

**Freedom Old School Future Use Options  
Report To The  
Freedom Board of Selectmen**

Prepared by

Freedom Old School Future Use Committee  
November 15, 2010

## **Freedom Old School Future Use Committee Report to Board of Selectmen**

### **1) Purpose of the Committee**

Article 10 of Freedom's 2010 Warrant Articles was approved by voters on March 9, 2010: "To see if the Town will vote to request the Selectmen to appoint a committee to review and recommend options for future use of the current Town Office Building"

### **2) Approach**

On June 14, 2010, the Freedom selectmen appointed the following members to the "Old School Future Use Committee": Susan Dube, Marshall Kendal, Scott Lees, Tammy Nason, Jim Shuff, John Shipman, Rick Zecher; Diane Park was assigned to be the recording secretary. Due to time and schedule conflicts, Jim Shuff was not able to continue on the committee and some members had to be away at certain times, so additional members were appointed by the selectmen. Hence, the committee in the second half (more or less) of the process also included Bonnie Borroughs and Dean Robertson with Art Robinson as an alternate.

The Selectmen met with the committee on June 28<sup>th</sup> to give their views and start the committee's work. Basically, the Committee was instructed to come up with ideas for the future use of the Old School House and to think outside the box. Selectman Babb stated that it was basically up to the public to decide the future of Town Office, and they, the selectmen, are open to all ideas. The other selectmen agreed with this and their statements and directions were included in the committee minutes, which have been posted on the Town's website ([www.townoffreedom.net](http://www.townoffreedom.net)). Basically, the selectmen asked the committee to describe each option, evaluate its advantages and disadvantages, its potential cost impacts and rank them by preference according to the Committee's best judgment. The Committee also decided to try to characterize each options potential risk of failure since failure could lead to an abandoned building (or have to move to a second option after trying the first) for the town to maintain. The Committee held public meetings essentially bi-weekly from June 28<sup>th</sup> to October 18<sup>th</sup>, and then on November 8<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>. The selectmen indicated that the committee could use any resources it felt necessary to complete its work.

The following steps were undertaken as part of the committee's approach:

- a) The committee compiled a list of potential options based on their own thoughts and any provided by the public present. All options were listed.
- b) Each committee member then selected options they felt best equipped to deal with, researched them, and then discussed them at subsequent committee meetings. Selected options were deemed not worth pursuing, for various reasons (see Results) and so were dropped from further consideration. A 'short-list' was thus chosen.

- c) The eight short-listed options were then researched and various items addressed, including: the concept, advantages, disadvantages, and potential (but admittedly rough) cost impacts, and potential for risk of failure (see Results)
- d) Freedom’s Heritage Commission was asked to look in to what other towns had done with their old building to see if there were any lessons and/or examples from which the committee could learn. In the end, the Heritage Commission researched 25 towns.
- e) Because one option was to see if there was a less expensive, less complicated option for upgrading the town offices in the current location, it was decided, based on methods used by another town (see Heritage Commission report), to undertake a fire, safety, ADA, code review. This concept was approved, and \$1,000 allocated for same, by the selectmen on October 18, 2010. After committee review of two potential code consultants, Shawn Bergeron (Bergeron Technical Services) of Conway, NH, was hired to conduct the code review and file a report to the committee by November 8, 2010.
- f) Also based on Heritage Commission research, a quick review of town records was conducted with the help of the Town Administrator and Town Clerk, to look for any records that could be archived elsewhere, and/or destroyed (beyond what they normally do). The purpose was to see if there is the potential to reduce the need and cost (i.e., size) for fireproof, humidity controlled and secure file storage infrastructure.
- g) In addition to the above resources, the final report from the 2009 “Article 26” work, prepared by SMP Architects, et.al) was reviewed for helpful and necessary information and to get the committee up to speed on those findings.

### 3) Results

- a) List of Options considered

The following table list the options considered and provides a brief description of the option

**Table 3-1 Description of Options considered for Old School (current Town Office) re-use.**

<b>Options carried forward</b>	<b>Concept</b>
Craft Center	Craft center co-op which can house, display and sell artisan and craft person products, and provide teaching and workshop opportunities for the public. A private sector enterprise in a Town-leased building
Day Care- Children	Private day-care facility for local children (Town-leased building)
Day Care- Adult	Private adult-care facility for area seniors (Town-leased building)
Fitness center	Town-owned, but user-supported, exercise and fitness center with equipment and instructional services provided to area adults.
Town Activity Center	Activities center for youth and adults to conduct organizational (formal and informal)

	activities and store equipment and/or resource materials
Sell private housing	Sell Town Office building to private developer to turn into single home or 2-unit condo
Town Office- expanded with <u>full</u> ADA/fire/safety/energy code compliance as specified in 'Art. 26'.	This is the option that resulted from the "Article 26" alternatives analysis for utilizing the existing building with a mid-sized addition.
Town Office Campus, using multiple buildings taken as is; i.e., without major code upgrades. <sup>1</sup>	Use a combination of buildings on 'the hill' (Town Office, Mason's and/or Rivard house) with minor upgrades that will use existing space, such that the needed square footage for a town office could be obtained. The goal of this option was to provide more space and not have to make major code upgrades.
Town Office- upgraded with smaller addition to meet needs and using creative design and construction to meet code requirements <sup>1</sup>	Examine office space needs, file storage needs, code options and allowed building upgrades and construction practices and design a building that meets space and code needs of the town while working with as much financial restraint as possible.
<b>Options dropped after initial review</b>	<b>Reason Dropped</b>
SAU 13 Office	SAU not interested- already moving to Brett school
Library use	Library not interested
Church use	Church not interested
Historical society	Historical Society not interested
VNA	Provider said Freedom was not central enough
Medical office	Provider said Freedom was not central enough
Town Museum	Potential use viewed as too low

