

Town Hall Preservation Committee

March 16, 2022

Committee members present: Paul Baines, Brad Foley, Sarah Stapler, Betsy Steen, Brett Thompson, Rachelle Tome, New member-Mark Dube. Community members- Kate Brismade

The Committee was called to order at 4:25 pm. Minutes from 2/16/22 were reviewed. It was requested that the date of 2021 be added to clarify the total for donations. Motion to accept as revised. (Paul/Betsy) Unanimously passed.

Welcome Mark Dube

Brett introduced the Committee's newest member, Mark Dube. Mark is currently affiliated with the Merrymeeting Arts Center and shared various connections to the Town Hall. Members present introduced themselves.

Committee Updates

A. Survey- The Committee reviewed the final result from the community survey. Heating, acoustics, and lighting received the highest scores. Other priorities included weatherproofing and stabilizing the building. Betsy suggested that the Town establish a fund for regular repairs. Members discussed the need for rule changes in the Town's By-Laws to ensure future funding will not be redirected to the general fund. Rachelle volunteered to check with Nicole about the process.

B. Paul Baines- Paul shared information from Criterium Engineers. He indicated that he was scheduling a site visit on 3/31 that would include Janet King, Aaron Burgess, and Ben Brungraber, all who have experience with historical municipal buildings. The goal is to have them create a scope of work and costs. Ideally, a set of working documents would be created, and future work by all providers could be noted in a common structure. There is no cost for the site visit and the committee is invited to participate. Paul indicated he had not heard anything from Helen Watts and may continue to look for engineers.

Betsy Steen shared a contact, Daphne White, who is an architect/ engineer of old buildings. Betsy indicated that she would check on Daphne's interest and would get back to Paul. Paul went on to explain how some earlier repairs, not part of the original structure, are now creating problems.

C. Betsy Steen- Betsy indicated that she had still not been able to connect with Frank Connors regarding bat guano. She clarified that \$914 was raised in 2021 and indicated that some money had been received during the Ice and Smelt Festival and more donations were coming in.

There was some discussion about the Town's level of commitment to the project. It was noted that funding had been directed to revisions for the Town Office, but none for the Town Hall. Mark Dube commented that the Town should have "some skin in the game." There was further discussion about fund raising. Rachelle mentioned "Cat's Meow," little wooden replicas of buildings, landmarks, and scenes, as a possible fundraiser. She offered to bring samples from her collection. Betsy shared hopes that there could be more options for fund raising with COVID numbers dropping.

Paul raised questions about rules related to 501c.3 organizations and their ability to divert funds to other projects. It was suggested that the committee get more information on this.

D. Brett Thompson- Brett showed his work to date on the fund-raising thermometers and indicated that he was open to help with finer details. Ideas for use and display of the thermometer were discussed. Paul suggested the possibility of a self-adhesive picture to create realism. Brett noted some of the acoustical issues with the building and suggested that perhaps a class from Bowdoin College could take on the problem. Paul noted that the floor can also impact sound quality. Brett reported that he had tried to contact Mr. Copp regarding foundation work. Mr. Copp is in Florida until 3/28. Brett will check back.

Next steps

1. Continue to follow up with Mr. Copp (Brett)
2. Frank Connors and bat guano (Betsy)
3. Contact Daphne White to determine interest in Town Hall project (Betsy)
4. Report on site visit/ scope and cost of repairs (Paul)
5. Check on 501c.3 rules and steps for adding a permanent funding line to the town's By-Laws. (Nicole)

Motion to adjourn (Sarah/Betsy) Meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Agenda Items for Next Meetings

- Report on next steps (listed above)
- Possible estimates
- Donation/ funding updates

Next meeting: Wednesday, 4/20 at 4:30 PM at Merrymeeting Hall. (Check with Nicole for site approval.) The public is welcome.