

To: Councilors
 Feb 21, 2021
 Re: Purchasing 57 Low St.
 From: Jane Snow 9 Coffin St.

Is buying 57 Low St a "good Deal"? 2.7 acres with only ¼ acre of usable space – the rest being wetlands. Building is 5,500 sq. ft.

My first question is always can I afford it? So, I looked at the big-ticket items we have on our plate.

Fire	Repair/replace stations \$16mil (mayor at council meeting) \$5.4 mil CIP FY 21
Planning & Dev	\$1.7mil CIP FY 21 (Rail Trail, WFTF resiliency, Central Waterfront Park Expansion & Rail Trail extension CIP FY 21 \$500,000 FY 22 \$1mil, YS FY \$500,000, FY 22 & 23 \$2mil
Parks	\$1.8 mil CIP FY 21 – Joppa Park improvement, \$1mil Fuller Field Complex, Bartlet Mall Restoration \$192,915 FY 22 \$413,000, Parks Field Office \$350,000
DPS	\$3.9 mil FY 21 \$7.2 FY 22 -Road paving FY 21 \$2.5 mil FY 22 \$1.5mil, Philips Dr FY 21 \$200,000 FY 22 \$2.5 mil, Plummer Spring Bridge FY 22 \$2.2 mil
Schools	FY 21 \$389,000 \$7.1 mil CIP FY 22 – NHS Addition & Roof Repair \$7mil,
New Debt	\$322,665 CIP FY 21, \$1,146,971 CIP FY 22
Existing Debt	\$3.6 mil CIP FY 21 & 22
Projected Revenue	FY 21 \$71.5 mil, FY 22 \$73.7 mil, FY 23 \$75.9 mil

With the pandemic, economic outlook and the number of folks who are unemployed I question if this is something we really need, especially when no definitive use has been stated for property. Office space for school, spot for Parks Department and Youth Services has been mentioned. Depending on how it is used effects the additional costs. Are we going to make it usable as office space then turn around and tear it all out for YS? Since the parks department has 2 possibly 3 employees that would use the space year-round that would not seem to justify that, but using the back part of building for equipment and a repair shop seems more feasible, but again does it justify the additional costs.

Can we immediately use building if purchased?

According to reports by staff there is an air quality issue. The mayor reported the building has mold due to a roof leak and would need a full cleaning. Yet, the folks hired to look at the property- Rick Vandenburg – Credere Co. never mentioned that and they were not asked to look at air quality.

Here are the numbers I heard:

Roof- \$48-60,000 to remove and dispose of roof material – does not include cost to replace roof

Gaskets to be removed -\$6-900

Lead paint removal- \$3,500

Possible Soil removal \$10,000 does not include consultant or trucking – est. \$20,000

Plan need to be updated as it was only good for 180days

I am not sure how long it has been since this building was used but I would be concerned about piping, electrical and heating if it has been for any extended period of time.

Additional monies would need to be spent in order to use this for office space.

Would this work for YS?

Currently Youth Services uses 15,925 sq. ft of the Brown School. (Gym 4,315 sq ft-10,770 ft of space for programs). Total number of students currently in grades 4-12 approx. 1,400

The capital improvement plan reflects about \$9mil for a YS building over the next few years.

Feasibility study stated \$8,592,230 for a staggered plan.

The current building only has 5,500 sq. ft of floor space. There would be no gym. This site would require a sizeable addition to bring YS up to their current amount of space. This would involve wet land mediation, adding sidewalks, and traffic signals. This building will never allow any space on the lot for the Youths to play. It would require them using the school across the street. YS could not be in this location for some time.

With every proposal there are pro's & cons., but I do not see this as a good spot for YS. I heard a lot of complaints about asbestos at the Brown- what about potential radon gases at this site? I also heard the Andover Youth Center referenced. Since I worked in Andover it peaked my curiosity. The project started in 1995 but stopped when the site they chose for the center had to be abandoned because of contamination on the adjacent lot. That is when the Town agreed to let them use part of Doherty Jr High parking lot for their center. The center opened in 2014 at a cost of \$10.4 mil for a 22,652 sq. ft building (includes 10,416 ft gym) and serves approximately 3,000 students grades 6-12. The town gave YS the land and \$2mil. The rest was paid for thru private donations (\$5mil), the Wood Trust (\$700,00) and Andover Youth Services (\$2.7 mil)

I am not seeing a strong reason to purchase this building under the current economic conditions, especially with no set plan in place and known additional costs to fulfill that plan.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.