b) What other towns have done

Freedom's Heritage Committee surveyed 25 New Hampshire towns to see what could be learned from their experiences. They field a report with the Committee entitled: "New Hampshire Historic Buildings Re-use Study", Prepared by Lee Fritz and Peg Scully, Members – Freedom Heritage Commission, October 5, 2010.

The authors grouped the actions taken by towns (that were researched) as follows (the reader is referred to the report so as not to repeat all findings here):

- Towns that have renovated old buildings: Madison, Sandwich, Auburn, Effingham
- Towns that have built new buildings: Tamworth, Moultonborough

- Towns where buildings have been rehabilitated by citizens groups: Derry, Bedford
- Towns that leased their buildings to historical societies: Jackson, Thornton
- Town that sold its Town Hall: Orford
- Towns that are struggling: Stoddard, Epsom
- Town that has been successful: Acworth

Beyond seeing what paths the other towns have taken, the authors commented that: “We were impressed with how often buildings are renovated or recycled for other uses and how unwilling people are to part with their historic buildings.”

While the survey results ran the gamut, it was clear that with proper planning rehabilitation of historic buildings is possible, if the desire and will to do so is there. Beyond what Madison, Sandwich, Auburn and Effingham did, the authors reported to the Committee that the town of Acworth NH provides an instructive example. Acworth hired an architect that worked within the building and life safety code requirements and came up with creative design and construction methods to meet the needs of the town while minimizing the cost and keeping the historic nature of the buildings. This led to a discussion with Acworth’s architect, Dan Bartlett, about potential approaches to take in Freedom. He recommended conducting a thorough code review and then using creative design and construction methods to minimize cost and impacts to Freedom’s historic building. After a discussion with Freedom’s selectmen, and undergoing a qualifications selection process, the Committee hired Bergeron Technical Services to complete the first aspect recommended: a thorough code review.

#### c) Code Review

As mentioned above, the Committee engaged Bergeron Technical Services LLC to do a fire/life safety/building/ADA code compliance review and answer code compliance questions from the Committee. The purpose of this review was to answer questions about re-use of the building and how potential options might be affected by its current and, potentially future, construction status. The Report (“Building Inspection Report, Town of Freedom Town Office Building and the adjacent Masonic Lodge”, Bergeron Technical Services, LLC, Nov.2, 2010) was filed with the Town and made available to the Committee, the Selectmen, Fire Chief, Building Inspector and the Town Office (and thus the public). The Building Inspection Report was thorough and should be reviewed for detailed findings. The Committee’s questions and discussion at the November 8, 2010 public meeting are summarized in the meeting minutes, attached as Appendix B. Some salient points of the code review, and subsequent meeting with the Committee, as they relate to potential re-use options, were:

- Mr. Bergeron made an opening statement saying that the Town Office Building was not that bad and the Mason’s Building has more issues than the Town Office

Building (App. B). Mr. Bergeron indicated that the town office building ‘structure appears to be sound’ (Report p. 1). This finding supports potential re-use options.

- The uses or occupancy classification for the Town Office is identified as “Existing Business” and requirements are laid out in Chapter 39 of Life Safety code (Report p.2). Mr. Bergeron stated that any “change of use” would require a full upgrade to meet current code requirements (App. B). This would affect several of the building options being considered, below; i.e., any that are not essentially business office, consistent with current use.
- The Bergeron report outlined several areas where he described ‘necessary improvements’ to means of egress from and within the building (p. 2-4), fire detection and suppression (p. 5), and the electrical system (p. 5) and the heating and hot water systems (p. 7). Mr. Bergeron also mentions improving energy conservation on p. 7. These needs would affect the cost of all the re-use options, except the sale of the building.
- Mr. Bergeron goes on to state that although an automatic fire suppression (sprinkler) system is not currently required, one would be required if built in 2010 because it exceeds building roof height requirements (per IBC) by 11 inches (drawing, final page). He states that, “A minor modification of roof pitch or modification of finished grade around the building could eliminate the sprinkler system requirement in this building if constructed anew in 2010.” (p. 5). He stated in the Committee meeting that the Town could also apply for a height variance. This would affect any building re-use options requiring re-construction and addition, unless a variance is issued. The committee did discuss the potential of putting a basement under the building (for file storage, as done in Madison), and this could potentially lead to a lowering of the building.
- At the November 8, 2010 Committee meeting, confusion arose about certain fire safety issues (i.e., renovations exceeding 50% of the existing square footage would require full code upgrades to entire building) and Shawn stated that he was not aware of any place in the codes where that is stated; he e-mailed the State Fire Chief these questions and is awaiting his comments. As far as exceeding the 20% renovation threshold requiring code upgrades, this applies only to ADA code compliance.
- Mr. Bergeron also stated in the committee meeting that a new addition to the town office could be added and if separated by a fire-rated wall, the existing structure would not have to be upgraded to meet life safety/fire codes.

