

TOWN SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS OF PUBLICLY OWNED PROPERTIES WITH BUILDINGS

AN OVERVIEW

Currently, Rye has 12 Town owned properties with building(s). Common sense and/or restricted use eliminate consideration of most of them as potential sites for the future conduct of Town business:

1. Three of these buildings are sewer pumping stations. The **sewer pumping station at 29 Church Road** is considered to have 0 acres.
2. The **Abeniqui Pumping Station** at 737 Central Road on less than one acre.
3. The **Jenness Beach Pumping Station** is also listed as 0 acres.
4. **Cemetery Vault:** Although the Central Cemetery, 20 Central Road, consists of 16.5 acres and is centrally located, use of both land and building is governed by the Cemetery Trustees.
5. **Outer Marker:** The Outer Marker, located at 105 Locke Road, is sited on 1.29 acres. It is a 30' x 30' cinder block, flat roofed building with no heat or other amenities. It was constructed as part of the Instrumental Landing Program installed when Pease Air Force Base was created. The building was donated to the Town of Rye by the Department of the Interior/National Park Service and is designated for recreational purposes only.
6. **Parsonage:** The Parsonage, 575 Washington Road, is located on 1.9 acres in the middle of Rye Center and the Historic District. The Parsonage Apartments are contained within the two buildings at this site and management is under the Housing Partnership.
7. **Recreation Building:** The Recreation Building, 55 Recreation Road, is cited on 171.02 acres. This land was designated the "Central Municipal Recreation Area" via Article 7 of the 1964 Town Meeting. Article 7 established the Rye Recreation Commission whose function it is to specifically "concern itself with all that which has to do with recreation in the Town of Rye and that it have the general supervision of all Town lands, buildings and facilities reserved or accepted for recreational use by the Town or its Selectmen, subject only to approval by the Selectmen".
8. **Public Works Department and Transfer Station:** Located at 309 Grove Road, the DPW site contains 7.13 acres. Only a very small percentage along the northern most portion of this area has not been excavated. The DPW garage and recycling building were sited at their current locations for that reason. Even the proposed salt shed of several years ago would have required pilings due to the status of the subsurface.

Although the 2012 warrant article requesting funding for a Public Works long range plan for the area was defeated, we continue to be aware that safety is an issue at this site and traffic through the facility is very heavy at times.
9. **Rye Public Library:** Our public library, 581 Washington Road, is sited on 0.25 acres of land. The building and its contents are the domain and responsibility of the Rye Library Trustees. Unless we extend and apply the logic of those who say that everything within the Town Hall can be digitized, this Library building is omitted from consideration as a possible Town Hall annex.

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More serious consideration for the alleviation of the overcrowded conditions at our Town Hall must be given to the last 3 Town owned pieces of land with buildings:

10. **Public Safety Building:** Set in the heart of the Historic District, the style and scale of this complex was designed to be in harmony with other colonial house/barn combinations in the area. During the design process, it was noted that space for "unknown future needs" would be available over the apparatus bays; but no measures were included to complete the space or provide access to it. Activities such as those of a Senior Center were discussed briefly; but at no time was it suggested by the Safety Building Committee that this location would be an appropriate place for Town Hall.

The Public Safety Complex site contains 2.17 acres. The central location is in its favor as a possibility for Town Hall activities; but, due to ever increasing traffic through Rye Center on Washington Road combined with the emergency nature of fire and police activities and the fact that school children traverse the roadway between the Junior High and the Library, deliberate addition of Town Hall activity at this location raises serious safety concerns. In addition, staff and residents, including those with disabilities, would be required to park at the rear of the building and then access the second floor via elevator or lengthy staircase making it less than user friendly.

The second story space currently has no floor. Support for a future second floor was included in the original design; but, as the area is over the apparatus bays, floor construction would require sealing from fumes, noise etc. to meet code. Ceiling, heat, electricity, telecommunications, plumbing, partitions and other necessities would all need to be incorporated into the design.

In addition to design and construction of the interior space, alterations to the existing exterior of the building would also be required. As the building currently stands, no natural light is available on a second floor except that provided by the three windows on each of the gable ends. Viewed from the exterior of the building, these windows are in proportion. Unfortunately, they are not located appropriately in relationship to an interior second floor. Dormers or skylights would also be required and, in doing so, the original design of the Public Safety Building Complex would be destroyed.

A financial estimate of converting this area for Town Hall activities, by Art Guadano, AG Architects, was provided in your packet of materials.

11. **Old Police Building:** The Old Police Building, 37 Central Road, is sited on 0.28 acres. This building was constructed at the turn of the 20th century as a battery building associated with the Portsmouth Electric Railway which ran through Rye from Portsmouth to Hampton Beach from 1899 to 1924.

The site was purchased by the Town of Rye in 1925 and served as home to our Highway Department until the current Public Works Building and Recycling Center were constructed in the 1980s. Following relocation of the Highway Department, the Police Department, previously housed in our old Fire Station, moved to 37 Central Road and made the best of the deteriorating surroundings until the Safety Complex became a reality. The furnace at the Old Police Building actually failed before the Safety Complex was completed.

This site is close to the Town Hall; but when disadvantages are listed they include mold, no septic, no heat, no plumbing and limited parking. In locating one or two departments here, we would be taking a step back from consolidation of Town functions.

12. **Town Hall:** The idea of putting an addition onto the rear of our current Town Hall has been put forward several times since World War II. Many have recognized the advantages, both organizationally and financially, of having all Town Hall related activity under one roof.

Although the Town Hall lot consists of only 1.37 acres, the Town of Rye owns up the hill to the north and across the front of the Church, between Washington Road and the Church steps, including the parking lot where the Farmers Market is currently held each Wednesday.

Building onto the rear of the existing Town Hall could allow easy access from the upper parking lot to the Town Hall second floor.

The south facing roof of an addition would provide an ideal location for solar energy installation.

How much space is required to alleviate the overcrowding and provide for the future is a basic question at any site. At Town Hall, that determination must begin with a decision about the great hall. Should the space within the great hall be reclaimed for meetings, events and activities or continue to be used as office space?

In addition, determination of space requirements is much more complicated than X number of square feet times ten employees. We have numerous boards, committees and commissions varying in size and public participation that require meeting space. Finding locations for these meetings has increasingly become a juggling act in recent years.

Despite digitizing technology, municipalities do require storage space for historical documents, state requirements and hard copies.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the Americans with Disabilities Act automatically adds space requirements the moment that we undertake renovation and/or construction regardless of the site.

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