

**This set of minutes was approved at the Town Council meeting on December 1, 2008**

**DURHAM TOWN COUNCIL  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2008  
DURHAM TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
7:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Neil Niman; Councilor Jerry Needell; Councilor Julian Smith; Councilor Peter Stanhope (arrived at 7:24 PM); Councilor Henry Smith; Councilor Cathy Leach (arrived at 7:53 PM); Councilor Mike Sievert; Councilor Doug Clark; Councilor Karl Van Asselt

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Councilor Henry Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Town Administrator Todd Selig;

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Niman called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and said this was a special work session to discuss issues pertaining to the Town Hall, and the future of the Town Hall site.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

***Councilor Van Asselt MOVED to approve the Agenda. Councilor Clark SECONDED the motion, and it PASSED unanimously 6-0.***

Administrator Selig said an architectural review of the Town Hall property had been done two years ago, and said at the time, there were several questions, one of which was whether an objective analysis could say that it met the Town's present needs. He said potential library locations were also being considered at the time, including the Town Hall site.

He said the findings of this review were that there wasn't enough room at the site for a stand alone Town Hall and a stand alone library, but there would be room for a combined, newly built facility. He noted that a challenge with the site was that 65 parking spaces there were taken up when the nearby District Court was in session. He said when it was not in session, there were plenty of spaces available, and some were rented to the Durham Village garage, for \$400 per space annually.

Administrator Selig said one issue with the present Town Hall building was that it didn't meet ADA requirements, beyond the threshold requirements. He provided details on this, noting among other things the safety issues concerning the stairways to the second floor. He said several people had fallen on these stairs, and said it was just a matter of time before someone was hurt. He said it was felt that making this change didn't make sense if the plan was to move to another facility.

He also spoke about the fact that it was not uncommon to need extra meeting locations, and that the Town Hall didn't provide these. He said he even allowed his own office to be used for meetings at times, but said this was not an ideal situation. He said there was often a lack of meeting spaces for Town staff, but said they made the best of this.

Administrator Selig said a third issue was the lack of storage capacity, and as part of this the lack of climate controlled storage space. He spoke about the fact that there was a vault that was modestly fireproofed, but said the Town would likely lose everything if there were a fire at the Town Hall. He spoke in detail about the lack of sufficient storage space, and said the Town would be starting to store some materials offsite in 2009. He noted that there were moisture problems in the basement, and also said there was a mold problem with an exterior wall of the building, which had created some allergy issues for Town staff.

He spoke in detail about the lack of energy efficiency in the Town Hall building, explaining first that the building was comprised of two old houses that had been joined together, and that there were two separate furnaces. He spoke about ongoing heating and cooling problems, and said that energy wise, the Town could do much better than this.

Administrator Selig next spoke about the fact that Town staff had expressed concerns that the Town Hall building had been constructed at a time when the security of staff members had not been a consideration. He said deficiencies in this area had been noted in the assessment of the property.

He concluded that the Town could continue to utilize this building for economic reasons, but that this was not an ideal situation.

Chair Niman said part of the reason for this discussion was to decide: if the Town Hall site should be sold, with the money from the sale then invested someplace else; if the Town should invest money in upgrading the existing building; or if the building should be torn down and replaced on the site with a new building.

He reviewed some related ideas, including the idea of a combined Town Hall/Library building, and the fact that the Durham Evangelical Church was looking to sell its property, and this might be a possible location for a Town Hall facility. He said another possible approach was to put new Town facilities out at the Durham Business Park, and said if this approach was desired, now was the time to make a decision on this.

Chair Niman said an additional issue, which some people saw as an opportunity and some didn't, was that an offer of \$2 million had been made on the Town Hall property, assuming that the Town would allow a drugstore to be built there. He said the appraised value of the site was \$650,000, which meant that if the property were sold, there could be a \$1.35 million gain that could be used to finance other options.

He said he hoped the Council could look at these various opportunities, and possibly reach a consensus on one of them, or on making do with the present situation.

