

TOWN HALL ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT

WHERE WE ARE

Wheelock has been grappling with the question of what to do about the Town Hall and Clerk's Office for more than 15 years. The building is not accessible to everyone and does not adequately meet the town's needs. The agreement that the town entered into with the U.S. Department of Justice requires us to have an answer by the end of this year to avoid legal action.

We need a proposal for an accessible, code-compliant facility to house town government functions that a majority of Wheelock voters will support.

To that end, the town secured grant funds to assist with developing the mandated Town Hall Accessibility Proposal this year. With that support, the Project Committee is going back to re-examine the options and re-engage the entire Wheelock community in making this critical decision.

The Project Committee is aware that cost is a primary concern. We understand and respect that position. However, meeting our legal obligation for an accessible facility is going to require some amount of town funding.

We need to come together as a community to solve this problem, this year. To do that, we are asking everyone to set aside prior positions and take a fresh look at the choices in front of us.

The various proposals considered over the years can be distilled into four general approaches:

WHEELOCK TOWN HALL – MAKE IT WORK

Make only the code & accessibility improvements to the Wheelock Town Hall necessary to meet the terms of the DOJ agreement with minimal other upgrades.

1

WHEELOCK TOWN HALL – MAKE IT BETTER

Make accessibility improvements to the Wheelock Town Hall, expand office & vault space, and upgrade facilities so the building can be used for more activities.

2

COMBINED FACILITIES – NEW BUILDINGS

Make accessibility and other improvements to the Wheelock Town Hall so it can serve as meeting space. Build new town facilities (office, garage) adjoining the Wheelock Town Hall.

3

COMBINED FACILITIES – NEW LOCATION

Build new town facilities (office, meeting space, garage) on a site elsewhere in town and leave the Town Hall as a vacant building for now.

4

We need to build a consensus around one of those approaches and move forward. We are asking Wheelock residents to participate – learn about the options, ask questions, tell us what you think, be part of making this important decision for the future of our town.

WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING

The Town Hall Accessibility Proposal Project will be underway throughout the calendar year. So far:

- ▶ We have established a regular meeting time for the Project Committee on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. (virtually until announced otherwise).
- ▶ We have hired a consultant team to assist us in meeting our obligation under the DOJ agreement.
- ▶ The architect and landscape architect on that team are currently reviewing prior plans and studies and will be presenting recommendations for providing an accessible and affordable town government facility.
- ▶ We have established a webpage at www.placesense.com/wheelock with information about the project, including many of the plans, designs, reports, presentations and other information related to the Wheelock Town Hall issue. Updated information about the project will be added to the website on a regular basis.
- ▶ We will be mailing out a survey at the end of April, following up on the response to last year's survey with some more detailed questions. The survey results will help the consultants and Project Committee select and refine options for further investigation and community input.
- ▶ We will be having a community meeting early in the summer to present and discuss the first phase of work.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

KEY Building proposal Town vote Dep't of Justice

