

Minutes
Committee of Seven for Designer Selection
Renovations to Fire Stations #4 and #1
29 March 2023
3:30 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Heather Hamilton, former member of the Select Board and chair of the Committee of Seven, Karen Breslawski, George Cole and Nathan Peck, Building Commission, John F. Sullivan, Fire Chief, Patricia Cripe and David Randolph, Fire Department. Non-voting attendees: Charlie Simmons, Beth McDonald and Anthony Guigli, Building Department.

Meeting called to order by Heather Hamilton.

After all attendees introduced themselves, A. Guigli provided a brief summary of the process of designer selection and the goals of the Committee of Seven (the Committee). The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has detailed requirements for designer selection for public projects, which can be viewed on line at the website of the Inspector General. Broadly, awarding authorities initially select design firms based on qualifications, not cost. Cost becomes a factor later during contract negotiations. Municipalities in Massachusetts are required to develop procedures that meet the intent of the regulations. The Town of Brookline's Committee of Seven as described in the By-Laws is its approach.

In response to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for this project, three (3) responses were received from the following firms; Johnson Roberts Associates (JR), HKT Architects (HKT) and Cambridge Seven Associates (C7). Prior to the meeting, all members of the Committee were given one copy each of the three proposals and the RFQ and were asked to read all the documents and be prepared to discuss.

A. Guigli said that the Committee should rank the three firms in order of preference based on the proposals received and, should the Committee elect to conduct them, interviews. The decision to conduct interviews is not required and is solely a decision of the Committee. In any case, once the firms are ranked, the work of the Committee is done and the Building Commission would then attempt to negotiate a contract with the top-ranked firm. If said negotiations are not successful, the Commission will terminate discussions and move to the second-ranked firm, and so on.

H. Hamilton then asked members of the Committee to share their thoughts on the proposals. N. Peck disclosed that his firm is in a contractual arrangement with one of the applicants, outside of this project. Pending review of this matter by Town Counsel, he did not participate in any of the discussions.

P. Cripe stated she had visited some of the buildings referenced in the proposals. She noted JR has limited experience with Fire Stations. Additionally most of their projects are new construction. Overall the submission did not seem very substantive. She was impressed with the C7 proposal. S. Greenfield and S. Bold both have relevant experience. The projects listed in the proposal while not great in number were captivating. HKT is a large firm with what appears to be mostly new construction experience. Other than Cambridge City Hall there seemed to be limited renovations work, but they do have one Net Zero project. The reference checks were mixed.

D. Randolph stated they appear to be three good firms and his thought are similar to those expressed by P. Cripe. Overall he was most impressed with C7.

K. Breslawski stated she appreciated the perspective of the Fire Department staff and stated all three firms have great experience, and agreed the JR proposal was somewhat lacking. C7 included great projects in their proposal, had a good outline of their approach and have demonstrated experience with Net Zero and/or sustainable projects. They did not, however, include a schedule. She noted HKT references and while their proposal was good, it was somewhat confusing as to which principals would be involved and offered little information on the role of project manager. Her preference is towards JR and C7.

G. Cole stated he has personal experience working with C7. S. Greenfield is excellent as is the overall level of experience of the firm. However, they have no fire station experience and they are a firm that typically does larger projects. He wondered whether a project of this size, as important as it is to Brookline, would get the needed attention by C7. HKT is a mid-sized and good firm that might be a good match to this project. He was not impressed by the HR submission.

H. Hamilton stated she was pleased that a couple of the proposals showed potential for the project, namely C7 and HKT as they both have good experience. JR proposal was unimpressive including its lack of gender diversity. Overall her thoughts were much like the statements of other Committee members. She felt the HKT proposal could have been better put together and perhaps included too much information. C7 is the best of the three as it was excellent in all respects.

Chief Sullivan thought the HKT submission had lots of information but was somewhat lacking in substance. He noted all three firms included GGD as their MEP consultant. He has experience with GGD as they are the firm that did the Fire Stations study that is the basis of the CIP program for all the stations. He felt C7 might be looking at the bigger picture of the entire Fire Stations program even as this project is limited to Stations #4 and #1. They have broad experience but not so much with fire stations. He has experience with JR as they were the architect associated with GGD for the study. Although not captured well in their proposal, he felt they did a good job on the study and have a good understanding of the goals of the project. His preliminary ranking is C7, JR and HKT in that order.

After some deliberations, the Committee decided to invite all three firms to interview on 13 April 2023. Building Department staff to craft the agenda and otherwise make arrangements. Firms to be asked to include at a minimum schedule, scope, budget, Net Zero/sustainability and an updated list of consultants as part of their presentation.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Anthony Guigli, Project Administrator