There was discussion on how a combined Town Hall/Library would save about 5,000 sf.

Councilor Clark asked if an analysis had been done on what were the best Town facilities to combine, in terms of achieving the greatest efficiencies.

Administrator Selig said a specific analysis like this had not been done. There was further discussion on this issue, especially concerning the idea of combining the Town Hall facility and the Police Department at the Durham Evangelical Church building. There was also discussion on the possibility of putting the new Library there.

Councilor Needell spoke about the idea of a public safety type facility, where the Police Department and the Fire Department might be combined. He noted that a Fire Department facility would need to be built in the not to distant future.

There was discussion on the importance of a central location for a Fire Department facility, to allow adequate response times. Administrator Selig said the Department favored a site on Garrison Ave., near Stoke Hall, based on the response time issue.

Councilor Julian Smith said the Library Board of Trustees had discussed the idea of using the ground floor of the Durham Evangelical Church for the library, but had not been interested in locating the library away from the center of Town.

Administrator Selig said he was aware of this, but had been curious about the cost savings that might be achieved with this approach. He said it would be a viable option, if the Trustees wanted the Library to go there.

There was discussion on the days and hours the District Court was in session, and on how this impacted the parking situation at the Town Hall site. There was also discussion on the likelihood that the Court would remain at the corner location, with Administrator Selig stating that this might not have to be a consideration in the future. He said if the Court wasn't there, the building could be put to another use, as perhaps Planning and Zoning offices and/or additional meeting facilities.

Councilor Julian Smith noted that the Board of Selectmen used to meet in the Court House building.

Administrator Selig noted that the Durham Historical Association would like to use the building.

He said the concern was that any of the possible options that had been outlined would be very expensive. He reviewed some of the costs involved, and spoke about how this would impact the tax rate.

Councilor Sievert asked if a viable option was to use Mill Plaza for a new Town Hall facility.

Administrator Selig said there had been discussions with Mill Plaza owner John Pinto over the last month, and he was still interested in developing the property. Administrator Selig said Mr. Pinto knew that the Library Trustees wanted the Library to go there, but was taking some time to develop a plan for the site, and to deal with funding issues.

Councilor Sievert asked if Mill Plaza would be a good place to have a combined Town Hall/Library

facility.

There was discussion on this. Councilor Julian Smith said the Mill Plaza Committee hadn't considered the idea of a combined facility. He noted that the Plaza was surrounded by other properties that could be a part of the redevelopment there, including some municipal buildings. He also spoke about the Kyreages properties in that area, which contained quite a bit of land that currently was not well used. He said having a combined facility was a possibility, but said it had been difficult to bring the various property owners together to talk about this concept.

Councilor Needell said the Mill Plaza Committee had taken the idea of a new Town Hall at Mill Plaza off the table, after discussing it. But he said the intention was to site the Library at the periphery of Mill Plaza so the Town Hall could possibly be sited next to it.

Councilor Julian Smith said the Committee hadn't looked at all the properties that could be part of a redevelopment.

Councilor Van Asselt received clarification that if over \$1 million were spent on any of the options outlined, this would require a Town vote. He then said that the Council first needed to decide on whether the current Town Hall was inadequate or not. He said if the answer to this question was yes, the Council could then look at alternative options. He said if it was thought that they could get by with the Town Hall right now, it would cost some money to make a few changes, but would buy them a few more years.

He said there were options for the Library that were more viable than going to Mill Plaza, but said he didn't think the Council should be spending its time thinking about the Library. He also said that concerning the Town Hall, if the majority of the Council was not interested in going anywhere other than the present site or somewhere downtown that simplified the discussion. He said if this was not the case, the Council needed to look at other options.

Councilor Needell said he agreed that the Council shouldn't concern itself with the Library, and should focus on the Town Hall. He also said the Council should first focus on whether it needed or was willing to do anything to upgrade the current Town Hall building. He said the question was whether the Council accepted the fact that it was inadequate, and if it did, what its commitment was to addressing this.

