

Minutes of the Patton Homestead Directors – Feb. 24, 2016

Attending: Carin Kale, Georgina Keefe-Feldman, Bill Burridge, Patrick Reffett and John McWane, with guest Bill Redford.

Carin called the meeting to order @ 4:20 and welcomed everyone. Brief updates were presented prior to a special personation from Bill Redford.

Carin Updates:

- We have no further information re: the RFP the Town will be issuing for the management of the Homestead. Patrick said that he, M. Lombardo and Donna Brewer are working on it and he hopes it will be going out in March.
- If anyone watched the BOS meeting on 2/22 they learned that the Town will be putting the possibility of a lease or rental of the Patton Homestead on the warrant. This is all we know. It will be discussed at the next BOS mtg.
- The 2/22 BOS meeting also put a request for the remaining \$250,000 from the Berry sale on the warrant, designated for the Patton Homestead.
- The Facilities Study has arrived. Bill R. will be presenting the findings to the Patton BOD today.
- The 2nd CPC Homestead site visit was conducted on Feb. 17th. Carin thanked Georgina, Bill and John for attending. Bill B. added that the tour was well-received and the presentation excellent; it kept everyone's interest.
- The Patton BOD is still expected to make a presentation to the Selectmen on March 7th. John stated that our original intent had been to present use options and to ask the BOS for a vote on our recommendation. Is this still the case? A thorough discussion of these issues will take place later in the meeting.

Georgina Updates:

- Georgina reminded the BOD that the Chair of the CPC had questioned whether the Patton Homestead could qualify for inclusion on the Nat'l. Register of Historic Places. The Patton BOD strongly disagreed. The Chairman suggested that we get a letter from an expert regarding this matter.

Georgina followed up with Bevara, the consultants who conducted the original feasibility study for the Homestead. They have provided a draft letter stating their expert opinion that the house would certainly qualify because of the historic importance of the people who lived there. The draft was circulated for discussion.

Patrick and John felt strongly that the age of the house should also be a part of the letter. Georgina also provided evidence that a famous NY architect was the designer of the “new” wing in the 1930’s with considerable input from Gen. and Mrs. George S. Patton. GK-F will follow-up with Bevara to have this info included in the letter, strengthening the case.

Bill Burrige Updates:

- Bill had been back in touch with his contact at the Firehouse Theater in Newburyport. A nonprofit was formed 30 years ago by Peter Kelly, the “founding father” of the theater. They lease it from the City (who owns the property) for \$1 a year. Mr. Kelly would be happy to come and speak to us to explain how that partnership operates. Carin added that they received funds from the State Legislature – a law was passed helping to create this new entity. It took ten years but the state saw it as an asset. Patrick added that this was at the time that Newburyport was building itself up and the state was very interested in helping that process. A former Mayor helped put it together – a very collaborative process.
- Carin spoke about “travel and tourism “state funds that we might be able to access. She knows Rep. Brad Hill would be supportive of this effort. Georgina added that Beverly Rep. Jerry Parisella is another to look to, especially if veteran’s programs are involved. He is a JAG member of the Guard and has taken a tour of the Homestead. Rep. Ann Margaret Ferrante of Gloucester and Sen. Bruce Tarr are also likely to help, plus others.

Bill Redford Presentation of the Facilities Report

Bill distributed copies of the recently arrived Facilities Systems Replacement Report, funded via an MCC grant. Sonia Montoya was the contact person for the Town. Joe Olive conducted the survey. Bill highlighted key findings. The report is a maintenance tool to assist the Town in planning. The report focused on the Homestead alone; the barn and stables were not included.

- The results are a 20 year repair and replacement report, intended to be a working tool. The Town can elect to make upgrades now or later. The report contained a spreadsheet with 20 year projected costs.
- No pipes were listed as failing.
- The house septic is OK. This surprised the Patton BOD. There was discussion that a kitchen upgrade might trigger something with septic.
- Asbestos? Not addressed. Patrick added that Joe O. is not certified for this.
- John asked if there was anything about cosmetic costs, such as painting interior walls.

Carin asked Bill R. for his reaction to the report. Since he has had it for only a week he is still studying it.

Carin stated that a 1.5 million figure from her worksheet would include parking, furniture etc. Patrick added the important point that if we do the bare minimum of improvements we will reap the bare minimum back in proceeds from events.

John McWane's Options Discussion

Carin asked everyone to look at the options in the context of our upcoming presentation to the BOS on March 7th.

- John added that he thought the purpose of the presentation is to show the BOS that the Homestead can be self-sustainable.
- Georgina stated that she felt his income projections are too high - how do we prove these numbers? She felt uncomfortable standing behind the figures at a BOS meeting.
- Carin discussed going with an exclusive caterer, which she thinks is the way to go. It may be years before the place is self-sustaining.
- John asked if we want to show it failing or succeeding. John thinks we need to ask the BOS to go forward with renovations so the nonprofit can use the facility for programs, funded by events.
- Bill added that we have the military influence and prestige going for us – no other local facility has that.
- Carin was hesitant about presenting this plan to the BOS at this time. She felt key questions still needed to be answered.
- Carin wants to present an overview that shows that the Homestead will not be a financial burden. The tax revenues from the Berry housing will bring in between \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually. This is significantly more than the “lost” Patton taxes, and those revenues come in forever. She will answer some tough questions before they are asked.

Will it be expensive to renovate? Yes, but it is worth it. The building will be made usable by getting it up to code & becoming accessible.

Is it sustainable? Yes. (see tax income above) Plus, the new nonprofit will go after grants and raise funds via events, solicitations, corporate gifts etc.

Will it be an asset to the Town? Yes. The Homestead is part of our Town character. With weekly events, both private and public, access to the new Ipswich Riverwalk and Town festivals it will become as much a part of the Town as Patton Park. The Town survey showed that over 50% of townspeople said preserving the historic character of Hamilton is a top priority.

Carin would also like to talk about programing, especially veteran's programs. She hopes Rich would not only attend the BOS meeting but also speak to this issue. Georgina will contact him to see if he can attend the next meeting and make a statement at the BOS mtg.

- John disagreed. He feels strongly that the Fin Comm. and others will want to see hard numbers. He has compared his projections with other comparable facilities and he is sure his numbers make sense.
- There was discussion about showing numbers for adding a function space, since that is the only way we foresee making it profitable. Just cleaning it up is not going to get us much income.
- Bill did not think we wanted to show too many numbers at the BOS presentation.

- John stated that we cannot afford to build a function room; we will have to go with a tent. He suggested that we ask Joanne Patton for a letter stating that she reviewed the plans and that it fits with her vision for the Homestead. Georgina was against this idea and did not encourage it. J. Patton has stayed out of these deliberations since making the gift, and does not even live in Town anymore.
- Final thoughts for the BOS meeting: John will encourage CPC members to attend. David Neal should be invited to attend as well. John will re-work his figures and do overheads. Carin may or may not do overheads.

Carin adjourned the meeting @ 6:45 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3rd @ 4:15 at the Library.

Georgina Keefe-Feldman

3/14/15