

05-08-2019 Town Council Meeting
Responses to Council Questions #1

ITEM #7: Open the Public Hearing: Application for Zoning Atlas Amendment - Fire Station Training Center, 6902 Millhouse Road

Council Question: How long has the burn building at 101 Weaver Dairy Road been in place?

Staff Response: *The burn building at 101 Weaver Dairy Road was placed in service in 1987.*

Council Question: What is the expected life span for a burn building typically?

Staff Response: *A concrete and steel burn structure has a typical lifespan of 20-30 years, depending on use intensity.*

Council Question: What is the expected life span for the new, temporary fire training facility?

Staff Response: *The life span of the containerized live burn training structure is between 10-15 years. The modular nature of the structure allows for individual components to be refurbished or replaced without replacing the whole.*

Council Question: For how long a period of time does the Fire Department foresee using this property for the requested purpose?

Staff Response: *We are anticipating using this property for at least 5 years. It is our intention to continue working with Orange County to find a more centralized location for this asset that will allow for more equalized access by all Orange County Fire Departments. Once a location is identified and site prepared the training structure will be moved.*

Council Question: Just to confirm, but this would be the only site in Orange County that has a burn building, correct?

Staff Response: *Yes, if approved and once installed this will be the only site in Orange County with a burn building. We will continue to use the existing Chapel Hill burn building for demonstration fires in one lower room and other non-live fire training exercises.*

Council Question: What differences will there be between the new fire training facility and the current, deteriorating burn building?

Staff Response: *Our existing burn building is a traditional masonry burn structure. The new fire training facility is a containerized structure. The use of steel shipping containers in fire and*

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rescue training has grown rapidly over the past decade due to their durability, versatility and economical customization. These structures provide multiple interfaces for use in simulating conditions critical to emergency training. The structure will consist of a series of containers purposed to simulate various aspects of firefighting and emergency response. The modular nature of the structure allows for individual components to be refurbished or replaced without replacing the whole.

Council Question: What are the long-term plans for a permanent fire training facility?

Staff Response: *Ready access to a fire training facility is an essential component of maintaining departmental readiness and employee safety. The presence of this asset is also a significant factor in setting the Town's property insurance ratings.*

Over the past several years Orange County emergency service agencies have engaged in discussions around the creation of a County wide emergency services training facility. Key issues that have surfaced involve location/available properties and costs. Orange County is in the process of issuing a request for proposals to conduct an assessment of existing facilities and needs. This assessment should provide information as to the viability of a joint facility.

In the absence of a county wide plan, the Town will continue to explore options that could be used to improve our existing training grounds. These options will be somewhat limited due to the growth of residential neighborhoods surrounding our current facility. In the event a future decision is made to relocate the existing fire station and training grounds, the uses could be split. Fire station placement remains a critical factor in ensuring efficient and rapid response times.