Councilor Van Asselt agreed, but said at some point, the Council needed to look at the business side of things. He said given that the Town had been offered \$2 million for the Town Hall property, the future use of the property became an economic question as well.

Councilor Sievert said he thought the approach outlined by Councilor Needell and Councilor Van Asselt was on the right track. He suggested that the Council could perhaps decide whether it wanted the Town Hall to be located either at the present site or some place else downtown, and said if the answer was yes, they could then discuss where to go from there.

Councilor Clark said he was in favor of having the Council decide on whether a new Town Hall was needed. But he said if the Council knew there could be a savings of 5000 sf by having a combined

Town Hall/Library facility, there was an equally compelling economic reason to have that discussion as there was to discuss the idea of selling the Town Hall property for \$2 million.

Administrator Selig said he had been in favor of the idea of having a combined facility, noting that there would be greater efficiency in terms of the use of space, as well as operational savings and options for shared staffing.

Councilor Clark said he didn't understand why one would want to have separate Town Hall and Library facilities.

Councilor Van Asselt said he didn't disagree with this, and said he was prepared to talk about the idea of combining them. But he said that in terms of the location of the Town Hall, he refused to see the options constricted by what the Trustees wanted.

There was further discussion on this.

Councilor Julian Smith noted that the Trustees had asked in the past if the Library could be built at the Town Hall site. He said if there was interest in the idea of combining the two facilities, the Trustees should be approached about this. He noted that the north side of the property backed up against the Irving site, and he suggested the idea of having a building that was up against that property line, but faced south, which would allow a southern exposure. He said there could be green roofs as part of such an approach.

He said he thought a joint facility made a lot of sense, and said he thought the Trustees were still interested in the Town Hall site. He said some of the Trustees would like the Library to be next to the Plaza, and said he personally would prefer to have it downtown if this could be arranged. But he said if this were not possible, he would like the Library to be located at the Town Hall site. He said he would not like to see the Library at the Evangelical Church site, and also said he would not like to see the Town Hall property sold without good reason.

Councilor Needell said he didn't have a problem with considering a joint facility in the future, but said the Council first needed to decide if a new Town Hall was needed.

Councilor Stanhope said he appreciated the fact that there was support for locating the Town Hall where it could be part of a community center. But he said the Town Hall site and the Plaza site were both properties that could ultimately be developed in a way that could make a major contribution to the tax base. He asked if there had been any studies on how many residents and others went to the Town Hall site on foot as compared to by car.

Administrator Selig said the vast majority of people got there by car.

Councilor Stanhope said it seemed illogical that the Town wouldn't seek a site that was affordable, whether it was the Church property or another one, and said this property could be one that was conveniently located on one of the Town's transportation routes. He spoke in detail on the advantages of this approach.

He said what happened concerning the Library was up to the Board of Trustees, noting that whatever approach they chose would have to be sold to the Town, but that this was not the Council's issue. He said the door should be open to the idea of a joint facility. But he said his concern about keeping the present Town Hall property for municipal use was that if it instead was a taxable property, it could make a significant contribution to the tax base.

Councilor Clark spoke in detail about the advantages of locating Town facilities in the center of Town. He said he agreed that the Town Hall site could probably make more money for the Town if it was not owned by the Town, but he said a reason to use it was to provide a sense of identity and character for the downtown.

Councilor Stanhope asked if currently, people coming to the Town Hall migrated downtown after they left.

Councilor Clark said no, but said if there was more of a downtown, he thought they would do so.

Councilor Needell said there could be economic benefits from putting a Town facility downtown, but also said this was a very expensive option. He said a question was whether this would work, and also whether the Town was willing to make the investment in it. He said he was not convinced that the Town could afford that option, or that they would get the results they wanted.