- Mr. Bergeron, in a summary statement about the Town Office building (old school), see p.7. in part, he comments: “Can the building be brought into full compliance for a reasonable cost versus benefit ratio? I think it can.” This opinion supports those options where re-use is feasible (i.e., construction restrictions or difficulties could reasonably be overcome).
- Mr. Bergeron provided some examples of town office sizes from Conway and Madison to help the Committee think about space requirements. Comparison of local Town office space with Freedom’s current, and proposed from Article 26 are listed in Appendix C.
- Mr. Bergeron also conducted a more cursory code review of the Masonic Lodge building next to the Town Office. He makes several recommendations, but points out in his summary that “the Mason’s Lodge could also have a bright future but will need greater improvement effort than the Town Office. This finding affects the option (and costs) that considers the involvement of the Mason’s building (i.e., the “Town Campus” concept)
- An ADA compliance review was also conducted by Bergeron and is filed with the code review report. As we already know, the Town does not need to meet these construction requirements in the current building but the Town currently does (as required) accommodate persons with disabilities for the main functions of the office. Paragraph 4 of this ADA review letter does indicate the ADA compliance requirements if the building is renovated, but also lists some compliance mitigating factors.

d) Alternative Assessments

Assessment Assessments were prepared for each option so that details on the advantages and disadvantages of each final option can be understood. These summaries are presented below.

i) Option Name: Craft Center

Researched by: Marshall Kendall

Concept: To have a location (privately run, building leased from Town) where local artisans (painters, potters, arts and crafts, jewelers, etc.) could make and display their craft products in their assigned alcove, hold classes and sell their products (locally, mail order or via internet).

A schedule of demonstrations would be performed by participating vendors and supplemented by others in various fields of crafts including furniture making/restoration, gardening, baking, canning, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, etc. Attendance by the public to these demos could be by donation/fee or if income potential exists to the demonstrator a fee to them or a commission on sales.

Alcoves or artisan stations would be available for a rental fee in which vendors can sell their wares. The building would be open as a retail operation a number of days per week. Vendors would be sought who can have work on display and work on their craft for the public display. Potentially only one vendor per category accepted, but that is up to the co-op.

The concept would be to have a management and promotion entity for profit or a non-profit entity with vendors for profit. The latter (non-profit) would be more appealing to this researcher, where volunteers would be encouraged. The building would be leased by the Town and run privately by a cooperative or by a single business person. The Town would need to seek a parking agreement with the Mason's

Advantages: Would keep the building active and could compliment the Village Store, thus helping to contribute to the retail and tourist activity in the Village, and help keep the town alive. If successful, would help make Freedom a destination for this type of artisan and retail activity.

Disadvantages: To be successful, a center like this would take a very committed person to run it, and they would need to be experienced in marketing the concept and keeping it active. This could be a challenge. Also, with Freedom being out of the way, it would take a strong marketing plan to both attract artisans and customers. The current economy could make this more problematic. Also, many local artists and artisans work out of their home and then display their works throughout the area. They may not want to, or be able to, pay for a public place in which to work. Finally, code requirements could prevent artisan that require the use of more 'risky' equipment (open flame, etc.) from being present in this building

Cost Impacts: Construction costs to fit-up for use could run \$250,000. However, operating costs would need to be covered by lease agreement; and, hopefully, make up some or all of the fit-up costs.

ii) Option Name: Child Daycare Center

Research By: Tammy Nason

Concept: Set the building to act as a privately run child daycare center, where parents could leave their kids during their work day. This would require licensed practitioners to run it, and the building would have to be leased from the Town.

Advantages: This option would be helpful to families in town by providing a service to working parents. It would also keep the building in use and this use would help pay for itself from money coming in.

Disadvantages: The cost of bringing the building up to code for use by children could be expensive; the cost of set up could be high as a playground would have to be put in; potentially a kitchen might have to be installed. The highest cost could be in paying a certified person to run the daycare.

Cost Impact: The cost is hard to determine but could be very high after upgrading the building as would adding a playground and kitchen. Fit up costs are estimated at \$250,000 plus playground + kitchen. Operating costs are estimated at \$10,000/yr (heat, elect & cleaning) and Staff costs (assume 1.5 certified persons min.) are estimated at \$90,000/yr



iii) Option Name: Adult Daycare Center

Research By: Tammy Nason

Concept: Set the building to act as a privately run adult daycare center, where families could bring their elders during their work day or just for senior companionship and activities. This would require licensed practitioners to run it, and the building would have to be leased from the Town.

Advantages: This option would be helpful seniors and to families with seniors in town by providing a companionship and activities center. It would also keep the building in use and this use would help pay for itself from money coming in.

Disadvantages: The cost of bringing the building up to code for such use could be expensive; the cost of set up could be high as full ADA compliance would have to be met; potentially a kitchen might have to be installed. The highest cost could be in paying a certified person to run the center.

