



# BUILDING 126/ ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

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MARCH 18, 2024 PRESENTATION

# BACKGROUND

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- Building 126 of Mitchell Field commonly known as the Administration Building.
- Built in 1954 as part of the US Navy's Fuel Depot for Brunswick Naval Air Force Base.
- Part of 118.5 acres of 1410 Harpswell Neck Road (Map 13 Lot 4), known as Mitchell Field.
- Total structure is 7,704 square feet according to Tax Card.
- Mitchell Field was transferred from the US Navy to the Town of Harpswell in 2001.
- Currently vacant with exception of storage for Harbor Master.

Administration Building, 2006



# WORK SINCE AUGUST 30, 2023 WORKSHOP

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Photo taken March 13, 2024

- MCOG worked from record of previous workshop, notes available.
- A Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment for Administration, Generator, Sentry, and Community Garden Building has been completed.
- Interviews were conducted with various nonprofits, town officials, contractors, and other potential leads.
- Demolition and rehabilitation estimates were gathered to help with recommendations.
- MCOG reviewed draft Comprehensive Plan and Mitchell Field Master Plans for this report.

# INTERVIEWS

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- MCOG interviewed the following groups based on feedback from the August workshop and recommendations made by the interviewees for the use of the building:
  - Town Office Staff (Town Administrator, Harbor Master, Recreation Director, Planner)
  - Mitchell Field Committee (MFC) during their February meeting.
  - Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH)
  - Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT)
  - Harpswell Anchor
  - The Benefactor
  - Curtis Memorial Library/ Bookmobile operator

# PURPOSE OF TONIGHT

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- MCOG will present the two options: 1. Rehabilitation and 2. Demolition.
- Both options will include estimates, pros, cons, and notes to consider.
- MCOG will provide a recommendation and the reasoning.
- Public input will be considered tonight before the report is finalized and submitted to the Select Board.

# OPTION I: REHABILITATION

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- The Benefactor is still willing to donate funds toward the administrative building (not the garage), but only for building rehabilitation purposes (no-preplanning or design)
- GE Roofing provided an updated estimate of no more than \$190k to repair the roof.
- Estimates for repair of the overall structure ranged from \$250 to \$350 per square foot.
  - Main building: \$1,376,000 to \$1,926,400
  - Garage: \$550,00 to \$770,000
- Masonry and cleaning inside estimated at \$150k for just the main building.
- Septic is an estimated \$25k if a new one is developed to the east of the building.

# REHABILITATION CONTINUED (NONPROFITS)

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- A coalition of nonprofits have expressed their interest to use the building as a shared facility that can offer services to Harpswell residents and be a space for their volunteers.
- The non-profits want to investigate building layout, design, funding options and services provided.
- This coalition would involve:
  - HAH, taking a lead fiduciary role (for grant purposes).
  - HHLT to assist with fundraising efforts and to conduct outdoor-focused services.
  - Harpswell Garden Club, Astronomers Club, others
  - Curtis Memorial Library to serve the facility with a bookmobile (currently goes to Mitchell Field)

# OPTION 2: DEMOLITION

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- Estimate depends on results of Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment
- If hazardous materials are discovered, demolition could be as high as \$200,000
- Opinions appeared just as divisive of whether to build something in place vs making it a parking area.
- Municipality will likely be covering the cost of demolition and possibly reconstruction.
- A plan is needed for the Harbor Master's equipment prior to demolition.



# OPTION 2: DEMOLITION (POST DEMOLITION)

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- As noted previously, just as divisive for what should be a replacement
  - Public parking
  - Boat trailer parking
  - Open air pavilion
  - Sitting area
  - Temporary or permanent restrooms
  - Welcoming Center, Casco Bay Lines
- Concerns raised that demolition would occur with no commitment for what would be replacing the Administration Building.
- Cost to build a similar structure would cost the same if the Town decides they need a permanent structure for services (bathrooms, indoor area for gatherings, etc.).

