

**Gas Holder Building Committee**  
**Meeting #4**  
**October 16, 2020**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
**Meeting held via Zoom**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

Committee members in attendance:

Councilors Champlin, Kenison, Kretovic, Todd (joined at 9:20 am), and Werner

Guests:

Jennifer Goodman, Stuart Arnett, Liz Hengen, Frank Lemay, Tim Sink, Ben Wilson, Huck Montgomery

City staff:

Carlos Baía

*Meeting called to order at 9:03 am*

Councilor Champlin read the required COVID opening statement per the Governor's order.

1. Minutes of September 24, 2020:

Liz Hengen suggested two corrections to the draft minutes: On page 4, Jim Garvin's title needs to read "State Architectural Historian" and the reference to the Gas Holder Building's designation should read "recorded on the National Historic Engineering Record" rather than a National Historic Engineering Landmark.

Motion made by Councilor Werner; Seconded by Councilor Kenison to accept the minutes with the corrections noted. Motion approved, in roll call vote, by Councilors Champlin, Kenison, Kretovic and Werner.

2. Status Update and Redevelopment Scenario Options to Date

Mr. Arnett shared his worksheet with the committee. He presented the information in this fashion to distinguish the possible solutions that the committee might look at from the options outlined in the GZA report. Mr. Arnett explained that the GZA options were more oriented toward cost-containment rather than the types of alternatives that the committee may wish to pursue.

Mr. Arnett proposed three "models" to consider:

Model A: Possibly convert the site into a "Historic Monument Park" with public access and site enhancements. In this instance, Mr. Arnett posited, the site could become a tourist destination and used by the neighborhood.

Model B: Adaptive re-use of the buildings and site which could include an improved 2-acre park and a building adapted to commercial use. Would likely require a public-private partnership.

Model C: Adaptive re-use as the lynchpin of a transformative gateway and/or greenway.

Councilor Champlin noted that Model C makes sense in light of the City's existing plans for the Merrimack River Greenway Trail that would run near Exit 13. Councilor Kenison expressed appreciation of the Model C alternative.

Ms. Hengen noted that the Gas Holder site is much smaller than the national examples cited by Mr. Arnett. She asked if this is an advantage or a challenge. Mr. Arnett was not yet prepared to make a recommendation. At this point, he explained that the information provided is for reference purposes.

Mr. Sink asked what the difference was between Option 1 under the GZA report and Model A. Mr. Arnett noted that Model A would be a "monument park" which allows for other interactive uses at the site.

Ms. Goodman added that the notion of the site as a "destination/attraction" was a theme that she sees but that the committee may wish to explore alternate scenarios. Councilor Champlin noted that any viable use is on the table including possibly housing.

Mr. Wilson stated that he hopes the committee will consider teaming up with other local groups looking for historic sites. He cited the example of the Abbot-Downing Historical Society and noted that this site would work better than the former Concord stable location to store coaches.

Councilor Kretovic stressed that the committee shouldn't lose sight of the structural integrity challenges for the building. She noted that the committee needs to know if the building is safe and salvageable prior to any recommendations.

Ms. Goodman noted that the Preservation Alliance will retain the services of "Structures North," a structural engineering firm with experience with historic buildings, to complete an analysis of the structural integrity of the building and report as to what it would take to 1) temporarily stabilize the structure; 2) options for long-term stabilization and 3) conceptual thoughts on re-use. The site visit by the structural engineer is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Montgomery stated that if other members of the committee wanted to visit the building on that day, it could be arranged.

Ms. Goodman asked the committee to consider that certain funding or incentives could be available if the redevelopment met preservation standards like the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Councilor Champlin asked for a spreadsheet outlining possible funding sources based on varied redevelopment scenarios. Mr. Arnett explained that this would be done as part of their final report.

Mr. Sink asked what the final report would look like. Would it present multiple solutions or one recommended alternative. Mr. Champlin answered that he envisions providing City Council with options but perhaps underscoring one alternative.

### 3. Fall Public Programs

Ms. Goodman stated that the NH Preservation Alliance was planning the following Zoom public sessions:

Tuesday, October 27, 2020 from 5:30-6:30 pm: History and Significance of Gas Holder property

Thursday, November 5, 2020 from 5:30-6:30 pm: Redevelopment Scenarios

Ms. Goodman added that the draft final report will be provided to the committee a week prior to its last meeting of November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Champlin noted that if he saw a reason to hold another committee meeting prior to November 20<sup>th</sup>, he would call it.

*Meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Carlos P. Baía*