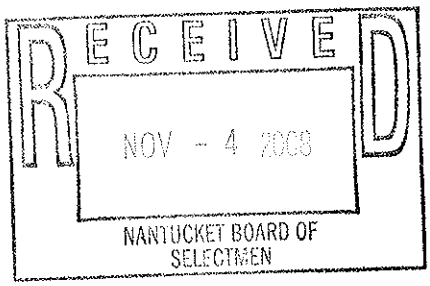
TO: Board of Selectmen

Town of Nantucket

RE: Report of the Citizen Advisory Board for a Public Safety Facility



Gentlemen and Ms. Roggeveen:

The Citizen Advisory Board for a Public Safety Facility is pleased to make the following report and recommendation:

The Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) received its commission from the Board of selectmen (BOS) on September 10, 2008. The CAB understands its commission to be to "Study and Advise the Board as to a public safety facility at 2 Fairgrounds Road and prioritize public safety needs in such a facility". The CAB also understood its commission to include the responsibility to "provide suggestions and assistance with public outreach and education ...on the facility".

In accepting the commission the CAB understood that the "public safety facility" referred to the CAB is the complex proposed to include a new police station to be constructed in tandem with a new fire department facility at the 2 Fairgrounds Road property. It is the same project as had been approved by the Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen. The CAB also is aware that the complex and plan has been rejected by the voters of the Town.

It is against this history of events beginning in 2006 and continuing in 2008, that the CAB accepted its commission and began its study.

The CAB determined that its study must include not only the proposed facility as presented to the voters, but also must include an analysis of the Town's current public safety needs together with consideration for the needs of the Town in years to come. The solo police facility cannot be considered in a vacuum which excludes other community public facilities.

The CAB began its deliberations on September 10, 2008, and met weekly. To advance its study and to prepare its advice to the BOS, the Committee resolved to consider the community needs by examining four possible approaches to this situation. These are:

Plan I

That the Town will construct a new police facility as depicted in the Kaestle Boos Associates plan at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site.

Plan II

That the Town will construct a new police facility in concert with a new fire department facility, all as depicted in the Kaestle Boos Associates plan at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site.

Plan III

That the Town will construct a new combined "safety and justice" complex facility at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site which will include a new police facility, a new fire department facility, and a new Trial Court facility.

Plan IV

That the Town will construct a new police facility as per the Kaestle Boos Associates plan at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site and make suitable provisions for the improvement of the existing fire department facility at the Sparks-Pleasant Street location to provide space relief at that fire station for a term of five(5) to seven (7) years.

In its consideration of the various plans the Committee summarized the "pros" and "cons" of the plans and determined the following:

For all practical purposes Plan I and Plan II are to be considered together.

Each plan has a poor history with the voters and for various reasons has been rejected by a decisive margin. The reasons for the rejection are many and may not directly address the credibility of the plan. Factors to consider in the voter's rejection include a generally unfavorable economic climate, a distrust of the ability of the Town administration to manage the Town's finances, a perception that the planned facilities are grandiose and other matters which may have impacted unfavorably with the voters at the time of the presentation.

In support of Plan I (the solo police facility) the CAB looked favorably on the fact that the facility is desperately needed to replace the current facility at North Water Street. The CAB's tour of the existing facility disclosed a woeful working environment conducted within an out-dated "rehab" of the old fire station. The structure is deficient to the point of being dangerous. Personnel facilities are such that the ability to conduct a credible safety presence for the public is

jeopardized by the lack of space, the lack of modern technology and the ability to house prisoners and process suspects.

In further support of Plan I and Plan II, The CAB notes that the design and planning expenses are completed. The Town has invested over $1.8 million in the planning for the facilities. There is little need for additional funds.

With respect to Plan I it is noted that certain logistical considerations must be addressed. These problems concern the relationship between the police, the office of the Sheriff and the Courts. Transportation of persons in custody is a major concern and the CAB is aware that such concerns rate highly with the Police Department and the courts when custodial transport is necessary. This issue is addressed in our recommendation set out in this report.

Note: In our consideration of Plan I the CAB addressed the issue as to whether the relocation of the current police facility would require a "mini" or "sub-station" presence downtown. That issue was raised to the CAB and is addressed in our recommendation.

Plan III contemplated the combined complex to include the police, fire and Trial Court. There is a need for a new court facility (Nantucket's court having been listed as one of the ten worst of the Commonwealth's 100 courts). The current court facilities are disgraceful for a community such as Nantucket. However, in its consideration of Plan III the CAB believes the matter of the court replacement may be deferred for such action as the Commonwealth's Department of the Trial Court may take. We are advised that the present "rental" of the court spaces by the Town to

the State is not an approved process for the future and that the Commonwealth will seek to own its courthouse facilities. There is ample space at the 2 Fairground Road site to accommodate a new courthouse and cooperation between the Town and Trial Court authorities is recommended to make a site available.

Plan IV envisions a new police facility at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site with a deferred new facility for the Nantucket Fire Department. It appears preferable to improve the existing Fire Department building at Sparks-Pleasant Street. In our analysis of the Fire Department facility we found the building to be inadequate in space for training, living facilities for the fire department personnel (male and female), storage, record keeping and apparatus maintenance. Article 10 of the 2002 Town Meeting appropriated $1.1 million to improve the existing Fire Department facility. Those funds remain available.