Cost Impact: The cost is hard to determine but could be high after upgrading the building to meet full code compliance for elderly persons and potentially adding a kitchen. Fit up costs are estimated at \$250,000+ plus kitchen. Operating costs are estimated at \$10,000/yr (heat, elect & cleaning) and Staff costs (assume 1.5 certified persons min.) are estimated at \$90,000/yr.

iv) Option Name: Town Fitness Center/Gym

Research By: Tammy Nason

Concept: The concept is to have a Town-run fitness center with open space and exercise equipment for area people to use. It would be fee-based facility to cover the cost of operations.

Advantages: It would keep the building in use by the public and there would be health benefits for the whole town, including fire and police staff. The cost of equipment is reasonable and employees could be kept at a minimum to help keep costs down.

Memberships could be sold by the day, week, or month to help people with the cost.

Disadvantages: Upgrading the building and parking lot could be expensive and parking could be an issue if it got busy. There may be a slow season in the summer when more people look to the outside for exercise.

Cost Impact: The cost is hard to determine; it would all depend on what it takes to update the building. Equipment costs are estimated at \$40,000 (one-time) and Fit-up costs estimated at \$180,000 which includes \$40k for shoring up first floor and \$40k for bathroom upgrades/showers. Operating costs estimated at \$8k for heating/cleaning and \$32k for Staff

v) Option Name: Town Activity Center

Research: Tammy Nason – Dean Robertson reporting

Concept: Activity Center for all clubs and activity groups to meet, spend time and carry out their activities for themselves and/or the public. Would be space to store supplies, have classes and conduct activities.

Advantages: The building would be used as a meeting center and also for activities for any activity group during the year. Could be used daily or a couple of day as needed. Bus trips could be arranged to leave from here for even more activities.

Disadvantages: High cost for start up. Cost to maintain. Need volunteers. Might not be used enough to keep open.

Cost Impacts: Lockers \$500; Repairs to fire escape (\$10,000?), add kitchen \$5,000 to 10,000; remove walls \$7,000; possibly a lift elevator (\$20k) or full elevator (\$80k); code upgrades to building, windows, carpets, toilets, refrigerator, stove, \$250,000 – \$300,000. Defibrillator and training for staff.

vi) Option Name: Sell as Private Housing

Research By: Susan Dube' - Scott Lees

Concept: Town would sell the Old School House/Town Offices to a private party, corporation or other entity and be developed as a private home or two-unit condo.

Advantages: Funds realized from the sale of the property could be used towards the purchase of another building or facility for Town Offices use. Repair, maintenance, and future rehabilitation would not be the Town's responsibility. Restoration of the building would be the project of a new owner. Town would collect property taxes annually for the property. This option is consistent with the zoning rules for this location, defined as 'Village Residential' (see Appendix A).

Disadvantage: Time frame for selling the property because of its unique features and situation, i.e., limited parking must be negotiated with neighboring building, septic easement, costly rehab to restore to a single family, two unit, condo, the current market, etc. In a slow real estate market, true value of the building might not be realized. Offers could be submitted for under Town assessed value. Once property has been sold, there will no longer be Town control over its upkeep and village appeal. Zoning will insure its proper use, but not condition. After sale of the property, the Town will have the expense of relocating Town Offices and also the newly repaired and painted Bandstand.

Cost Impacts: This evaluation can be completed only by knowing the exact costs related to the relocation of Town Offices. Selling the property at the assessed value or below in this market could take some time and consequently result in costly repairs in addition to ongoing maintenance, while not accumulating additional equity.

vii) Option Name: Town Office renovation & upgrades as per Art. 26 proposed.

Research By: John Shipman

Concept: Design/build an office upgrade that will use existing space, with improvements as needed, consistent with SMP 'mid-sized' option proposed from Article 26 findings.

Advantages: This option will keep the town office functions in the Village proper; it will keep the level of activity in the Village center up and consistent with its current level; it will keep town government functions in one location; it will allow for maintenance and/or investment in historical buildings in town; and, it maintains the iconic value of the buildings in village center on 'the hill'.

Disadvantages: The office space would not be new. This is a costly option due to the size (5200 s.f, approximately) and the type and degree of construction to meet code compliance as drawn by SMP. Parking upgrades would also be required. Additionally, ‘The hill’ driving access issue remains. Finally, this option has been initially rejected by the voters at the 2010 Town Meeting (as were the other options).

Cost Impacts: In the range of \$750k-\$950k, even up to a million dollars depending on final space is finally required.

(viii) Option Name: Town Office ‘Campus’

Research By: John Shipman

Concept: Use all, or some combinations of, buildings on top of ‘the hill’ for town office functions. This option involves using old school (current town office) and purchasing or leasing all or portions of Mason’s building and/or the Rivard house.

Advantages: This option would keep town office functions and the town government center in the Village proper and keep the level of activity in the Village center at its current level. This option allows for the maintenance and/or investment in historical buildings in town and maintains the iconic, historic value of buildings in village center. This option has the potential to allow for expanded capacity without as much major construction expense and may require less fire, safety, ADA and energy code upgrades compared to full re-hab option. It could allow for easier access for disabled to BOS meetings if held in the Masonic Hall or the Town Hall.

