors must pass through the living quarters.
- The Recreation Department, which is currently located in the museum, is very restricted for space and needs a space of its own. It needs 2,100-2,300 square feet of additional space for offices, meetings for up to 20 people, additional storage, and additional space for activities.
- Fayville Hall is in poor condition and the temporary measures currently in place are not long-term solutions.
- The Facilities Department needs an additional 2,800-3,000 square feet of storage space for two large vehicles and covered storage space for materials and supplies.
- The Senior Center/Council on Aging, which currently uses Cordaville Hall, needs an additional 700-920 square feet for an accessible function room/activity space.

- The departments currently located within the Town House require an additional 2,560 to 3,270 square feet of space. The building also needs to be reorganized to allow for better circulation and a more efficient work environment.
- Overall, municipal departments require an additional 15,000-20,000 square feet of space to meet the town's current and future demands.

### **A PROPOSED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM**

- In adding space to existing facilities and bringing new buildings on line, complimentary departments should be placed in close proximity and any discordant uses should be separated. In addition, the current character of the town's historic town center should be maintained.
- The acquisition of Cordaville Hall provides an excellent opportunity for the town to invest renovation and expansion money on a centrally-located site near other government functions. The Committee recommends investing in Cordaville Hall as a new community center that would include the Senior Center, Youth and Family Services and the Recreation Department.
- Some departments currently located in the Town House should also be relocated to the new Cordaville Hall, thereby freeing up space at the Town House for the expansion of the remaining departments.
- The renovation and expansion of Cordaville Hall should be the first priority of this municipal facilities plan and funds should be appropriated as soon as possible (at Town Meeting this Fall, if possible) to prepare the design of the new building. The Cecil Group estimates that the total cost of the Cordaville Hall renovation and expansion would be \$3,200,000-\$3,400,000.
- Fire Station #1 should be renovated and expanded to serve the long-term needs of both the Fire and Police Departments in a single public safety complex. Once that complex is completed, the existing police station could be used for a different town function.
- The building of the public safety complex should be the next highest priority following the Cordaville Hall project. Ideally, both Cordaville Hall and the public safety complex would be completed within the first five years of the plan. The Cecil Group estimates that the total cost of a new public safety complex would be \$3,200,000-\$3,600,000.
- The Department of Public Works complex should be expanded to include a 4,000 square foot outdoor salt storage shed and additional space for the Facilities Department.
- The Cecil Group recommends that the town demolish Fayville Hall and the town-owned residential building next to it (the Delarda House), and hold the land for future use. *Southborough Facilities Plan*, p. 8. The Committee does not agree with this recommendation at this time. Given the long history of Fayville Hall and its importance to many members of the Southborough community, the Committee is not prepared to recommend its immediate destruction. However,

the Committee does recommend that upon the completion of Cordaville Hall and the DPW expansion (if not sooner), the departments currently located at Fayville Hall should be relocated.

- Following the renovation and expansion of Cordaville Hall, the Town House should be reorganized to provide for more office and storage space for the remaining departments.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Town of Southborough currently suffers from a severe shortage of space that impacts the quality and extent of services being delivered to Southborough residents. Now that the town has addressed the space crunch in the schools, this Committee believes that it is time to address the space crunch in our municipal facilities. Having completed its assessment of the problem and proposed a number of solutions, the Committee is available to answer any questions that the Board may have and is prepared to assist the Board in implementing the attached *Southborough Facilities Plan*.

### **The Municipal Facilities Committee**

Brian Shea  
Sam Theodoss  
Matt Hurley  
Louis Bartolini  
Robert Bezokas

### **Staff to the Committee**

Janice Conlin, Town Administrator  
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