Administrator Selig said the wheels of the Town Hall property weren't falling off, and said it did meet the Town's basic needs, so it could continue to be used. But he said if they were planning to stay there for any length of time, the stairs issue should be addressed, along with changes needed for the Town Clerk's area and to provide additional storage area. He said \$200,000 would buy the Town another 10 years.

Councilor Sievert said he did think the wheels were falling off. He said if they were talking about making a small investment to buy the Town a few years, and if it was known the Town Hall would then be moved someplace else, this would be a reasonable investment. But he said it didn't make sense to make a major investment to keep the heat in, the mold out, etc.

Councilor Van Asselt said he had no problem looking at options outside of the immediate Town center area, and said there were a couple of good locations. He said if the majority of the Council was interested in looking at this, they should do so.

Chair Niman said he would like to agree with Councilor Clark, but said he didn't think the Town had the property tax base to support a combined Town Hall/Library facility downtown. He said his concern was that this would drive the tax rate up. He said that 10 years from now, if there was the tax base to support such an approach, it would be great.

He said he was willing to look at other sites. He noted that his perspective was that if the Town decided to put the Town Hall facility at the Church property, it didn't have to stay there for the next 50 years. He also said the only way he would be interested in building a new Town Hall was if the Town could find someone else to pay for it. He spoke in some detail on this, including how selling the Town Hall site might be a part of this. He said he was not interested in keeping the Town Hall

site and building a \$3 million building there by itself, stating that he didn't see where this got the Town in the long run.

Councilor Needell said he was fairly ambivalent as to where the Town Hall should be. But he said he didn't feel the Town could afford to build a new building anywhere in the near future. He said he thought the Town should either renovate the present Town Hall building, or find another building to move into. He said if the Church made sense for this, they should talk about that. He said he was open to anything but a new building.

Councilor Stanhope said he didn't want the Town to spend a penny on the Town Hall building, stating that they would still end up with a white elephant. He said there would be a substantial cost for a new building, and said there didn't seem to be interest around the table in spending the money. He said he agreed with Chair Niman that he didn't care where the Town Hall went as long as it made economic sense.

Councilor Leach said she agreed with Councilor Needell, and also said she was ambivalent as to where the Town Hall should be located. She said people conducted a lot of their business with the Town online these days, and also said it would be costly to build a new building. She said if the Town Hall could be moved somewhere else that worked for Town staff and was economically viable, she would be interested in looking at this.

Councilor Sievert said he too was ambivalent on this issue. He said he didn't think the Town Hall had to be located downtown, but said he liked the idea of a central location, and liked the idea of a combined facility and the savings that would come from this. He spoke about how such a facility in the Mill Plaza area could possibly help revitalize the downtown area. He said he was in favor of leaving the various possible sites on the table for now to be looked at.

Chair Niman said there were other ways to revitalize the downtown, and said there were some other ideas being worked on concerning this. He said he hoped to talk about this with the Council in the future.

Administrator Selig said he would prefer to have the Town Hall downtown, stating that in the long term, this would be good for the community. But he said he had spoken with potential developers regarding possible win-win situations for development downtown, and had thrown in the idea of a Town Hall as part of this. He said almost all of them hadn't seen this as a net positive approach, economically speaking.

Councilor Stanhope said he was skeptical of the comments in the Church appraisal that the building could be converted to office space for less than \$200,000, and said he thought the actual expense for this would knock the price down. There was discussion on this.

Councilor Van Asselt said there seemed to be some interest on the Council in looking at other possible locations, but said he didn't see enthusiasm on the Council for a new building. He said it also seemed that of the other options on the table, only one involved an existing building. He said those involving just land were the Durham Business Park, Mill Pond, the Pettee Brook parking lot downtown, and Wagon Hill. He asked whether putting the Town Hall at the Church was an

interim kind of thing, or if it was a valid option for the Town Hall and the Police Department.

On another issue, Councilor Needell said it was not clear to him what the true value of the Town Hall site was.

