

PLAINFIELD TOWN GARAGE STUDY GROUP

Sustainability of the Town's Garage and Site Preservation

Group Participants:

Jeff Allbright (Planning Board), Brad Atwater (Zoning Board & Finance Committee), Myra Ferguson (Conservation Commission), Bill Knight (Conservation Commission), Michael O'Leary (Chair; and Energy Committee), Evan Oxenham (Energy Committee), Mike Sutherland (Planning Board & Finance Committee)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- Advise the Selectboard on actions needed for maintenance and repair of the Plainfield Town Garage.
- Identify, define and prioritize necessary maintenance and repair items.
- Formulate a ten-year plan to implement the required work so that the building and site remains viable for the next 30 to 40 years.
- Integrate the concerns of the Plainfield Energy Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Board and the Town Highway crew in this process.
- Recommend the necessary steps required to ensure the building and site remain in compliance with the current building codes and NH State laws.

GOALS To investigate research and recommend how to ensure that the...

- Town Garage is brought into compliance with New Hampshire building codes;
- Town's natural resources and water quality are protected from adverse building operations;
- Systems (e.g., water, sewer, toxic materials handling, heat, and recommended ventilation, etc.) function efficiently and appropriately;
- Modifications or repairs are made to insure the integrity of the existing garage and site; and
- Building provides an opportunity for a clean and healthy workplace for town employees.

REPORT The recent focus on the sustainability of the Town Garage began a few years ago when the Plainfield Energy Committee (PEC) canvassed all of the town-owned buildings to find ways to control the high-cost of energy to maintain these buildings and save some of our tax dollars. It was also suggested that solar panels on the roofs of some of these buildings would lessen the impact of the escalating cost of electricity. The Planning Board's Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) was also cited for its reference to the environmental protection of the Penniman Wetlands which is adjacent to, and downstream of, the Town Garage site.

Among the town-owned buildings canvassed by the PEC, the Town Garage has many complex challenges—most obvious is the garage is a 35-year-old building constructed on an environmentally sensitive site. The Selectboard asked for a volunteer group of residents representing various town boards and commissions to examine and make recommendations about the future of the highway maintenance buildings and site. The Plainfield Town Garage Study Group (PTGSG) started meeting in May 2015. We formulated our statement of purpose and listed our goals. However, efforts were diverted by the state's demand that our garage's underground fuel storage had to be replaced with an aboveground tank. Fortunately, the state provided grant monies for the removal of the old tank. A new above-ground fuel tank has been installed. However, the committee recommends that a concrete *spill apron* be installed to complete the project.

Through the summer and fall of 2015, the PTGSG worked to identify and document issues with the garage building and the site which need to be addressed in order to meet the needs of the highway department for the next several decades. We examined the overall site and found that the existing:

- Floor drain system did not meet code and was a potential contamination source;
- Septic system had not been maintained and was not functioning properly;
- Water well does not provide potable water for employee use; and
- Site itself may not be graded appropriately to protect the surrounding water resources.

The study group also examined the engineering reports which were completed in 2014 concerning the garage structure and conducted additional tests. Those tests evaluate the viability of the floor drains, septic system, water supply and building foundation. The reports and results of those tests are available on the town web site www.plainfieldnh.org. At this time, we have not completed our evaluation of the building itself. The data collected so far does not support a conclusion as to the best course of action for the town. It *is* clear the building does not meet current code; however, it is *not* clear what remediation is necessary or at what cost.

Our primary goal in the next year is to continue the site work, gather the facts and project costs which will make the decision to repair the building or replace it possible. As we work to complete our investigations, the recommendations below can be implemented. They are appropriate regardless of the final decision about the building itself.

1. Complete the installation of a code-compliant tank to contain the mixed water/oil/chemical effluent from the garage floor drains.
2. Continue to research and determine the cost and benefit of a new building versus renovating the current building.
3. Recommend the hiring of appropriate engineering consultants to design and plan the renovations or complete reconstruction of the garage.
4. Develop a site plan and regrade the site as necessary to manage storm-water runoff and protect the Penniman Wetland and the aquifer beneath it.
5. Examine the current location of the salt shed and determine how to enhance the use of best management practices for handling road salt and protecting the neighboring water resource.
6. Clean and repair the existing well, including regrading around the current well site to prevent future contamination of the well, or drill a new well to provide potable water for employee use.
7. Complete repairs to the current septic system to make it function appropriately.
8. Protect the wetland using an appropriate vegetative buffer on the site's boundary with the wetland.

I would like to thank all of the members of the study group for their contribution and time to date in this process.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael O'Leary, Chair
 Plainfield Town Garage Study Group