



TOWN OF GREENWICH

Office of First Selectman (203) 622-7710 fax (203) 622-3793
Town Hall • 101 Field Point Road • Greenwich, CT 06830
E-Mail: fred.camillo@greenwichct.org

Fred Camillo
First Selectman

THE FIRST SELECTMAN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE HAVEMEYER BUILDING

ZOOM WEBINAR

Monday, November 6, 2023
10:00 am

ACCESS

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/88900682954?pwd=ZEI0eDBmcnVRZ0t4cGt1RUo4TnNuUT09>
Password: 3179863

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +16465189805,,88900682954#,,1#,3179863# or 8778535257,,88900682954#,,1#,3179863#
(Toll Free)

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(Toll Free) or 833 548 0282 (Toll Free)

Webinar ID: 889 0068 2954

Password: 3179863

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the minutes for the Committee meetings of October 30, 2023
3. Final (?) read and adoption of the Committee's Report
4. Adjournment

The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org.

"The Town of Greenwich is Dedicated to Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity"



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THE FIRST SELECTMAN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE HAVEMEYER BUILDING

Zoom Webinar Meeting
Wednesday October 30, 2023
10:00am

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees:

Committee: Andy Duus (*Chair*), Christina Downey, Bill Drake, and Miriam Kreuzer
Absent: Joe Kelly
Guest: Peter Alexander

1. Call to Order

- Mr. Duus called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

2. Approval of the Minutes of Prior Committee Meetings

- Attending members of the Committee unanimously approved the minutes for the meetings of October 4 and October 19.

3. Review of third Draft of the Committee's Final Report

- The Committee discussed the draft and identified areas for clarification.

4. Next Meeting

- For the expected final read and adoption of its Report, the Committee scheduled its next meeting for 10am Monday November 6.

5. Adjournment

- After a vote of 4-0-0, the Committee adjourned the meeting at 10:42 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Andreas Duus III, Committee Chair

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Town of Greenwich, CT

**Report of
The First Selectman's Advisory Committee
On the Havemeyer Building**

In November 2022, the First Selectman Fred Camillo established an advisory committee (the "Committee") to evaluate and advise him regarding the Havemeyer Building ("Havemeyer" or the "Building").

Selected by the First Selectman, Committee members comprised Christina Downey (Vice Chair BOE), Bill Drake (member BET), Andy Duus (Committee Chair and former member BET), Joe Kelly (Chair BOE), and Miriam Kreuzer (member BET). Former Committee member Amy Courage had resigned due to other commitments.

**Genesis for the Committee
and the Current Opportunity**

One of the principal landmarks of downtown Greenwich, the Havemeyer Building has been the home for the district administrative offices of the Greenwich Public Schools ("Schools") for the past 76 years.

In recent decades, however, there has been periodic interest, expressed by either the Schools or the Town, to consider the move of the central administrative offices to another location, including the following reasons:

- The staff there face certain physical limitations in the structure and may have concerns about potential health risks.
- The capital maintenance and upgrades necessary to update the Building within the BOE's 15-year capital plan competing with necessary investments in our school buildings.
- The Town, which owns the building, recognizes that its current use may not be its 'highest and best' use, and that its redevelopment might contribute to the economic vitality of the downtown.

Two developments have recently occurred that make a potential move of the Schools' central administrative offices possibly more actionable:

1. The First Selectman has expressed the willingness to propose to other Town bodies that the Town – and not the Schools – assume the transition and rental costs of

office space to be used by the Schools' central staff. In other words, a move would not directly cause any increase in the Schools' operating costs. The *quid pro quo* is that the Town would have the latitude to then repurpose the Havemeyer Building.

2. The post-pandemic decline of interest in office space nationwide has led to an increase in available space and a possible decline in the rental rates in local office buildings. Prior efforts to relocate from Havemeyer had only considered office space, either extant or to-be-built, located on Town property. Perhaps indicative of office space opportunities in Greenwich, last month New Canaan moved its Public Schools central office, as well as the district's launch program and downtown campus, into privately-owned office space.

Recommendations

The Committee approved [unanimously] the following recommendations:

1. Relocate the Schools' Central Administrative Staff from the Havemeyer Building

- ⊖ The Committee recommends that the Board of Education formally approve the efforts by The First Selectman and the Superintendent to consider and evaluate the potential move of the District central offices from Havemeyer to suitable space in an office building.