Disadvantages: The office space would not be new or as efficiently laid out as newly constructed space elsewhere. The Town could end up with more old buildings to maintain and potentially upgrade or repair, which could be costly. The second floor of the town office might end up only being used for file storage as the upstairs would likely not have handicap access. Full fire safety and ADA upgrades would be required if the Rivard house is used (due to change of use from residential to business). Finally, the ‘hill’ issue persists.

Cost Impacts: As with the other options, code upgrades would be required (min. \$250k) for the Town Office building. Cost would be much higher if the Mason’s building were purchased (\$250k?) and then upgraded for codes (\$250k?). Only if the building were rented for BOS meeting space (\$5k annually?) would costs be more reasonable (unless this constitutes a zoning ‘change of use’).

**Table 3-2 Potential “Town Campus” building space:**

Total need identified in SMP “Article 26” report: 4,656 square feet.

	Town Office	Mason’s	Rivard House**
<b>Downstairs s.f.</b>	1,640	2,296	1,100
<b>Upstairs s.f.</b>	1,148	2,296	400?
<b>Total s.f.</b>	2,788	4,592	1,500

**Table 3-3 Town Campus space- sample Options (for demonstration purposes only!)**

	Town Office	Mason’s	Rivard House**
--	-------------	---------	----------------

<b>Option A</b>	Town Administration, Treasurer, Tax collector, File storage	Town Clerk, BOS meeting room, BOS office, ZBA, Con Com, Code officer	Police
<b>Option B</b>	Town Administration, Treasurer, Tax collector, File storage; ZBA, Con Com, Planning board, BOS office	Police, BOS meeting	Town Clerk, Code officer
<b>Option C</b>	Town Administration, Treasurer, Tax collector, File storage	Town Clerk, BOS meeting room, BOS office, ZBA, Con Com, Code officer	-----*

\*Police to Village Rd with Fire Dept.

\*\* Note: In the final analysis, this building was dropped from consideration.

(iv) Option Name: Town Office- Use creative design, construction and code methods to upgrade & add to existing Office while meeting needs (space, historic preservation and financial)

Researched by: Committee

Concept: Examine office space needs, file storage needs, code options, and code variance potential and allowed building upgrades and construction practices and design a building that meets space and code needs of the town while working with as much financial restraint as possible. Preservation of historic value would also be a goal.

Advantages: This option would keep town office functions and the town government center in the Village proper and keep the level of activity in the Village center at its current level. Its risk of failure was rated as ‘none’. This option allows for the maintenance and/or investment in historical buildings in town and maintains the iconic, historic value of buildings in village center. This option has the potential to allow for expanded capacity without as much space and construction expense but may require more creative, but allowed, solutions to fire, safety, ADA and energy code compliance compared to full (Article 26) re-hab/addition option.

Disadvantages: The office space would not be new or as efficiently laid out as newly constructed space elsewhere. The Town could end up with higher maintenance or operational costs than a new building. The second floor of the town office might end up only being used for file storage as the upstairs would likely not have handicap access. This option still inherits ‘the hill’ issues; parking solutions have some limitations, although some ‘doable’ options were presented in the Art. 26 findings.

Cost Impacts: Costs depend on the final square feet needed for the building. Bergeron thought that for \$500k the Town would end up with a very nice building. He suggested using \$150 per square foot, which at 4,000 SF translates to \$6000. It could be more or less, depending how the filing situation and selectmen’s meetings are dealt with.

#### 4) Alternatives Matrix

An evaluation matrix for the alternatives was developed so that a quick overview of findings could be presented to the selectmen. More details related to advantages and disadvantages of

each option were provided in ‘Alternative Assessments’ (see above) and this information is critical to an understanding of each option, even though not included in the evaluation matrix. They must be reviewed equally to get a true picture of each option.

This matrix summarizes the options brought forward for full evaluation. See *footnotes*, also.

**Table 3-4 Old School House Future Use Alternatives Evaluation matrix, 11-8-2010**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost Impacts (rough estimate)</b>	<b>Visits per year<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Estimated risk of failure<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>Craft Center</b>	Privately run artists/craft center, leased from Town	Constr. Cost to fit-up \$250k <sup>2</sup> ; Operating costs- \$0/yr - income breakeven min. target; or make some small income	2500	Moderate? (difficult to assess; need right leader)	
<b>Day Care-Children</b>	Child day-care; Town or privately run?	Constr. Cost to fit-up \$250k <sup>2</sup> ? Operating costs- Personnel & facility costs <sup>4</sup> \$100k/yr	1500	High (Cost/use ratio high)	
<b>Day Care-Adult</b>	Adult day-care; town or privately run?	Constr. Cost to fit-up \$250k <sup>2</sup> ? Operating costs- Personnel & facility costs <sup>4</sup> \$100k+/yr	750	High (Cost/use ratio high)	
<b>Fitness center</b>	Exercise room & equipment; town or privately run?	Constr. Cost to fit-up \$230k <sup>2</sup> ? Operating cost- personnel & facility costs <sup>4</sup> \$40k/yr	2000-2500	Moderate	
<b>Town Activity Center</b>	Activity center for all ages; town run	Constr. Cost to fit-up \$300k <sup>2</sup> ? Operating costs \$10k/yr <sup>4</sup>	420	High (Cost to use ratio high)	
<b>Sell private housing</b>	Single family or 2-unit condo	Initial income to Town est. at \$100k? Annual tax income \$2.5k/yr	1400 <sup>5</sup>	Low <sup>8</sup>	
<b>Town Office-expanded<sup>1</sup></b>	Upgrade & add on to existing building <sup>2</sup> ; codes met as per Art. 26	Constr. Costs \$750k-\$950k <sup>3</sup> Operating costs \$20k <sup>4</sup>	2500	None	
<b>Town Office “Campus”</b>	Purchase Mason’s <sup>7</sup> or rent for add’l space <sup>10</sup> ; minimal upgrades, as needed	Constr. Cost \$500k-\$750k <sup>3</sup> Operating costs \$20k/yr <sup>4</sup>	2500	None	
<b>Town Office-Renovation &amp; upgrades to creatively meet requirements</b>	Use creative design and code methods to upgrade & add to existing Office while meeting needs (space, code and financial)	Constr., costs \$500k-\$600k; Operating costs \$12k/year	2500	None	

