



## *Board of Selectmen*

*Town of Swansea  
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DEREK W. HEIM, *Chairman*  
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*Town Administrator*

## Statement from Swansea Board of Selectmen Regarding the Cancellation of Public Forums to Discuss Town Hall Proposal

We, the Board of Selectmen, regret to inform the public that all public forums on the topic of the municipal office space are cancelled. These forums were scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021 and Thursday, October 21, 2021. This is a major proposal coming before the Town at the Fall Town Meeting on November 1, 2021. The Selectmen will be making a motion to postpone indefinitely the article to acquire the office space and the related articles with it. These are Articles 9, 10 and 11 on the Warrant posted last week. We continue to encourage citizens to attend the annual Fall Special Town Meeting as there are many additional important Articles to address which include those providing funding for video camera equipment for our police cruisers and police station, and for architectural services for the library project, as well as housekeeping items necessary to setting the tax rate in late November.

A little about how we got here:

The first step in acquiring any property is the solicitation of a Request for Proposals (RFP), which the Town issued in April. Once the proposals are analyzed, the Town chooses which to award. It then seeks authorization of the acquisition at Town Meeting. As we approached Town Meeting, we were triple checking that the t's were crossed and the I's were dotted. We reviewed all questions asked by members of the public, members of the Advisory and Finance Committee and members of the Town Hall Building Committee. Such deliberations began in August of this year and were conducted publicly, at open meetings of various committees in the interest of being as transparent as possible. In so doing, we worked through a cogent, conscientious vetting process of this proposal. Contemporaneously, after a bid is awarded, the standard process is for the parties to discuss and negotiate further details needed to draft a contract. Part of this process also includes a legal review.

In aiming to answer all of the questions raised, in performing our due diligence, and during the negotiations and legal review, we have found we are legally unable to move forward with this proposal and that we cannot, in good faith, continue to prepare terms and conditions for a contract with the Proposer. During this process, the Town first became aware of both factual and legal issues with the Proposal. For instance, as asked specific questions about access, we learned

that there were impediments to the needed repair of the ring road question, and in providing a dedicated driveway/entryway to what would be the Town's portion of the building. As we received varying answers to our inquiries about the cost of construction, legal issues were identified. As a result, we cannot ask the Town to vote on this proposal to move forward in the next step of the process.

This cancellation in no way reflects our thoughts on the merits of the proposal, the financial sense the proposal makes, the capability and well-meaning intentions of the developers, and the sincere and dire need for municipal office space that is a safe, code compliant, and a healthy workplace that can provide quality governmental services to our community. The Board will reposition ourselves to continue to pursue other opportunities for office space, to develop a full capital improvement plan that answers questions of how the creation of municipal offices fits into the development of other worthy projects, such as a Highway Garage, Fire Station, or Library, and to increase accessibility to government. We will continue to draft our plans for all public buildings to determine how they fit financially in our future plans and how we can address the many challenges the Town faces with appropriate, fiscally sound, and conscientious solutions.

Sincerely,

**THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Derek W. Heim, Chairman

Steven H. Kitchin, Vice Chairman

Christopher R. Carreiro, Clerk