- The Committee recommends that the Town Attorney prepare a memorandum confirming the rights and powers of the Town of Greenwich and the Board of Education pertaining to the Havemeyer Building prior to any action.

- The Committee recommends that the Town and the Schools enter into an agreement by which the Town bears the responsibility for any cost of space for the Schools' Central Administrative Staff in perpetuity.

- The Committee recommends that the Town, working with the Schools, seek suitable office space for the Schools' central administrative staff. The lease should be long-term, ideally not less than five/ten years, with an option to renew for a like-term. Ultimately, the RTM would need to approve any proposed lease.

- The Committee recommends that the Town consider engaging an agent to represent it in identifying the location and the negotiation of the lease of suitable office space.

- ⊖ To facilitate the transition, especially for those functions currently housed in the Havemeyer Building that would not move into the to-be-leased office space (such as storage and Facilities), the Committee recommends that an informal committee be established among Town and School representatives to relocate

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these non-administrative functions. The Committee recommends where appropriate these costs- will be borne by the Town.

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2. Budget for the New Lease

- o It may be possible that a move from the Havemeyer Building could begin as early as the beginning of fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024). Therefore, the Committee recommends that an estimate of the annual rental costs for the new office space together with other costs of the transition, be included in the preliminary budget for fiscal 2025 to be proposed by the First Selectman's Office. These costs should be outside of the Board of Education budget, in a suitable department or budget code to be determined by the Town Administrator.

3. Repurpose the Havemeyer Building

- o Concurrent with ~~a the~~ search for alternative space, the Town should begin the process for the potential repurposing of the Havemeyer Building. The Committee recommends the establishment of a new committee to assist with the preparation of, and the evaluation of responses to, a Request for Proposals for the Havemeyer Building.

4. Conclude the Current Committee

- o The Committee recognizes that its form as a public committee may not be appropriate for (a) the search and negotiation for new office space, and (b) for evaluation of responses to a request for proposals.
- o The Committee further recognizes that its membership composition may not be ideal for the recommended next steps. No current member of the Committee has the real estate experience necessary to evaluate the proposals responding to ~~athe~~ RFP or to negotiate the ultimate agreement with the ~~selected winning~~ proposal. Additionally, the four Committee members who currently serve either on the BET or on the BOE are not standing for re-election this November.
- o Therefore, we recommend that the Committee conclude its efforts after submission of this final report.

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Summary of Committee Process and Findings

The Committee met ~~a dozen~~~~eleven~~ times through ~~November~~~~October~~ 2023, during which it considered the following topics:

Building History & Use

In 1891, Daniel Mead sold the 2.7-acre property at 290 Greenwich Avenue, on which the Havemeyer Building now stands, to the Town's Meeting House School District. In the following year, sugar magnate Henry O. Havemeyer and his wife Louisine Havemeyer fully funded the construction of a school on the site. They selected architects Loring & Phipps, who developed an attractive buff-brick Romanesque design. Construction was completed in 1894.

The building comprises a total floor space of 52,520 square feet, or, after excluding the attic, usable floor space of 49,063 square feet. See below:

Basement	17,736 sq. ft.
First	17,729
Second	13,598
Attic	3,457

Though used initially as an elementary school, the Havemeyer Building soon hosted high school classes, as well, and saw its first high school class graduation in 1898. After the Town opened (a) its first dedicated high school (at 27 Havemeyer Place) in 1907 and (b) other elementary schools in subsequent years, the Greenwich Board of Education and the School District's central administrative offices moved into the Building in 1948 and remain headquartered there today.

Building Ownership

The Town's Law Department has advised that in the early 1900s, after State legislation mandated essentially that individual school districts be combined into the municipality, the Havemeyer property became the direct property of the Town. More broadly, according to State legislation (10-220) and case law, whereas municipal boards of education have responsibility for the maintenance of the properties used for school purposes, the ownership of properties resides with the municipality.

The Law Department has further advised that the BOE has control over the Building as long as it is being used for school purposes. To the extent the BOE wishes to give up its

use of the Building for something other than school purposes, the BOE would need to ~~take a formal~~ vote to turn the Building over to the Town. Once this is done, the Town would be able to take appropriate actions regarding the future of the Building.