Councilor Van Asselt said that regarding the Church option, he wasn't necessarily thinking of having the \$2 million in hand from selling the Town Hall site as part of this option.

Councilor Clark said it seemed that even if the Council made an independent decision regarding the Town Hall, it would still have to make the decision to fund the Library at some point. He said it could save \$1 million if there was a combined facility, and also said the Town could also save money in terms of the piece of land that was chosen. He said not looking for economies of scale as part of this didn't make sense to him.

He also said a question was whether it made sense from a municipal point of view to take advantage of the economic climate right now to build something less expensive, or to wait until people felt it was ok to spend money again.

Chair Niman described a possible scenario where there was a long-term plan for a Town Hall and a Library, and a possible community center, which could be located at the Durham Business Park, a property the Town owned. He also said that as a result of selling the present Town Hall site, there would be the money available to at least build the Town Hall portion of the facility. He said this was certainly a possibility.

He also noted that if everyone wanted to build the Town facility downtown some time in the future, he didn't have a problem with this. He said if there was the money for this, he wouldn't have a problem working toward that goal. But he said he wouldn't put something like this before the voters right now.

There was discussion about the possibility of putting a Town facility at the Pettee Brook lot, another property the Town owned. Councilor Clark said this would be a fine place for a Library. Councilor Van Asselt discussed the idea of possibly doing a public/private development there, and considered whether this was perhaps the piece of land the Town should be creative about.

Councilor Stanhope said there were already vacancies downtown, and said the rents wouldn't support such a development. There was further discussion.

Administrator Selig said a challenge with this property was that business owners relied on that parking area, so if they went away, additional parking would need to be provided some place else.

Councilor Needell said such a development would impact Pettee Brook Road, and he said there was also the Store 24 issue. He said he agreed that the Town Hall was not an efficient building, but said he was not willing to give up on the idea of salvaging the building in the short run. He said it was possible that a long-term change might come about, but said he thought this approach was quite far away.



He said he thought a discussion on a new Town Hall was a separate discussion, and said he was concerned about jumping ahead to this idea without having a full plan in place. He said he didn't think other schemes were viable at this point unless there was a willingness to commit to doing a master plan for them.

Councilor Clark said he thought this meeting was the beginning of a discussion on whether a plan was needed regarding a new Town Hall.

Councilor Needell said a purpose of this meeting was to decide if the Town should go down that road, and said he didn't feel there was the need to go down that road.

Administrator Selig said if the Town sold the Town Hall site, it was unknown how much it would cost for a new facility some place else. He spoke about how selling the property would help offset the debt service on a new building, and also spoke about the fact that development of the Town Hall site commercially could add between \$70,000 and 80,000 in taxes each year.

Chair Niman said this could help with the financing of the new building.

Councilor Sievert said he hadn't thought about using the Church temporarily for the Town Hall, and said this might be a great solution. He also said he thought the whole downtown was currently in a state of flux, and said that perhaps, it was premature to make decisions regarding moving there. He said he thought there should be discussion on moving the Town Hall temporarily to the Church, and said he thought that renovating that property would be a far better investment than putting a lot of money into the present Town Hall building. He said if the Town spent \$250,000 on the Town Hall building, the purchase price wouldn't go up, so it would be throwing money away.

Councilor Stanhope provided details on why he thought moving to the Church and investing some money there made the most sense now. He said he wasn't opposed to having the Town facility downtown, but said he didn't think this would happen. He spoke in some detail about the idea of using the Pettee Brook parking lot, stating that this would involve having to move the road, and also that there wasn't really that much building area there.

Councilor Sievert questioned whether it made sense for the Police Station to be moved to the Church if this was a temporary move, and Councilor Stanhope said the numbers could be crunched concerning this.

Councilor Needell spoke about the numbers being thrown around concerning the value of the Church and the Town Hall property, and said he didn't feel the appraisals were defensible right now. There was discussion on this.

