

  
**Haines Borough**  
**Borough Assembly Special Meeting**  
**Joint Session with the Planning Commission**  
**Special 29, 2008**

**MINUTES**

**Approved**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG** Mayor **SHIELDS** called the meeting to order at 5:30pm in the Assembly Chambers of the Public Safety Building and led the pledge to the flag.
2. **ROLL CALL** **Present:** Mayor Fred **SHIELDS** and Assembly Members Norm **SMITH**, Jerry **LAPP**, Pete **LAPHAM**, Doug **OLERUD**, Steve **VICK**, and Deborah **VOGT**. Planning Commission: Lee **HEINMILLER**/Chairman, Rob **GOLDBERG**, Andy **HEDDEN**, Greg **BRASK**, and Donnie **TURNER**.

**Staff Present:** Tom **BOLEN**/Borough Manager, Julie **COZZI**/Borough Clerk, Steve **RITZINGER**/Planning & Zoning Technician, John **WURST**/Assessor-Lands Manager, and Debra **SCHNABEL**/Project Clerk.

**Visitors Present:** Jessica **EDWARDS**/CVN, Madeleine **SHIELDS**, Norm **HUGHES**, Sean **GAFFNEY**, Jason **GAFFNEY**, Darsie **CULBECK**, Les **HOSTETLER**, Christy **TENGS-FOWLER**, Fred **GRAY**, and others.

3. **APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion** by **LAPP**: Approve the Agenda. It was seconded by **VOGT**. The motion carried unanimously by both the assembly and commission.

4. **FORMER SCHOOL PROPERTIES**

- a. **Asbestos Abatement**
- b. **Future of Properties**

**BOLEN** read a written report concerning the asbestos abatement issues. He asked the assembly and planning commission to clarify for him the future of the properties. Dawson Construction relied on a report from Nortek in preparing their work estimate for the abatement, but there is actually a larger problem than reported. **HUGHES** asked if the asbestos abatement had to take place regardless of what happens to the buildings. **BOLEN** responded that only a portion has to be abated no matter what.

**SCHNABEL** summarized the past actions on this topic by the assembly, planning commission, and Oversight & Planning (O&P) Committee. She said the 1<sup>st</sup> decision was made in 2004 to demolish the former buildings and sell the property to recover the money spent on the Schafer property to situate the new

school. Then, moving from design to construction, the construction estimate was more than anticipated so the demolition portion was removed from the contract. Then, early this year, the contractor informed the borough of unused construction funds, so the abatement issue/demolition was brought back for consideration. When Alaska Mountain Guides proposed purchase of the primary school property, research on abatement was begun in earnest. It was discovered that it was not mandatory prior to selling the property as long as the purchaser accepted asbestos responsibility. She further explained that she informed the borough that there is liability sitting there and the O&P approved the abatement followed by assembly approval. **VOGT** clarified that the assembly specifically directed to abate for demolition.

**SHIELDS** explained that the local landfill will take the demolished building as a whole with all of the mastic, tile, etc. in it at a cost of 7 cents per pound. **VOGT** asked if special personnel are needed for the demolition. [No.] **OLERUD** asked if the borough has accepted the buildings from the school district. He believed the borough was going to leave them with the school because of a chance they could qualify for maintenance and demolition funds. The elementary building is still full of furnishings and fixtures. **SCHNABEL** said school project funds have paid the cost of shutting down the primary school building and associated maintenance. The school district has abandoned both buildings, property, and furnishings, and there is still money in the project to deal with the asbestos issue.

**OLERUD** said the 3-story building with the gym might be feasible to save, and he wondered if an engineer has looked at it. **SCHNABEL** responded that the school district had a feasibility study done in 2004 by qualified people who evaluated the building financially. **OLERUD** explained that he was referring to demolishing the older 2-story section and keeping the 3-story section. **BOLEN** said he has an extensive background in building construction, and he did a walk-through of the building. He agrees that the 3-story section is the only viable portion to save. He added that it does not contain asbestos. He disagrees with the opinion of some that it is more expensive to retrofit an old building.

**LAPHAM** asked about the current contract. **BOLEN** said the owner (the borough) has the right to increase and decrease the scope of work in a project. Changes sometimes impact mobilization and demobilization costs.

**SMITH** suggested that the borough could hold a "garage sale" to get rid of the old furnishings and fixtures rather than paying the contractor to remove them. **HEINMILLER** suggested that all furnishings be moved into the gymnasium since that isn't involved in the abatement.

