

ALTERNATIVE
PLAN
FOR
THE
PENN HILLS
MUNICIPAL
BUILDING

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GENERAL DISCUSSION: Currently the Penn Hills Municipal Building houses four major functions for the community: Police Department, EMS Department, Administration Departments and Council Chambers. For the purposes of this report, these functions although housed in the same building, each one is wholly independent of the others. This fact is a very important as we proceed with an alternative plan for the de-construction and re-construction of the Penn Hills Municipal Building.

The Penn Hills Municipal Building is actually two independent buildings that are connected together. The one building is the original Municipal Building that was dedicated in 1936 to serve the rural community then known as Penn Hills Township. The other building is a newer, more expansive building that was dedicated in 1967 to serve the suburban community now known as the Municipality of Penn Hills. Since 1967 the two buildings have functioned as one building housing the four community functions previously mentioned.

It should be noted that the 1967 is now 48 years old and the 1936 building is now 79 years old. And although some interior updates, re-roofing of the 1936 building and ADA handicap modifications have occurred to the building, for the most part the combined building is largely the same as it was in 1967 when the last major expansion took place.

Recently, the Penn Hills Council has determined that the building in its present state has inadequacies that require serious attention. Therefore, it was the decision of Council to proceed with consideration of repairing/renovating the existing Municipal Building (estimated at \$8 million dollars) or abandoning the current building and constructing an entirely new building on Duff Road at the site of the Penn Hebron Elementary School (former Penn Hills Junior High School)(estimated at \$11 million dollars).

In addition to the potential cost savings in maintaining reuse of the present building through repair and renovation, there is one major importance that has been overlooked and cannot be quantified in dollars and sense. The historic value of the building and its prime location are of extreme importance to the community. First and foremost, the building serves as a statement to all that this is Penn Hills. Presently, all our public memorials are located here. Moving the memorials to Duff Road will take away their significance to the community. How many people pass these memorials each and every day on Frankstown Road and how few people will see them on Duff Road? Also, the building plays a significant role being the location of the end of the Memorial Day Parade. The grandstands are always located here and the added presence of the Municipal Building plays an important role. The building also serves as the location of the holiday season light-up night. With the holiday decorations here, it is similar to the memorials, the community passes here daily getting to enjoy the beauty of the holiday decorations. And last, the visual importance of the Police Station being on Main Street (Frankstown Road) gives an added sense of security to the hundreds, and possibly thousands that pass by daily. None of these things will be the case once moved to the Duff Road location. Duff Road is only a side street in Penn Hills utilized mainly by the residents in that area of Penn Hills. These may seem like minor points, but they are indeed important and valuable considerations to be taken into account.

PHASE 1 – Construction of the New EMS Building

- A. In preparation for demolition of the 1936 building, the EMS department must be relocated. Since the EMS department must be operational 24/7 at all times, the relocation must be seamless with no operational down time. Therefore, a new EMS building must first be constructed in order for the EMS department to have a new home to relocate to without experiencing any down time.
- B. It is proposed that the new EMS building be an expansion of the existing No.7 Volunteer Fire Station on Universal Road, just off the intersection of Frankstown and Rodi Roads. This location is deemed to be a very favorable location due to its central location in the community and its direct access to two major arteries (Frankstown Road and Rodi Road) serving Penn Hills.
- C. Upon a field visit to the fire station site, it is determined there is more than sufficient land adjacent to the building to expand the building to accommodate the additional space needed to house all the EMS vehicles and necessary support spaces.
- D. As part of the normal architectural planning and construction document preparation, the building plans should include a dispatch office, locker room and break room, in addition to garage area to house the EMS vehicles. It may be possible that some of these spaces can be shared with similar spaces in the existing fire station.

PHASE 2 – Relocation of the EMS Department into the New EMS Building

- A. Upon completion of the new EMS building adjacent to the No.7 Volunteer Fire Station, the EMS department shall move from its present location in the 1936 building to the new EMS building.

