

Town Hall and Budget Thoughts, as of Dec. 2024

~Stephen Paczkowski- Garrett Park Town Council

I've shared many thoughts on these topics. I've been working on trying to crack the nut that is a Town Hall Renovation for all of my 7 years serving on Town Council. In fact, getting this project going in the right direction is the reason I ran for and joined Town Council in 2017 and had organized a community charrette on the topic in 2018, followed by another town specific community meeting and presentation in 2021. I think we are close to a workable solution.

I see a clear path forward working with some key guiding principles:

1. Don't overspend on Town Hall, trying to feed an unlimited budget, at the expense of most or all other improvements and maintenance to the town in the coming years.
2. Keep in mind that the current Town Hall operates just fine for its typical programming for low or no cost events. Routine maintenance fixing peeling paint, etc. has always been an option, while a costly renovation is also just that, an option.
3. Set a realistic budget for Town Hall, and similar budgeting for other projects in town. (I've been pushing on this change in mindset for a few years now)
4. Plan budgeting for Town Hall to be rehabilitated and renovated along with other improvements to town in a strategic Capital Improvements Plan.

The town is overdue at putting a realistic budget on a Town Hall project, to guide design, and keep the project from hitting sticking points, like trying to find funding north of \$3 million for a 700 square foot room and its support spaces. I think we can and should set a budget now. I previously broke down the Axias estimates The Weideman Architects' Options 1 and 4. Estimated costs for rehabilitating the historic building portion of the project were running a little under \$600 per square foot in those options, while new built sections of the facility were running nearly double that at \$1,150 per square foot. Work on the site around the building was totaling about \$60 per foot. The cost for the historic was not surprising to me as someone who works with construction estimating every week, however the new addition estimated costs seemed startling. I'd suggest moving forward with budget targets in this range, including all hard and soft costs:

Town Hall high level budget	Area	Budget per	
		SF	Totals
Historic structure	1355	\$600	\$813,000
New Addition	1240	\$600	\$744,000
Site	7386	\$50	\$369,300
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$1,926,300</b>

I feel it would be important to keep further estimating broken out into those major categories of historic and new buildings, and then site work. Additional community wishes could be separated further as potential add on costs. As an example, there could be a potential to design the rear addition to maximize PV panels and potentially operate the facility on its own power. Such a venture could be looked as an add-alternate.

I've said repeatedly I could not support renovating Town Hall unchecked, at the expense of other community amenities' potential. I just don't think its responsible as a government volunteer, looking out for the benefit of the town as a whole. Key to my stance on that is rehabilitation of Cambria Park, surrounding the pool. There is approximately 33,000 square feet of area, west and east of the pool grounds, by rough measurement. A meaningful renovation of those areas could be \$20-30, if not more, per square foot. That could be pushing \$1 million dollars but for amenities that would be extensively used by residents, especially during the summer/pool season. In my opinion, such park renovations would be higher benefit to the town residents overall than Town Hall which is visited a handful of times per year on average by residents. Planning for those areas is pretty simple and obvious with renovation of active recreation field and court space, as well as creating a dog run in town. I'm not saying to do Cambria instead of Town Hall (I know this town loves a strawman argument), but instead do both, and do them well.

The town will have other costs for improvement projects in coming years, as well as maintenance needs like paving and other infrastructure. There is also money committed to creating something at the former Yeandle property.

Estimated costs to continually improving the town in a meaningful way can be added up and planned for. Just with topics described above, it could on the order of:

- \$2 million for Town Hall (including the outside funding secured)
- \$100-500K for add-on wishes to Town Hall, e.g. Solar or added
- \$100-\$200K of Town tax money for Yeandle park (project has outside funding)
- \$1 million or so for Cambria Park areas
- \$1-\$2 million for other maintenance, infrastructure etc. in coming years.

Those components add up in the \$4-5 million range, but similar to how Rome wasn't built in a day, Garrett Park improvements wouldn't happen in one year. The existing budget plus the coming year's revenues added are enough to make all of these things achievable, together, to benefit all of us.