**TURNER** said the buildings need to come down one way or another. **LAPHAM** wondered what the building weighs at 7 cents a pound. He said the old A&P building was dumped by the pound, as well. The elementary school is cement.

**VICK** said he is glad to hear that retrofitting an old building is not necessarily more expensive. He believes we have a building that could potentially house the court system, government offices, and a community recreation center. It would be worth getting a good engineer's report on it. **LAPHAM** said he understood that it was in such terrible shape that it couldn't be renovated. **OLERUD** said the 2-story section needs to be torn down. That would have been the main cost of retrofitting it. Making it ADA compliant with elevators, etc. was determined to be cost prohibitive. He believes the contractors should finish the abatement that has to be done and then the borough should get an engineers estimate on retrofitting the 3-story section. **VOGT** said she assumes that it could be sold, as is. **HOSTETLER** said he is not sure about the primary building. He can clarify what has to be done and what's elective. If the building was going to be demolished, he would abate for demolition. If it was abated for reuse, it would have to also involve an air quality test following the abatement. He added that both buildings were supposed to be empty prior to abatement work.

**BOLEN** said it is an old gym, but it's an asset that should be rehabilitated. A lot of activities could take place in that building, but there would have to be a large funding source identified to retrofit it. **VICK** said his biggest concern with the Primary School property is that the borough may need it for wood storage, etc. **VOGT** agreed with respect to maintaining the land, possibly for use as snow storage. **SCHNABEL** explained that when the idea was first proposed to sell the property to AMG, the property was subdivided. A lot was provided for a centralized wood-burning facility. Additionally, there is space that could be used for snow storage.

**GOLDBERG** said a planner's job is to try to look into the future to try to determine what the borough may need. Sooner rather than later, he believes the borough will outgrow the present borough administration building and should retain the properties rather than sell them. There are many potential

uses for the current property including a new home for the preschool, a satellite University of Alaska campus, a community recreation center, etc. Additionally, he noted the parking requirements in the code and said perhaps the primary building should go but the property converted to a parking area for the other building. He believes it would be a big mistake to let go of the properties.

**HEINMILLER** said if multiple uses were incorporated into the elementary building, there could be 3 different access levels for the different uses in order to get around the ADA access issues. **VOGT** said the courthouse could pay rent to use part of the building. **OLERUD** disagreed and said the lot right next to the Public Safety Building (PSB) would be good location for the suggested uses. **BRASK** agreed and said the downtown property should be used for something else. **VICK** said he thought the lot next to the PSB was not a good piece of land, but if it is good, then he would be all for that idea. **BRASK** said he does not know that this parcel is any better or worse than the school parcels. **OLERUD** said wood storage and central heating could be situated in the large field behind the borough administration building. If it proves to be cost effective to maintain the 3-story section, then he's all for it, but the other part should be demolished. Additionally, if the borough gets a good proposal for the primary school property, it should be accepted.

**GRAY** said he was on the Educational Specifications Committee for the new school project. The Schafer property was over-valued, but the committee supported the purchase as long as the former school property was returned to the tax rolls. He believes it's a breach of public trust not to follow through with that.

**TENGS-FOWLER**, downtown business owner, said she gets upset about the "pie-in-the-sky ideas" while there are businesses seriously hurting. She believes the downtown looks bad and is suffering. AMG would revitalize the downtown, and the primary school property should be sold to them. **HEINMILLER** asked if there is any advantage to having the primary school abatement done right now. **BOLEN** said if there are asbestos items in the primary school building that are "must remove," they will be removed while the contractors are here.

**Motion** by **GOLDBERG**: Keep the properties and don't sell them until future decisions are made, and abate the properties as needed. It was seconded by **TURNER**. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Motion** by **OLERUD**: Authorize minimal abatement on the primary and elementary school buildings at this time. It was seconded by **LAPP**.

**BOLEN** said the borough administration will handle the removal of the furnishings.

The motion carried unanimously in a roll call vote.

**SHIELDS** noted that the proposal deadline for the primary school property purchase is September 30<sup>th</sup>, and the assembly will consider them at the October 14<sup>th</sup> assembly meeting.

**HUGHES** said the borough made a promise. The primary property should be sold to pay back the Schafer cost and the rest of it retained for the future.

**5. ADJOURNMENT - 6:39pm**

**Motion** by **OLERUD**: Adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by **LAPHAM**. The motion carried unanimously.

---

Fred Shields, Mayor

ATTEST:

---

Julie Cozzi, Borough Clerk