Administrator Selig and Chair Niman said they agreed with Councilor Sievert, with Chair Niman suggesting that perhaps the unused area at the Church could be used for community space. Councilor Stanhope said the Town could offer to allow the Library to go there. There was further discussion on what the options were.

Councilor Van Asselt said the Town owned the Durham Business Park, and was land on which a

Town Hall, a Library, a community facility, etc., could be placed. He spoke about the idea of putting trails on the property to connect with other trails in the area. He said a lot of town groups could participate at that kind of facility, and said he didn't think the Council should throw out this possible option.

He said he was not sure the Town would be able to realize the private development out there that it had hoped for, but said he thought the property could be developed. He said there were all kinds of possibilities, and said this spoke to Councilor Needell's point about the need for a master plan for public facilities. He said he was curious to see if there was interest in this idea. But he also said he didn't see why the Town couldn't use the Church facility first.

Councilor Sievert said he thought the concept described for the Business Park was a great idea, for a great location, but said the problem there was access onto Route 4, especially if all of the combined uses were there.

Councilor Julian Smith said the State would want the Town to punch through Old Piscataqua Road for access.

Councilor Sievert agreed, stating that this would be a great idea, and said he didn't think this site shouldn't be thrown off the list. He also said another piece of the puzzle with that site was the shoreland protection rules, which mean the buildable area was getting smaller and smaller over time.

Councilor Van Asselt said it was getting smaller in terms of development, but not necessarily in terms of providing things like walking trails, etc. He said this was a piece of land where something like that could happen.

Councilor Leach said for her, it was the money issue, and said she thought they should look at using the Church right now. She said perhaps too many possible Town uses had been suggested for the Business Park, and also said that perhaps the development of the property could be staggered over time. But she said she agreed that the Council should look into the idea of using the Business Park, stating that it would be a beautiful spot for the Library.

Councilor Clark said if money was no object, the Business Park was his second choice after the downtown. But he said he would like to see a rough analysis and comparison, with some concrete numbers, between having a Town facility on town owned land downtown or at the Business Park, or at the Church. He said the Council could then go from there.

Councilor Stanhope said Councilor Clark had hit on something, and said he also liked where Councilor Van Asselt was going with this. He said the Business Park was a great piece of land that was not being utilized well, and noted that a good developer hadn't been able to do anything with it. He said Old Piscataqua Road could be used for access, and also said that boating access could be provided on the property. In addition, he said there could be a possible mix of private and public use of the property.

There was additional discussion on the idea of using the Town Hall site. Councilor Sievert said there was the issue of the state of this building, and also said the future of the Court building was

unknown. He said this site wouldn't be a viable location for all the municipal uses, and said he felt the site had lived out its useful life as a Town property unless it was just used for a Town Hall, and not in its current form.

Chair Niman agreed with Councilor Clark that real numbers were needed regarding the concepts of having a Town facility on Town owned land downtown, or at the Town-owned Business Park, or the Church.

Councilor Needell said Councilor Van Asselt's idea was intriguing, but said there would be infrastructure costs. He said if a plan was developed, the Council could talk about it. But he said the Council had a more immediate decision to make, regarding keeping the Town Hall at the present site. He said he didn't believe there were the resources to play with that the Council was convincing itself it had.

Chair Niman noted that there was the TIF district, and said the plan could potentially be amended, so that the taxes the Town would capture would go toward building out Piscataqua Road to change the access. He said the Town could speak with Chinburg Builders about the idea of a public/private partnership, in order to make the development of the property a more saleable proposition. He also said that perhaps tax revenues could help fund some of the municipal construction at the Business Park.

Chair Niman asked whether the Council should follow up concerning the issue of the \$2 million offered for the Town Hall property.

Councilor Needell said this offer was basically for an approved site plan, and said it wasn't known whether that would happen. He said he was concerned about the idea of the Town being in the position of holding the bonus over the head of the Planning Board, and that anything less granted by the Planning Board than what the developer wanted would bring the price down. He said he was uncomfortable with the Town being involved in that bargain.

