



JOIN US FOR A COMMUNITY MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 6 P.M.
AT THE WHEELOCK TOWN HALL

For a century and a half Wheelock residents have gathered at the Town Hall to discuss community issues and make community decisions. As we mark the Town Hall's 150th anniversary, we are facing a critical decision about our future needs for town government facilities and the role of this building and site in that future. The Town Hall Accessibility Project Committee is considering two options for meeting our obligation as we develop a proposal for an accessible, code-compliant facility to house town government functions by the end of this year. We are inviting all town residents to attend this meeting and participate in selecting the best way forward for our community.

The meeting will be conducted following COVID protocols and we are asking attendees to wear masks. If we need to make changes to the meeting in response to evolving conditions, we will announce that as broadly as possible through the normal town government and community communication channels.

OPTION 1 MAKE IT BETTER



A 550-square foot addition to the rear of the Town Hall building would accommodate accessible restrooms at the lower (office) level and a kitchen at the upper (town hall) level with a lift to meet accessibility requirements. A re-graded parking area would provide an accessible walkway to a code-compliant entrance in the new addition at the upper (town hall) level. A re-configured floor plan for the lower level would accommodate a larger vault. This option does not significantly change the configuration or quality of town office and conference room meeting space in the lower (office) level. It would not substantially increase the size or capacity of the town hall meeting space in the upper level.

DETAILS

Total additional floor space: 1,100 sf

Town hall: 928 sf (+28 sf)

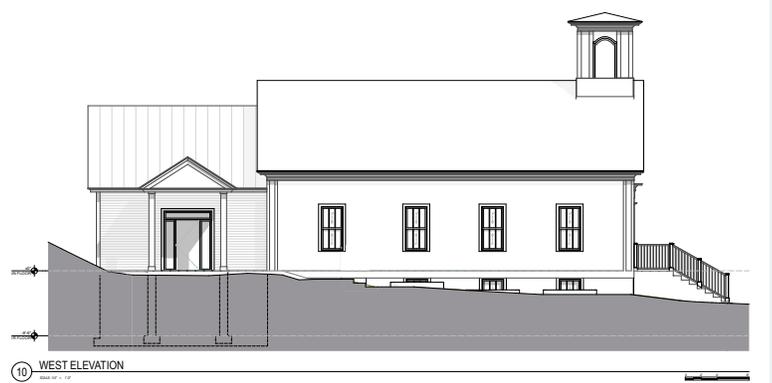
Kitchen: 155 sf (new)

Restrooms: 118 sf (new)

Town office: 440 sf (+120 sf)

Conference room: 372 sf (-388 sf)

Vault: 155 sf (+80 sf)



OPTION 2 NEW FACILITY



A 2,228-square foot addition to the north side and rear of the Town Hall building would accommodate all building functions on a single level (existing basement to be used only for mechanicals and storage, no lift required). A combination walkway and ramp would provide accessible entries to both the town hall and town office space. The existing stage would be moved into a rear addition, increasing the capacity of the large meeting space to 200 people (from 128 now). The addition provides for accessible restrooms, a kitchen and a larger vault. By moving the town office and conference room above grade those work spaces will have the benefit of improved natural light and ventilation.

DETAILS

Total additional floor space: 2,228 sf
 Town hall: 1,394 sf (+494 sf)
 Kitchen: 111 sf (new)
 Restrooms: 118 sf (new)
 Town office: 276 sf (-44 sf)
 Conference room: 261 sf (-499 sf)
 Vault: 163 sf (+88 sf)



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. We need to come together as a community to solve this problem, this year. To do that, we have been asking everyone to set aside prior positions and take a fresh look at the choices in front of us. The agreement that the town entered into with the U.S. Department of Justice requires us to have a plan for moving forward 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 has been going back to re-examine the options and re-engage the entire Wheelock community in making this critical decision. 80 Wheelock residents responded to a community survey conducted this spring. The survey provided more insight into the values, motivations and concerns of town residents on the issue of the town's facility needs and what steps we should take next. We heard many different perspectives. The survey results suggest that

a majority of townspeople agree that Wheelock needs an accessible public meeting space that can accommodate 200 people.

The Project Committee is aware that cost is a primary concern in our community. However, the survey response suggests that the majority of Wheelock voters are willing to raise additional tax funding if needed for town facilities. We also know that voters are considering the combined costs of both the Town Hall project and the long-term needs of the Highway Department, when assessing what is affordable to Wheelock taxpayers. Looking ahead, it appears like there is potential to secure federal funds in support of one or both of these projects on the horizon. The Project Committee is following what is happening on the federal and state level closely. We will be actively seeking all available outside funding to minimize the cost to property taxpayers.

- “ I would like to see a historically sensitive expansion, addition with a realistic budget. Nothing extravagant, but functional and sound.
- “ It just doesn't make sense to spend the amount needed to continue to renovate this old building for historic value. It's a shame all this money has already been spent but it would be great to progress toward a high tech option and set us up for an option of technology improvements as needed.
- “ I think that building a new meeting space would change the character & charm of Wheelock's historic and beautiful Town Hall. Finding ways to make it more accessible while being as thrifty as possible seem in line with Wheelock's values.
- “ Enough time wasted. Let's get it done and give our community something to be proud of. The status quo is embarrassing.
- “ Please help us raise the bar here in Wheelock. Our poor town center is looking very sad and dilapidated. If we want to participate in the future and be appealing to potential residents we need to show that we care about all of our residents and that we are putting our best foot forward.
- “ Since we have already made some improvements to the current building, it makes sense to continue to do so. It would also make sense to either expand with either an adjoining building or adjacent one to correct whatever deficiencies repairs of the current building won't resolve. We need to resolve this issue by not merely band-aiding it. Doing so will just prolong our dealings with it.

NEXT STEPS

From the input received at the September 27 community meeting, we will select and refine a final approach for an accessible, code-compliant facility to house town government functions.

With the help of our consultants, we will prepare the DOJ-mandated Town Hall Accessibility Proposal by the end of the year.

With a proposal and cost estimates in hand, we anticipate seeking authorization from the voters at the March 2022 Town Meeting to move forward with a project. A proposal and cost estimates will also enable us to more effectively seek outside funding for the project.

For more information, check out the project webpage at www.placesense.com/wheelock.