Havemeyer Building Maintenance Trust

After the passing of Henry O. Havemeyer, his children created a trust in 1909 which had as its sole purpose the application of its “net income” to keep “in good order and repair said school building and the fixtures therein...”. Importantly, if the Havemeyer Building would ever cease to be used for “educational purposes”, the remaining balance of the trust fund (~~the “Trust Fund”~~) would revert to the Havemeyer heirs.

The Trust has two accounts:

- The “Basic” account. Also known as the principal account, it was originally funded through the contribution of bonds valued at \$27,000. Its value on September 30, 2022, (the most recent date data was available to us) was \$459,000. Per the Trust agreement, a unit of BofA has managed the fund since its inception.
- The “Income” account. This account receives periodic distributions of the net income of the “basic” account and is managed by trustees appointed by the Greenwich Probate Court. When requested by the Schools and after the trustees approve, the account may make distributions to reimburse the Schools for maintenance expenses incurred at the Havemeyer Building. The value of the account on June 30, 2023, was \$117,628, *pro forma* for the subsequent September distribution of \$171,700 to fund repairs at the Havemeyer Building.

Despite ongoing annual Building maintenance, disbursements have been uncommon. The immediate prior disbursements from the Trust were made in 2009 and in 1977.

We have been unable to determine whether the “basic” account includes any meaningful amount of net income, which should be distributed to the “income” account according to the terms of the Trust.

Although the two current trustees have submitted their resignations earlier this year, they continue to serve until replacements are named. Joe Kelly, a member of the Committee, has applied to the Probate Court to serve as a trustee.

Under the auspices of the Greenwich Probate Court and pursuant to the trust agreement, the Trust Fund has two trustees. [Although both have recently indicated a willingness to step-down, they continue to serve until the Court names their replacements.] [CAN UPDATE ON MONDAY PER JOE?]

~~Until earlier this year, no disbursements had been made from the Trust Fund since 2009, despite ongoing annual Building maintenance costs. After being alerted by the Committee of the Trust Fund's existence, the Superintendent's Office sought and received approval from the Probate Court in last month for distribution of \$171,700 for reimbursement of qualifying maintenance expenditures.~~

~~The balance remaining after the distribution was \$[?][UPDATE ON MONDAY?] of which all but the \$[?] [UPDATE ON MONDAY] original principal would be available for maintenance expense reimbursement.~~

The Greenwich Avenue Historic District

The Havemeyer Building does not have specific historic designation. It is located, however, in The Greenwich Avenue Historic District, which recognizes the commercial and civic historical development of the downtown area of Greenwich. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. Included within the broader historic district is the Greenwich Municipal Center Historic District, noted for the classical revival style municipal buildings – including the Havemeyer Building - in the core of downtown Greenwich.

Although inclusion in the historical district does not limit alternative uses of the Havemeyer Building, it likely limits latitude to alter the Building's exterior appearance.

Building Structure and Safety

For fiscal 2023, the RTM approved a budget request initially made by the First Selectmen for funding up to \$50,000 for an engineering survey and assessment of the Havemeyer Building. To conduct the study, the Committee engaged Pustola and Associates ("Pustola"), a leading engineering and construction firm that has had much experience working with the Town on a wide variety of renovation and new construction projects.

Helpfully, the Town has an extant service agreement with Pustola for building construction and maintenance. Therefore, the Committee was allowed to accept a proposal from Pustola, without the need for the circulation of a new Request for Proposal, provided the cost per engagement does not exceed \$25,000.

The Committee negotiated two separate engagements with Pustola.

- The first engagement requested a review of the capacity and safety of the Building's current structure and systems. Agreed-to fee was \$17,680.
- The second engagement was for a "Building Information Module" (or "BIM"), which provides certain information allowing for possible structural changes to be analyzed on the computer before being done physically. This technology is becoming the standard for building drafting and design. Agreed-to fee was \$10,200.

In summary, Pustola did not find any visible signs of hazardous materials, any major safety, code compliance, or any structural issues requiring immediate attention. Because Pustola did not conduct any invasive testing, it advises that prior to any significant renovations of the building, that environmental surveys be undertaken. It further advises that likely many of the systems would require updating to comply with current building code requirements.

