



Paul Foley <pfoley@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Fwd: Rogers School

1 message

Rogers Study <rogerscommittee@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 7:32 AM

To: ksilvia@fairhaven-ma.gov, selectmanbobespindola@gmail.com, pfoley@fairhaven-ma.gov, wgraves@fairhaven-ma.gov

Good Morning

I'm passing on an email that the committee received.

Sue

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Alyssa Marshall** <alyssa_marshall@emerson.edu>

Date: Wed, Jan 27, 2021, 4:37 PM

Subject: Rogers School

To: <dfreitas@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Cc: <rogerscommittee@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. Freitas,

I've been researching and crunching numbers to try to assess the need of affordable housing for Fairhaven residents. This is a difficult task. First, I'm a writer so numbers are not my specialty. Second, the numbers are hard to come by (at least when you're new to this sort of thing). The best I could do was a demographic chart from 2018 and an average from the coalition on senior housing.

As of 2018, the town had 3524 senior residents age 65+ (the designation the coalition uses). Of those residents, roughly 10.4% on national average should need affordable housing. That's 366 units. With Oxford and a list someone else submitted (granting their numbers are accurate) we are exceeding that threshold. If you factor in the 16% of the population that is between 55-64 to account for the 55+ community the proposal hopes to serve, we are very close to that threshold when the Oxford project is factored in. As Joann Cunha, I believe a former employee of the housing authority, if not a current one, publicly noted, the housing ratio to town population needs to be looked at. "The current ratio far exceeds most surrounding towns." I'm assuming the excess is in the green, meaning we have more affordable housing than most neighboring towns.

I've also run some other (very basic, very rough) numbers. It seems like a tax increase of roughly \$240 would handle a total demolition of the building when spread across residents. It would require, without further funding, roughly a \$560 increase for a rehab project.

This does not take into account any funding that could be found for historical restoration, crowdsourcing, donations, or the corporate taxes that might be available with a minimal increase as well.

The current proposal is expecting \$21 million plus dollars from this very sort of thing and although much of that is likely attributed to the affordable housing component, it's a drastically large number to assume a large portion couldn't be funded for the four million dollars reportedly needed to rehabilitate.

Perhaps we could pay a minimal tax increase and also fund a portion?

I can conceive of a community building that would be immensely more useful to our town. Other residents are considering ways their skillsets might be useful to a project like this. Maybe something else comes up. If not, if nothing does, I think a \$240 tax increase and demolition is better than the current proposal. You could fit at least 8 house lots in the front lot alone, likely more.

And although property tax might be a big incentive for the town with the current proposal, at what cost does it come to its residents?

I have considered and reconsidered this proposal. I have driven around looking at buildings, trying to figure out what the current developer could do to make it more agreeable to the community. I have thought maybe they could add some brick and stonework, dog shed dormers, like they did to the Our Lady's Haven addition. I have thought they could make it smaller, take out some units, get it down to 30 or 40. I have thought maybe the town can keep the back lot.

I implore you to think about what this building will do to the community in the center. The loss of the park would be a great devalue to our small town. I know they are saying they will keep it, but for how long? Is it private property? Both proposals also shove the "Big Toy" into the back corner and seem to decrease its size, but also the footprint of the free space where kids play baseball, basketball, soccer, kickball, hosted a community nerf gun fight, amongst other group activities is lost. There's a list of roughly 60 other questions and concerns about traffic, aesthetics, foot traffic, etc, so I won't go on, but couldn't we at least fund a community outreach project to keep the park?

I can't imagine we couldn't make that work. I can think of several friends with business who would be willing to donate to that alone. Maybe the back lot could come off the table or be sold separately? Is it a matter of the town not wanting to maintain it for public use?

I am aware that the building has been sitting for seven years. I have been informed that there are anywhere from three to ten years (from different sources) before demolition is the only viable option. The most informed one suggested 8-10 years with the mothballing,

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repointing, and current roof condition. That's a lot of time to accept a proposal that will dramatically affect residents, because it is "the only option."

It's not. It's just the only one right now.

I do hope economic factors will be considered (since that is a viable and necessary part of our community) but thought beyond, as well. The right project is out there. I hope you'll consider giving it time to manifest.

Thank you for your consideration and service to the town,

Alyssa Marshall