Table 3-4 *footnotes, other assumptions, implications and/or consequences:*

1. Assumes police would move to fire station; impacts would be additional cost of building “safety complex”
2. Means that additional cost incurred for full town office, fire and police complex at Village Rd. site. SMP estimate from Article 26 study was \$2,829,244 for new + renovated option (i.e., all town functions at one site)
3. Means that additional cost incurred to construct police office facilities and add to/renovate fire station at Village Rd site. SMP estimate from Article 26 study was \$2,416,174 (i.e., Town ‘safety complex’ to house fire and police together). Placing Police at a third location (i.e., housed by themselves) could be considered if fire house on Village Rd is not expanded/upgraded. SMP estimate from Article 26 study indicated that ideally the police would be provided a minimum (not including exercise room, break room, lockers/showers or sally port) of 2700 s.f. At SMP’s construction cost estimate of \$158/s.f., that means \$427,000 for new construction of police-only facility, not including land purchase and site development costs; costs to move police to an existing (yet unidentified) building has not been estimated.
4. Facility Costs assumed at \$10,000 per year for utilities and cleaning per approx. 2600 s.f. of office space
5. Assume 4 adults (2 units)
6. Risk of failure defined as chances that Old School re-use option will not be successful as planned- i.e., chance that building will become vacant and languish as a result of project failure
7. Initial discussions with building owners or tenants indicated that they would consider offers that the Town (and only the Town) may propose
8. Purchaser would need an agreement with the Mason’s to access the property.
9. Visit per year were estimated based on the number of employees and the estimated number of the public that currently visit the Town Office.
10. The Rivard’s house on the hill (the original Town school house) was considered, and the owners would have considered an offer from the Town to buy the house. However, the Committee finally decided to not carry this building forward for further discussion. The space was not really needed in this option and it would have meant significant code upgrades due to Town zoning ordinance designation as a “change of use” (residential to business office use).

## 5. Summary of Findings

The findings of this committee have been summarized in Table 3-4 (above) which must be utilized in concert with the Alternative Assessments sections in Section 3, which list advantages and disadvantages of each option.

By totaling the rankings of each committee member (Table 5-1, below),

<b>Table 5-1. Scores and ranking of Old School Future Use Committee</b>										
	Committee Member#									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Rank
<b>Craft Center</b>	4	1	7	7	4	4	4	1	32	4
<b>Child Day Care</b>	7	8	8	6	7	7	8	5	56	8
<b>Adult Day Care</b>	8	9	9	5	6	8	7	6	58	9
<b>Fitness Center</b>	5	2	5	4	3	5	5	2	31	3
<b>Activity Center</b>	6	3	6	9	5	6	6	7	48	6
<b>Sell Building</b>	9	4	4	8	9	9	3	3	49	7
<b>Office –Full Upgrade</b>	2	6	2	3	8	3	9	8	41	5
<b>Office Campus</b>	3	7	3	1	1	1	2	4	22	1
<b>Office- Modified Upgrade</b>	1	5	1	2	2	2	1	9	23	2

Summary statements based on Committee findings:

1. The Committee came up with 16 potential alternative uses for the Old School and narrowed that down to nine that it examined in more detail.
2. Of the final nine alternatives, five related to conducting alternative activities at the building, three involved re-use as the Town Office, and one involved the sale of the building.
3. Beyond the Committee’s own work, Freedom’s Heritage committee did research into what other towns have done with their old buildings and a life safety/fire/building/ADA code review was conducted by a consultant (Bergeron Technical Services). Both these reports should be reviewed for their findings.
4. The Committee used its best judgment to estimate relative costs, risk of failure and advantages and disadvantages of each of the nine alternatives. Any final alternatives to be more carefully considered by the Town would need much more refined cost estimates to ensure they were complete and accurate. The rough costs presented were based on information from Article 26 work, Bergeron Technical Services, or research the committee members did themselves; or our best estimates as laypersons.
5. The summary table of alternatives (Table 3-4) must be viewed in concert with the detailed list of advantages and disadvantages to get the full picture.
6. The Bergeron report pointed out a good number of the current problems with the Old School building, but also made recommendations as to how they could be fixed. It’s clear that, on the one hand, the problems with the Old School, and its location, can be used as a means to indicate that the building should no longer be used as a town office; on the other hand, there do appear to be solutions to the problems listed. The Bergeron report stated that the building isn’t that bad. That said, the Town needs to decide how much money to put into the building if it were to choose any of the alternative uses.
7. While the Committee members ranked their preferences (Table 5-1), it is clear that their opinions were different and likely reflect the diversity of opinions held by Freedom

townspeople. While the majority ranked two of the old school re-use options as most preferred, not everyone agreed.