Administrator Selig noted that ZBA approval would be needed as well.

Other Councilors agreed that these were good points, and there was discussion.

Councilor Stanhope said there was a review process the Town followed, which had resulted in the Hotel and the Irving station. He said he was comfortable that this process could probably benefit the Town and the developer, noting that there had been long term tax benefits from those two developments. He said the Council should pursue the sale of the property, but should recognize that there was the possibility that it wouldn't work.

Councilor Needell noted that the Hotel and the Irving station were located on private land. He said he agreed that there was a good chance that the developer would be able to work with the Planning Board, but said the Town Hall property was public property right now.

Councilor Clark asked what would happen to the Court House if the Town Hall property became a private property, and also asked what the timeline was for the use of Court House building.

Administrator Selig said the lease was over in June of 2009, and said discussion on renewal of the lease had started. He said that long term, keeping the Court there would tie up parking, which was problematic. He said that realistically, the Town should look at whether it wanted to continue to have the Court there. He said there wasn't an alternative location right now, but he also said it was likely that over time, the Court would be moved anyway.

Chair Niman asked if the Town had talked to the University about the idea of hosting the Court at one of its buildings.

Councilor Sievert suggested that perhaps the Church basement could be used.

Administrator Selig said this had been looked at, but said the Court was not thought to be a good mix with the Town Hall. He also said it wouldn't make sense to renovate the Church basement unless the Court was located there long term, and that the Court would prefer to be in Dover, for consolidation purposes.

Chair Niman suggested that if there was a transition period when the Town Hall was at the Church, the Court could stay at its present location in the short term. He then suggested that Town staff could sit down with Scott Mitchell to see if some of the terms of the offer could perhaps be changed.

Administrator Selig noted that the EDC had discussed the idea of the Town doing a request for proposals to see if there might be other viable buyers of the Town Hall property. He said doing this would say to the community that the Town had gotten the best possible price for the property.

Chair Niman said there should be discussion with Scott Mitchell, with the Evangelical Church, and with Chinburg Builders, in order to possibly enlarge the Council's vision of what the options were. He also said they should look at doing an assessment of possible downtown locations.

Administrator Selig asked the Council if it was happy with the work that Sumner Davis had done.

The Council agreed that it made sense both economically and otherwise to continue working with the firm for now.

Administrator Selig said the Town would select a firm through the bid process if it moved ahead with an architectural design.

There was discussion on what would be involved in doing an assessment of the downtown as a possible location for a Town facility. Councilor Clark said such an assessment should include: looking at the cost of building on the Pettee Brook lot property, as well as considerations regarding the parking issue; and figuring out what land exchanges were needed in order for the Town to be able to own part of the Mill Plaza area so it could build a Library and a Town Hall there.

Administrator Selig said as yet, the Town had made no progress with property owners regarding a possible land swap. There was discussion on this.

Chair Niman noted that the Council's hope had been that the Zoning could be changed to make the numbers work for the Kyreages property, so the owner would be more likely to want to sell it. He also said even if the Town could acquire it, the only access to it was through the Mill Plaza property. He said his guess was that Mr. Pinto wouldn't want to make a commitment concerning this until he figured out what he was going to do with the Plaza. He said the situation was stuck right now, and might continue to be stuck for quite some time.

Councilor Julian Smith recommended that for the time being, the Town should therefore plan to stay at the Town Hall building, put some money into it, and wait things out.

Administrator Selig said that there had been a plan 6-7 years ago to have ball fields at the Durham Business Park. He suggested that there could be Town offices there, as well as playing fields and perhaps a pod containing a private development that could be a part of the TIF district, and which could help pay for everything.

### **III. Adjourn (NLT 10:30 PM)**

***Councilor Stanhope MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Leach SECONDED the motion, and it PASSED unanimously 8-0.***

Adjournment at 9:02 pm

Victoria Parmele, Minutes taker