PHASE 3 – Relocation of the Administration Departments and Council Chambers

- A. In preparation for demolition of the 1936 building, the administration departments and council chambers must be relocated.
- B. There are three possible locations for the temporary relocation of the administration departments. An economic evaluation will need to be done of these possible locations to determine the most cost effective choice.
 - 1. Since the Council has proceeded with purchase and ownership of the Penn Hebron School (former Penn Hills Junior High School), consideration should be given to the temporary relocation to this building.
 - 2. The high rise office building at 10 Duff Road (at the intersection of Frankstown and Duff Roads across from the McDonalds) currently has vacancies. Therefore, consideration should be given to the temporary relocation to this building.

3. The Municipal Shopping Center directly across the street from the current Municipal Building currently has vacancies. The largest available space is the vacant Dollar General storefront (former Penn Hills Post Office). If this location does not provide sufficient space, there are two additional vacant storefronts (former Crescent Pharmacy and former Athletic Sports Shop). Therefore, consideration should be given to the temporary relocation to this building.
- C. There are two possible locations for the temporary relocation of the council chambers. The more favorable location will need to be determined by the Council itself.
1. Since the Council has proceeded with purchase and ownership of the Penn Hebron School (former Penn Hills Junior High School), consideration should be given to the temporary relocation to the auditorium wing of this building.
 2. Many local communities find it feasible to utilize auditorium space at the local schools. Currently, both the high school and the middle school have large auditoriums that could be utilized. Either of these locations should be found available to schedule for the several times a month that council holds public meetings. Therefore, consideration should be given to the temporary relocation to the auditorium space of the local school district.

PHASE 3 – Demolition of the 1936 Municipal Building

- A. With the 1936 building now completely vacated, demolition of the building can proceed.
- B. However, since the 1936 building has historical significance to the community, a visual record should be made of the building inside and out before demolition occurs. In addition, any significant artifacts should be retained before and during demolition.
- C. Consideration might be given to install a live cam linked to the municipality's website in order to allow people to observe the progress of demolition of the 1936 building and construction of a new replacement building on the same site.

Phase 4 – Construction of the New Police Station on the Site of the Demolished 1936 Building

- A. In preparation for demolition of the interiors of the 1967 Municipal Building, the police department must be relocated. Since the police department must be operational 24/7 at all times, the relocation must be seamless with no operational down time. Therefore, a new police station must first be constructed in order for the police department to have a new home to relocate to without experiencing any down time.
- B. It is proposed that the new police station be constructed on the site of the demolished 1936 building. This location is deemed to be the most favorable location due to its central location in

the community and its direct access to a major artery (Frankstown Road) serving Penn Hills. Plus the fact that this location has been the police location for almost a century and serves a valuable visual importance due to the fact that so many people living in the community, working in the community and passing through the community pass it every day on their travels.

Phase 5 – Relocation of the Police Department into the New Police Station Building

- A. Upon completion of the new police station, the police department shall move from its present location in the 1967 building to the new police station building.

Phase 6 – Demolition of the Interiors of the 1967 Municipal Building

- A. With the 1967 building now completely vacated, demolition of the interior building spaces and building systems can proceed.
- B. However, since the 1967 building has historical significance to the community, a visual record should be made of the building inside and out before demolition occurs. In addition, any significant artifacts should be retained before and during demolition.

Phase 7 – Reconstruction of the 1967 Municipal Building

- A. Upon completion of the demolition of the interior building spaces and building systems, reconstruction of the building can proceed.
- B. As was noted in the Walk-Thru Observation Report of August 19, 2015, the repair or replacement of the existing roof, as evaluated and determined by professionals for the proper remedy should be included as part of the contract reconstructing the building.

Phase 8 – Relocation of the Administration Departments and Council Chambers into the New Reconstructed Municipal Building

- A. Upon completion of the new reconstructed municipal building, the administration departments and council chambers shall move from their temporary locations to the new reconstructed municipal building.

PHASE 9 – Public Dedication of the New Penn Hills Municipal Building and Police Station

- A. Upon completion of all phases of the project, a public dedication shall be held in celebration of the opening of the newly renovated and constructed Penn Hills Municipal Building and Police Station.