8. Should the selectmen go forward with re-use of the Town Office/Old School, this committee recommends that a new committee be formed to take a new look, based on past studies and findings, at how the re-use can be accomplished. It may be advisable for this committee to also look at how to and where to house the police; since they currently are in the town office.
9. Based on the results of these findings, our recommendation is for the Town is to contract a consultant (or consulting team) to develop a detailed plan for the preferred alternative (s), and a cost estimate to complete it, using techniques and designs sensitive to the building (s), the site and cost. Information from Article 26 and the Bergeron report would be a good starting point.
10. If the Town Office were to remain in the Old School it would appear advisable to study more thoroughly what other towns have for space and what has and has not worked for them. It is clear from the Conway example that population size does not drive the size of a town office. A town just needs to be able to accommodate staff moving from part-time to full-time status as a larger population increases the demands on staff time.

## **6. Appendices**

- A) Zoning Ordinance 304.1 Table (Permitted uses in “Village Residential” District)
- B) Old School Future Use Committee Minutes, November 8, 2010
- C) Comparison of Local Town office space with Freedom (some examples)



## Appendix A

### Freedom Zoning Ordinance 304.1 Table (Permitted uses in "Village Residential" District)

#### 304.1 TABLE "VR" VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL

##### Objective

In our community with a respect for its historic past, and its tradition of single family houses, it is necessary to make provisions for the conservation of these values. This District is centered around the area of Freedom, known as the Village. (See map).

##### USES

###### Permitted Uses

1. Single family dwelling
2. Agriculture
3. Forestry
4. Produce Stand
5. Water Storage Facility Amended 3/10/98
6. Residential Camping
7. Use accessory to permitted use

###### Special Exception Uses

1. Tourist home
2. Church
3. Home occupation
4. Private school
5. Use accessory to special exception use

##### Area and Dimensions

Minimum Lot Size	1.0 acre
Minimum road frontage	200 feet
Minimum front yard	50 feet
Minimum side yard	30 feet
Minimum rear yard	40 feet

Appendix B  
**Old Schoolhouse Future Use Committee**  
**November 8, 2010**

**Members Present:** Susan Dube, Scott Lees, Tammy Nason, John Shipman, Dean Robertson, Bonnie Burroughs, Marshall Kendall, Art Robinson (alternate)

**Members Absent:** Rick Zecher

**Others Present:** Jane Luke, Lucy Kendell, Peg Scully, Anne Cunningham, Lee Fritz, Sylvia Carney, Shawn Bergeron

Minutes recorded by Dianne Park

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm.

**Minutes**

Motion by Marshall, seconded by Bonnie to approve the minutes from October 11, 2010 with changes. All in favor. Changes were as follows:

Under 'Members Absent' add Scott Lees.

First page, paragraph starting with 'The Selectmen agreed, with the board, to hire a consultant to conduct a code review for the Town Office and Mason's building to examine ways to minimize the impact of fire/safety and energy issues on potential re-construction alternatives. They gave the Old Schoolhouse Committee \$1,000 for this project. They want the committee to look at Bergeron Technical Services because they're a local firm, in addition to Dan Bartlett, an architect from Keene.'

First Page, third paragraph, add the option '- Prepare a report on code issues.'

Page 2, second paragraph, have the last sentence read: 'The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 25, 2010, depending on when Bergeron can finish their report.'

Page 2, 'Record Storage', change the first sentence to read: 'John stated that in talking with Lee Fritz, of the Heritage Committee, that the town of Acworth is storing some of their records at the State Archives Office in Concord, NH and the town of Freedom might be able to do the same.'

**Bergeron Technical Services – Shawn Bergeron**

Shawn Bergeron made an opening statement saying that the Town Office Building was not that bad and the Mason's Building has more issues than the Town Office Building. Shawn answered all questions from the Committee & Audience.

Marshall Kendell asked three questions:

1 – Page 4, talking about fire escapes ‘...existing fire escapes can remain but shall not constitute more than 50% of the required means of egress...’ Marshall wanted to know if this meant that the second floor needed an upgraded fire escape. Shawn answered ‘yes’.

2 – Question on the statement in the report that refers to the town office building being 11” too high and will that trigger the installation of a sprinkler system, and would a change of use trigger this as well. To the first question, Shawn answered ‘yes’, but the Town could apply for a variance given its only 11”; Shawn answered the second part as ‘yes’, a change of use would require the installation of a sprinkler system and he further explained the sprinkler issue.