Pustola's report is available both in hard-copy and digitally. It also incorporates by reference (a) the 2008 report "Existing Conditions, Preliminary Building Assessment", prepared by Perkins Eastman in anticipation for the possible conversion of the Havemeyer Building into The Greenwich Senior Center, and (b) The 2023 MEP report by Long Consulting evaluating the Building's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Pustola will also maintain the extensive data files (for which the Town received copies on thumb drives) underlying its BIM model and its structural analysis on its servers for a period of at least ten years.

Needs of the Schools' Central Administrative Office Staff

After having a full building tour, conducted by Dan Watson, Director of Facilities for the Schools, the Committee then met twice with Superintendent Toni Jones.

- Dr. Jones noted that the Havemeyer Building has certain physical limitations, including poor air circulation and an insufficient number of conference rooms, rest rooms and staff rooms.
- Additionally, Dr. Jones acknowledged that many among her staff in the Building have expressed concerns about potential exposure to mold, lead-based paint, and asbestos. The building examination conducted by the consulting engineer Mr. Kyle Pustola, however, did not find any mold. Additionally, he believes that the lead-

based paint and asbestos possibly present in the Building (given its age) would not pose a health risk so long as such remains either encapsulated or undisturbed.

For these reasons, Dr. Jones expressed willingness to consider a move of the central administrative offices from Havemeyer Building to another site, including space in a private office building. She has estimated that her staff of 100 approximately would require about 20,500 net square feet of office space. This estimate excludes space required by the Facilities department now housed at Havemeyer that would not need to be adjacent to the school administrative staff. The Facilities department (which includes shipping and warehouse) would need approximately 10,800 square feet. The costs of this space as well will be borne by the Town.

Specific office space preferences expressed by Dr. Jones include (a) walled offices over 'open plan' seating (due to the frequent confidential discussions had with families), and (b) a central location convenient for public access, the staff's commutation and for families to visit. In addition, there are other logistical requirements, including technology, which would need to be addressed.

The Committee notes that these space requirements do not differ significantly from an earlier space needs study and a separate potential Town-owned site relocation study done in 2005 (by Peter Gisolfi Associates) and updating studies done in 2009 (by The Geddes Partnership). The Committee also notes the 2016 study (by Fuller & D'Angelo) to "make recommendations for possible rearrangement, realignment and relocation of spaces within the building."

Potential Repurposing of the Building

Although how Havemeyer might be repurposed prospectively was beyond the purview of the Committee, it did review some prior efforts. Periodically, at least since the 1960s, there have been discussions about the potential repurposing.

The repurposing of public buildings in Greenwich has been done before, including notably the 1970 conversion of the former Greenwich High School into its Town Hall, and the 1977 conversion of the former Town Hall at 299 Greenwich Avenue into a senior center and an arts center.

Among specific efforts to repurpose the Havemeyer Building was the 2008 proposal by the Greenwich Center for the Arts. One of its former board members, community leader

Stuart Adelberg, shared his perspectives with the Committee. This group had sought to “restore and reimagine” the Building into an art center, featuring both the 400-seat proscenium theater and a 125-seat black box theater, as well as classrooms, rehearsal spaces, studios, and a café. Ultimately, however, this effort did not proceed.

If the decision is made for the Schools’ central administrative staff and its Facilities department to relocate from the Building, the Committee recommends that the Town begin the process of evaluating a repurposing of the Building. This would include the establishment of a new committee to prepare and circulate an appropriate Request for Proposal ~~for the Building~~.

Assuming a repurposed Havemeyer Building would be leased and not sold, the Committee notes that the Town would incur two potential financial exposures:

- There would be a delay between the beginning of the lease payments owed by the Town on the newly rented space for the Schools and the receipt by the Town of rents on a repurposed Havemeyer Building.
- The Town would assume market risk to the extent the term of the lease of the new space would be less than the term of the lease of the repurposed building.

The Committee expresses its thanks for the guidance and assistance provided by Stuart Adelberg, Aamina Ahmad, Ben Branyan, Dr. Toni Jones, Angelina Kaether, Blaize Levitan, Renata Michalski, and Dan Watson.

For establishing the Committee and the opportunity to serve, we thank First Selectman Fred Camillo.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee Members: Christina Downey

DRAFT ~~11-020-24~~ [November 6](#) ~~October 30~~, 2023

Bill Drake
Andy Duus (Chair)
Joe Kelly
Miriam Kreuzer

Copy:

Fred Camillo, First Selectman
Ben Branyan, Town Administrator
Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools
Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating Officer, Greenwich Public Schools