RECCOMENDATION

It is the considered recommendation of this committee that Plan IV be favored for immediate implementation and that the Board of Selectmen take such action as is required to establish a new police facility as per the Kaestle Boos plans at the 2 Fairgrounds Road site. Further, that the Board of Selectmen make available to Nantucket Fire Department a sum of money up to $1.1 million as approved in the aforesaid 2002 Town Meeting Article 10 to be used to modify the current Fire Department facility.

In support of this recommendation the CAB believes this construction of the new police facility combined with the deferred new Fire Department facility is a reasonable approach to the solution for new public safety facilities. We recognize the magnitude of the expense of a combined complex may not be in the best financial interests of the Town at this time. The improvement of the Fire Department facility is believed to "buy time" –perhaps five to seven years – without jeopardizing the efficient operation of the NFD.

With respect to releasing the 2002 Town Meeting Article 10 funds for the use of the Fire Department it is recommended that particular emphasis be placed on modifying interior spaces to accommodate training and dormitory uses.

In our consideration of Plan IV we discussed the issue of prisoner transfer recognizing the distance between the 2 Fairground Road site and the present court. A solution seems to be to use a portion of the current police station at North Water Street for short term detention. This can be arranged by designating a portion of that building to the office of the Sheriff. (The Sheriff is charged with prisoner detention and transfer). Such a use would solve an immediate problem of prisoner transport and have the added advantage of providing a downtown sub-station available to the public. Other benefits include making space within the Town Building now occupied by the Sheriff's Department available for other use. The reduction of approximately 1200s.f. now allocated to a Sheriff's Department, from the new facility would save an estimated $480,000 in construction cost.

The issue of whether the planned police facility is excessive in its outline of space needs was raised by the CAB. The CAB members are not qualified to conduct an examination of the various components of the planned facility. However, the information provided to the CAB by Chief Pitman appears to support the conclusion that the planned components are optimal to meet the credible needs of the Nantucket Police Department.

While not a part of its immediate charter, the CAB is aware that the Town has an immediate need for improving its municipal facilities. A well thought plan would be in the best interests of the community and such a plan would necessarily include:

A. Consideration for the use of the Town Building without the tenancy of the courts;

B. Whether a consolidation of Town offices would make the Mooney Building and the Washington Street Annex, surplus property and a source of funds.

In making its analysis of the public safety project it is necessary to review the site qualifications. The property at 2 Fairgrounds Road is now owned by the Town and appears to have adequate access and offers maximum opportunity for growth. The site offers opportunities to accommodate future improvements to keep pace with the growth of the Town. Site studies are complete and appear positive in all respects. The Town's investment in this parcel appears prudent and forward looking.

It is suggested that the land at Candle and Commercial streets may be an alternate site for a police facility. The site is owned (according to the records of the Office of the Assessor) by Nantucket Electric Company and is sometimes referred to as the "National Grid" site. This site

consists of eight parcels which total approximately two and one half acres. The site is bounded by Candle Street and Commercial Street and the "A&P" property and has access to Washington Street. Access is poor and any efficient use of this parcel would appear to require a major revision and re-design of Candle and Commercial Streets. The site is located in a state-recognized flood plain. Safety vehicles leaving this site would necessarily impact adversely on all downtown traffic. The Town would be required to purchase this site assuming there is a willing seller.

With respect to the second part of our charter (public outreach and education) it is assumed that this request is intended to reverse any unfavorable impact and negative impression resulting from the voter's rejection of the plan as originally submitted.

The CAB believes the voters are in favor of a new police facility. The CAB believes the voters, if presented with the full facts of the need for the new police facility, will accept that necessity as a normal part of the Town's growth. However, there must be an immediate and credible improvement in the administration of the Town's finances before we begin the process of asking for the community's trust.

It is necessary to enlist community leaders in this effort so that the community may hear from, not just the police or the administration, but from responsible individuals who will be educated to the needs for the police facility. The police personnel cannot do this job. The administration can not do this job.

The CAB believes that the Board of Selectmen must individually enthusiastically support this project. Board members must not only support the project but must appear to support the project.

The Committee is advised that there is within the Kaestle Boos contract provision for public relations and community education. The CAB assumes adequate funding for public relations is available. This must be activated so that an independently sponsored effort can be initiated to publicize the need for this police facility. That effort must be carefully supervised so that the public is educated with information that is 100% reliable. The public confidence in this project must be restored before it is brought to the voters again.

In its deliberations the Citizen Advisory Board has had the excellent cooperation of the Nantucket Police Department, the Nantucket Fire Department and personnel of the Trial Court Department and Ms. Diane O'Neill of the Selectmen's office.

Respectfully submitted, this 4th day of November, 2008.

Neil Paterson

Curtis Barnes

Frank Spriggs

Charles J. Gardner

Wayne F. Holmes

Charles Hughes

Citizen Advisory Committee
for a Public Safety Facility

The charge of the Citizen Advisory Committee for a Public Safety Facility is to: "Study and advise the Board of Selectmen as to the Public Safety Facility at 2 Fairgrounds Road and prioritize public safety needs in such a facility."

While not part of the formal charge of the advisory committee, in its discussions of creating the advisory committee the Board of Selectmen indicated that the Citizen Advisory Committee for a Public Safety Facility should also provide suggestions and assistance with public outreach and education on the Public Safety Facility.