Toward moving the ball up the field on Town Hall, please see the attached documents:

- A facility program for Town Hall, assuming a new addition built to the maximum zoning allowance by the county for the site. There is a finite amount of space, so we cannot just say we want more of everything. More costs more, and there's a limit to building size that community needs and wants must be carved within.
- A plan diagram showing the recommended components for budgeting this project, with costs at the historic chapel building, then costs for new construction behind it, and finally for improvements to the site around the building, with landscaping, ramps, steps etc.. Cost for add-on items should be their own section of a budget, e.g. solar. The example plan shows a purposely simple rectangular addition in hopes that could be most efficient on cost, setting a new foundation away from the 1890s foundation. That new section would need to be connected to the old, of course.

Thanks for reading, and please do not hesitate to hit me up with any questions at [councilstephen@garretparkmd.gov](mailto:councilstephen@garretparkmd.gov)! I'm eager to get his project and others solved.

~Stephen Paczkowski

## Garrett Park Town Hall- Facility program

### Introduction Notes:

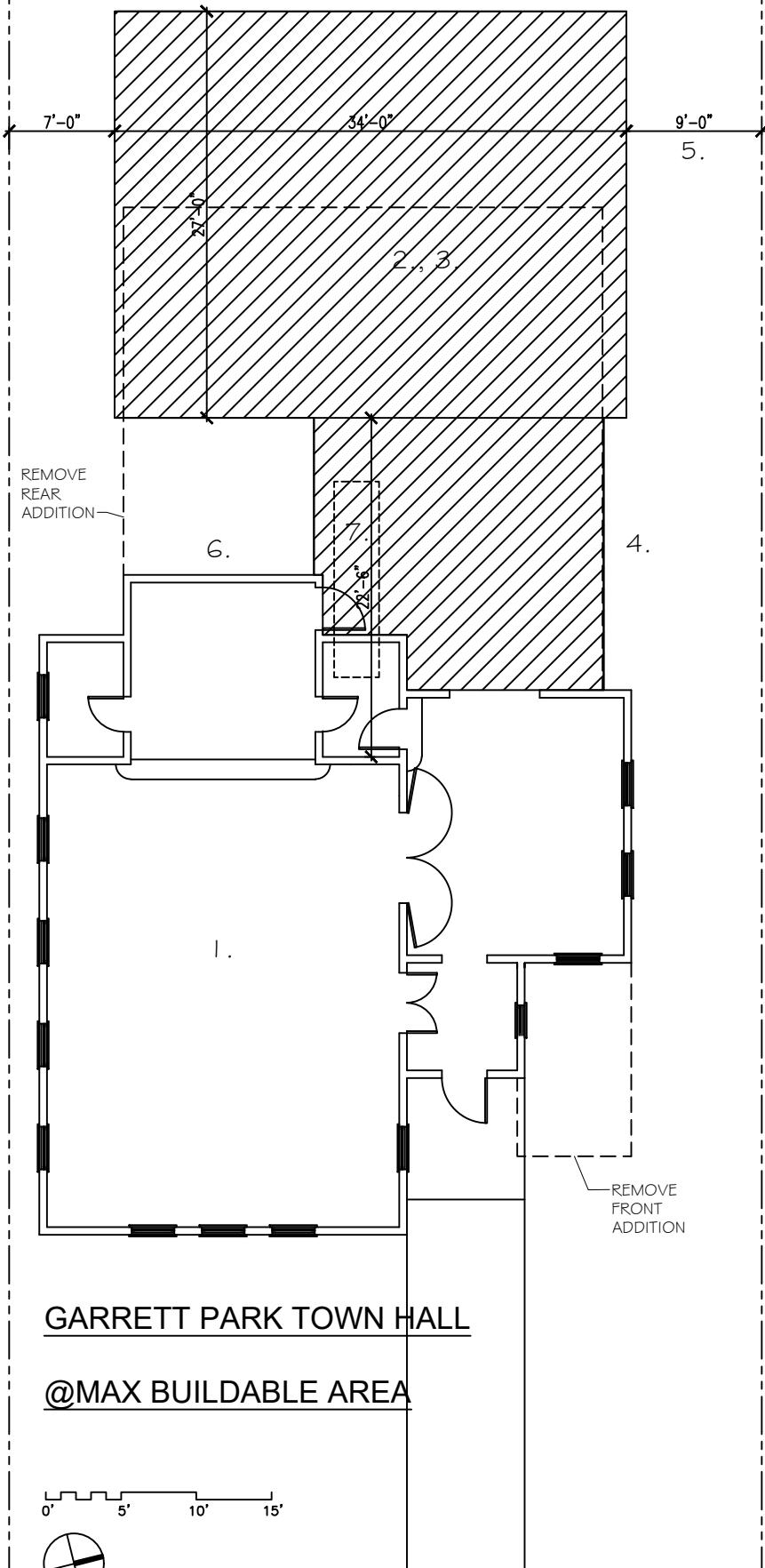
- a. Net square feet (NSF) means occupiable/ useable space, i.e. area you can stand or sit on.
- b. Gross square feet (GSF) is the total footprint of the building, including walls, corridors, utility chases, etc.
- c. The lot on which Town Hall sits is 9,981 SF. Max lot coverage (county R90 zoning) is 26% for this size lot.
- d. Maximum building footprint calculates at 26% of 9,981 = 2,595 SF.
- e. The historic building footprint is 1,355 GSF, leaving up to 1,240 GSF for a rear addition.