# MCOG RECOMMENDATION PART I OVERVIEW

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- Due to the nonprofit interest, benefactor donation, and services that could be offered, MCOG recommends offering an opportunity for the nonprofits to rehabilitate the building.
- Nonprofits shall be given a timeframe from the Town to privately fundraise the necessary amount to rehabilitate the building for occupancy.
- MCOG is NOT recommending Town General fund support, but rather offer a below market rate lease to the non-profit consortium; successful rehabilitation will save the Town financing the demolition and future rehabilitation.
- In leasing the structure, the non-profit consortium will be responsible for maintaining the structure, sharing in ongoing operational support.

# MCOG RECOMMENDATION PART II LEASE

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- 20-year lease, renewable. Conditions would be in place to require the tenants to comply with local standards and restrictions associated with Mitchell Field, maintain the building.
- MCOG advocates for no rent to be associated with the lease agreement:
  - A non-profit lease saves the cost of demolition
  - Installation of a public restroom/septic system addresses a citizen need, and
  - The building will be available to Harpswell residents for programs and services
- Tenants of Administration Building would be obligated to contribute to snow removal, general property maintenance (if applicable), and any costs associated with improving parking areas around the building.
- Parking arrangement at the building should give priority to Harpswell residents seeking services but should be publicly available during larger events.

# MCOG RECOMMENDATION PART 3 TIMELINE

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- MCOG recommends a 2-year window for planning and fundraising.
  - First 3 months dedicated to outlining building use, layout, and cost;
    - Grant needed to support building design and organizational efforts
  - Second 3 months developing sublease and standards for use, funding plan
  - Next 12-18 months would be identifying and pursuing funding sources.
  - These are only broad milestone dates. The Town can set additional milestone dates.
- If unable to meet milestone dates, then the Select Board would be authorized to seek demolition bids.
- MCOGs recommendation would be moot if non-profits seek alternative space.
- Rehabilitation can be done in two phases: 1. The main wing; 2. The garage

# MCOG RECOMMENDATIONS PART 4 GRANTS

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- Maine Community Foundation
- Congressional Directed Spending
- Town of Harpswell (assisting with pursuing grants as a sponsor)
- Community Development Block Grant
- Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation
- Maine DEP remediation grant to clean up hazardous materials
- While funding from Benefactor and private fundraising are available, the grants listed above can help with lowering the threshold and long-term maintenance fees.

# MCOG RECOMMENDATION PART 5

## MITCHELL FIELD

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- MCOG strongly advises the Town to establish a plan for the remaining buildings on Mitchell Field.
  - Example: Generator Building has potential for large storage space for Mitchell Field equipment.
  - Example: Sentry Building could be satellite office or a rented out.
- Due to the boat ramp installation, increased interest in the Mitchell Field property, and lack of parking prior to Administration Building discussions, a parking plan needs to be implemented.
- The Town should begin to outline a 5-year plan to relocate the equipment and vehicles in the Administration Building garage, assuming the Town does not want a satellite location for equipment at Mitchell Field.

# FINAL STEPS

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- MCOG will prepare a written report based on this presentation and input gathered from residents following this presentation. This report will be submitted to the Select Board.
- Recommendation will include representatives from the Town Office and nonprofit coalition to meet and outline terms of a potential agreement.
- Proposal will go before residents for approval at a later time determined by the Select Board.
- If approved, the Town will commit to no further action on the building until the time granted to the nonprofit runs out. The Town may still provide letters of support and documentation to the nonprofits if grants are being sought.

# FINAL THOUGHTS FOR HARPSWELL

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- Something needs to be done to the Administration Building.
- There is interest from the nonprofits and multiple revenue streams available to allow the Town to avoid an unnecessary expenditure if done properly.
- The Town can transition to the demolition plan with the building already remediated if fundraising milestones are not achieved, but demolition is a point of no return with no plan/commitment from the community on what happens after the building is gone.
- The timing of a new planner, an updated Comprehensive Plan, and the steward of Mitchell Field stepping down warrants a discussion on how active of a role the Town wants to have regarding this parcel.



# QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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