3 – If the town wanted to use the Mason’s building for anything other than how it’s used today is a sprinkler system needed. Shawn answered ‘yes’, because it’s a change of use’.

Dean Robertson wanted to know if the Town Office Building stays a Town Office Building wouldn’t it be smart to put in an elevator. John Shipman commented that in his opinion an elevator should be installed but that would increase the cost. Shawn explained that when Madison, NH renovated their town hall, plans were drawn up that included a base so that they could install an elevator at a future date. The committee wanted to know how Madison handled their storage issues. Shawn stated that Madison put their vault in the foundation of the elevator, and would report its size to the Committee.

Susan Dube wanted to know why the Article 26 Committee did not have any of this information. John explained why/how the two committees were different.

Confusion arose about certain fire safety issues (i.e., renovations exceeding 50% of the existing square footage would require full code upgrades to entire building) and Shawn stated that he e-mailed the State Fire Chief these questions and is awaiting his comments. He will give the committee this information when he receives it. Shawn also suggested sending his report to the State Fire Marshall’s Office and have them give their opinion. Shawn further suggested that if the present addition were to be torn down and a new one erected with fire safety protections between the two building, then the new building has to be fully compliant but the old one does not. Shawn spoke about the fire safety of the Town Office and Mason’s Building and what should/can be done.

Anne Cunningham asked if documents were stored in the vault did that mean the no access was possible. Shawn explained that people could access this information anytime.

Scott Lees brought up the point about making the buildings ADA Compliant. Shawn passed out this report stating that it was put together after the Building Inspection Report was sent in. He briefly read from his ADA Report stating that as long as the buildings stay in their present use the all ADA compliance is fine but if a change of use happens then that would trigger putting in full ADA access.

John asked the committee’s reaction about putting the option of renovating the town office building back on the table. Scott commented by saying that with the Bergeron Report that option

should come back on the table in order to give the Board of Selectmen (BOS) all the information but will the report trigger a change in the matrix cost figures. John gave Shawn the Evaluation Matrix and asked his opinion on the cost estimates listed. Shawn stated that we should plan on costs for construction/rehab being in the \$150 per square foot range. Shawn stated that more planning was needed to see what the real costs would be. John asked if a \$500,000 budget would be realistic for this project and Shawn answered 'yes' and further stated that in order to keep the budget work backwards from \$500,000. Shawn did say, however, that the preferred way was to come up with a design that meets the Town's needs and then do the cost estimating.

Anne Cunningham asked the question of what was the real requirement for office space compared with the Article 26 figures. Shawn will give the committee the figures from Madison and Conway Town Hall renovation.

John stated he would like to write up the building renovation option and ask Shawn and the Committee to comment on its accuracy. Shawn commented that he was already way over our budget, so the Committee will review the write-up itself.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 15, 2010 @ 5:00pm and the agenda should include; increase cost impact figures, put the option to renovate the town office building back in the matrix and reclassify matrix options. John stated that the final report is due to the Selectmen on November 15, 2010 and he will attend tonight's BOS Meeting and ask for more time. However, the Committee wanted to finish up its work, so it was decide they would make every attempt to finalize the report on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November He further stated that he would like all committee members to comment on the final report draft and rescore the matrix. Scott lees commented that the committee should score the options at the next meeting to keep all our considerations public. John agreed. He will put this information together and have a full discussion on the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **Approval of Invoice**

Company: Bergeron Technical Services

Date: November 4, 2010

Amount: \$850.00

Services: On site analysis & code review of the Town Office Building and a less detailed analysis of the Masonic Lodge. Written report including life safety code review, systems analysis and suggestions for improvement.

21.17hr @ 100.00 - \$2,117.00

4.90 hr. @ 68.00 – 333.20

Less a credit of \$1,600.20 (to honor proposal)

Motion by Marshall, seconded by Dean to approve this invoice. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

## Appendix C

### Comparison of Local Town office space with Freedom (some examples)

Town	Population 2000 Census	No. of Staff ** Full-time/part- time (Total Occ.)***	Meeting space (Occupancy)	Square feet
Conway Town Hall	8,604	9/3 (15)	50	4,660
Madison Town Hall	1,984	6/3 (11)	50	4,568*
Sandwich Town Hall	1286	3/1 (9)	30****	5,920
Freedom Town Hall- Existing	1,303	3/6 (11)	20	2,788
Freedom Town Hall- Art. 26 size proposed 2010 Town warrant				5,236 (2,108 sf renovation + 3544 addition)
Freedom Town Hall- Art. 26 minimum evaluated				3,698 (2268 sf renovation + 1430 addition)

\* Fireproof Town Vault (concrete walls, ceiling and rated door) Approx. 9'x12' (108 s.f.)

\*\* Includes police on-shift at any one time

\*\*\* if all staff and Board chairs were there all at the same time, not including any public

\*\*\*\* Sandwich currently has a meeting room on first floor for 30 people, but will be moving meetings upstairs where there is a large meeting room which will hold 50+ people; they are replacing the downstairs meeting room with office space. They are adding an elevator to access the upstairs meeting room (Est. \$20k). To date they have all their office functions and meetings on first floor ( about 2,960 sf), but are planning on expanding to second floor to take full advantage of their second floor which is underutilized.