

**Town of Ancram  
Garage Construction Committee Meeting  
March 3, 2010**

**Members Present:** Art Bassin, Will Lutz, Jim Miller, Emile Racenet, George Wittlinger;  
**Others present:** Rick Dubray, Mike Citrin

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**1. Morris Engineering Proposal** -- The committee reviewed the Morris Associates proposal for engineering support. Morris has proposed a fee of \$17,500 for engineering support services including designing the storm water retention pond, the building foundation, the grading plan, the septic system and development of the bid package. The Committee decided it was prudent to seek additional proposals and interview other engineering firms to develop some alternatives for consideration.

**2. Garage Visits** -- Mr. Miller and Mr. Racenet had visited garages since the last meeting, as had Mr. Bassin and Highway Superintendent MacArthur. Among the 8 sites visited was a new garage in Ghent which was finished three weeks ago. It was an 80x150 structure made of prefab steel, and cost \$800,000. The Committee noted that the 80x80 or 60x100 structures the committee was considering were about half the size of the Ghent building. Mr. Bassin noted that he and Mr. MacArthur had seen a 100x60 facility with 5 bays, and truck access from the side as well, and Mr. MacArthur indicated that that size of structure could work for Ancram and hold all 5 plow trucks, with room for the rest of the equipment as well (loader, backhoe, grader, chipper). In addition, there would be room in a 60x100 or 80x80 building for three more plow trucks should we ever need them for expansion. Mr. Bassin commented that he was surprised that all the buildings he and Mr. MacArthur saw were metal, and all but one were on parcels under 3 acres.

**3. Metal building** -- The Committee decided to explore the cost of metal buildings. Mr. Miller and Mr. Racenet would seek estimates from Olympia and Essex, both well know metal building firms who operate in the area. (Olympia did the Ghent building).

**4. Work by Highway Department Staff** -- The Committee discussed whether to include the cost of the work that could be done by the highway department (site prep, septic, digging the storm water retention pond) and concluded that these costs should be estimated and included in the total project cost, and we should keep track of the actual costs incurred by the highway department in doing this work.

**5. Prevailing Wage** -- The Committee discussed the impact of the prevailing wage law on the cost of the project, and discussed a suggestion from Superintendent MacArthur to avoiding the prevailing wage issue by actually employing the people who worked on building the garage. Mr. Bassin will check with the Town Attorney to see if this is feasible. Mr. Bassin will also check with Wes Coons to see what the effect of the prevailing wage law would have on his estimates.

**6. General Contractor** -- The Committee discussed the need for a GC to run the job, and agreed to try and find someone locally who could be hired to do that work if the GC role was not included as part of the final bid package.

**7. Site Plan** -- The Committee agreed with Mr. Dubray that once the building design had been settled, a site plan diagram should be laid out showing where everything would be and how the traffic flow, and septic, drainage and storm water retention pond would be sited.

**8. 80x80 Building** -- Mr. Racenet presented an 80x80 design with 4 doors, which could handle 8 ten-wheel plow trucks, or 5 ten-wheelers with all the other equipment the town now has. (Note: the town currently uses three 8-wheel plow trucks, 1 ten-wheeler, and has one small spare plow truck). The Committee agreed that this 6400 sf design made sense, and could also accommodate new office space, a break room and a tool room, unless we decided to leave the office space and break room in the existing building and spend some money to fix up the existing space in the existing building.

**9. Indoor Drain** -- The Committee discussed the pros and cons of installing an indoor drain, and concluded that there was no need to install indoor drains and the expensive oil-water separator that went along with indoor drains. Without indoor drains, the equipment would be washed outside before being driven into the garage.

**10. Survey** -- Mr. Bassin commented that we had gotten an estimate of \$2500 from Lynden Chase to do a 2 foot contour survey. This survey would be used to help determine the drainage plan and the size of the storm water retention pond.

**11. Well** -- Mr. Racenet commented that he had gotten an estimate of \$6000 for a well, and a \$3000 estimate for the septic tank, assuming the town does the work to install it. The Committee agreed to develop a complete a list of all estimated costs for this project for the next meeting.

**12. Contamination Assessment** -- Mr. Bassin reported that DEC and Empire GeoServices had done the drilling for the contamination assessment at the town garage site that morning. Mr. Dubray commented that he heard they did not dig in the spot off the end of Jim MacArthur's office where the storm water pond might go, and where there was some digging done by the town a year ago and early this year to determine if oil was present. Mr. Bassin commented that Bill Christensen, the DEC petroleum expert, supervised the drilling, and decided where they should dig, not where anyone in Ancram thought they should dig, and that DEC's close supervision of this effort should give us all comfort. Preliminary indications are that there was no petroleum contamination, but one sample taken near the septic smelled pretty bad.

**13. County Salt Shed** -- Mr. Bassin also reported that he had talked with David Robinson, head of the Columbia County highway department, about sharing use of the County salt shed facility on CR 7. The County currently shares salt sheds with Livingston and Ghent. Mr. Robinson was receptive, and conversations will continue see if this option makes sense financially and logistically for the Town, and if it made sense for the Town to do any

additional snow plowing for the County on CR 7 and CR 3. Superintendent MacArthur indicated we might be able to do this if the County could lend us one of their 10 wheel plow trucks.

**14. New Mathews Proposal** – The Committee discussed a new proposal from Bob Mathews to sell the paint ball building and 8 acres to the town for \$480,000, with free financing for three years. This compares to the \$750,000 price that Mr. Mathews and the Town Board had been discussing last year. Mr. Bassin noted we would need an engineering study done of the Mathews building and the road situation, and that the costs of improving the building, the roads and the property tax losses resulting from a Town purchase of this facility could make the Mathews option twice as costly as the existing site option we were working on. In addition, Mr. Bassin noted that the new \$480,000 asking price was still substantially above the fair market value of the Mathews property, which made it illegal for the Town to buy at that price. Mr. Racenet commented that the proposal from Mr. Mathews did not contain the kind of information that would be necessary to help the town make a decision (i.e. engineering studies on building & roads, a current appraisal, a survey etc). Mr. Bassin commented that if the Town was not going to be able to consider the Mathews proposal because it was too expensive and illegal, and if we thought we had a solution at the current site that would cost half as much as the Mathews option, it was not fair to Mr. Mathews to request any additional information that could cost Mr. Mathews additional money. The Committee agreed that it did not seem to make any sense to reopen discussions with Mr. Mathews given where the numbers were coming out.

**15. Legal Letters** -- Mr. Lutz asked Mr. Citrin about the legal opinion letters he had secured last year and if they shed any light on our efforts at the current garage site – whether there were any DEC or SEQRA rules or anything else that we needed to consider. Mr. Citrin said he would send the legal opinion letters to Mr. Bassin for distribution to the Committee (they are attached), and that the most important element of the letters was the point that it was illegal for a town to pay more than fair market value for a property. Mr. Citrin said he did not think SEQRA would apply, as the current site was already a garage site and the use was not changing, but suggested the Committee consult with the Town Attorney or DEC on this matter.

**16. Next Meeting** -- The Committee set the next meeting for Tuesday, March 16 at 7 p.m.