Town Hall Program Areas	Net Square Feet (NSF)	Gross Square Feet (GSF)
<b>Historic building- 1890's chapel</b>		
Entry/ Bell Tower	52	
Foyer- 'piano room'	247	
Main Hall- main level	706	
Stage, incl. step up	162	
Storage closet- south	39	
Storage closet- north	39	
Area Total- after demolition of front bathrooms addition	1,245	1,355
Gross / Net		108.8%
<b>New Addition in rear</b>		
Foyer extension- food/beverage layout	250	288
Warming Pantry	125	144
Bathroom 1	50	58
Bathroom 2	50	58
Ramp- up to stage level	39	45
Accessory Room	400	460
Storage- tables and chairs	111	127
Storage- piano garage	49	56
Storage- coat closet	15	17
Storage- tenants, rentable	49	56
Janitor/ Hot Water	20	23
Drinking fountain	20	23
Area Total	1,178	1,354
Area factored in for Gross SF		115.0%
Total Gross SF above- historic + new		2,709
Max Gross SF- per zoning		2,595
overage in GSF- to address in design		114

### Notes:

- 1 Table and chair storage is figured at 10% of net area of main and accessory rooms.
- 2 New area programming above, with wished for spaces, comes out over the 1,240 GSF maximum.
- 3 Area designed over 1,240 GSF in the new construction would require one or more of:
  - a) hyper-efficient design and construction with little to no circulation, thin walls etc.
  - b) reduction in some wished for net areas. Something has to give to allow for something else.
  - c) request a variance from county limited lot coverage. Note: 26% is a county limit, while GP is 20%.
- 4 Note that a Garrett Park review and potentially a variance would be required to exceed 20% lot coverage.
- 5 It's worth noting the historic structure is extremely efficient net to gross, with no corridors, and few rooms.
- 6 Plan 'Option 4' had Accessory room at just 234 SF, net, which can be used for small meetings, not much else.

8.



#### MAX OUT PLAN

This plan illustrates:

1. The historic chapel footprint with all later additions removed (unhatched), resulting in +/- 1,355 square feet in gross area.
2. New construction rear addition at max allowable footprint of +/- 1,240 square feet, shown hatched. The max allowable building footprint for the lot is +/- 2,595.
3. New addition section could be explored as a simple as possible rectangular structure to be cost efficient.
4. The new addition holding most functions could be connected with a connector/hyphen, as was elegantly done at Penn Place.
5. Side setbacks suggested at 7' on south, which is the minimum for the county on lots mapped by Jan 1, 1954, and 9' on north end which aligns to existing north passage and keeps new construction tucked behind historic for smooth sailing with county Historic Preservation.
6. This arrangement has the potential to add windows to daylight at the back of the stage. It's probable the chapel had windows behind its altar space prior to the 1950s addition, and framing for such openings may be buried in the wall.
7. Diagram suggests a ramp linking the stage level to the main level.
8. Rear yard would be about 60 feet deep, roughly the same as the existing distance from the front of Town Hall to the sidewalk.