

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 7, 2021

Members Present: Mike Twomey, Jay Butler, Rosemary Kennedy, Darcy Dale, Tim Olson, Jean-Pierre Minois, and Patrick Reffett

Members Absent: Jack Lawrence

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM) - Design Technique (DTI), John Sayre-Scibona (part-time); Designer/Architect - Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB), Mark Ritz; Pat Shannon, Assistant to the Town Manager and CPC Coordinator; Nick Tensen, FINCOM ; and Kirsten Alexander, Communication Consultant

Mike Twomey opened the Zoom audio/video teleconference at 1:01 PM. Jay then took a roll call of committee members, determining there was a quorum of 6 members. (Darcy joined the meeting late.)

Past Meeting Minutes

Jay made a motion that was seconded to accept the 4/1/21 meeting minutes, and mentioned suggested corrections by John and Jack. After hearing one additional comment from Patrick, Jay then recorded a roll call Yes vote of 6 - 0. (Darcy had not yet joined up.)

Communication Efforts

Kirsten mentioned that due to the recent increase in COVID 19 cases in Hamilton that she had reached out to Town Manager, Joe D., to inquire as to whether she should proceed with the planned Open House this coming Friday at Town Hall. He had suggested going forward but to follow current mask and social distancing recommendations and to minimize discussions inside Town Hall and perhaps do more of it outside. Rosemary echoed the fact that the COVID 19 guidelines were still in place. Kirsten said she will have a script available for the committee members to follow and confirmed the attendance of herself, Rosemary, Darcy, and Mike with Jean-Pierre arriving there somewhat late. She asked that the committee arrive at 4:15 PM for the tours that will be held from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

Kirsten next brought up a discussion on the two (one short form and one long form) draft Letters to the Editor she was proposing be sent from the THBC (ex, Town employees, Tim and Patrick) to the Salem News. She then asked Jay to explain the comments he had sent her just prior to the meeting. Jay's first comment questioned the comment that the cupola had caused the bowing of second floor walls. After some back and forth, Mark suggested that the weight of the roof over 120 years was the problem. Jay's next comment was that Kirsten should avoid mentioning the CPC state match since those funds would not be used to support the project as they are not eligible. He also explained that the CPC would be taking out a 30 year bond for both the already approved \$3M grant as well as the proposed \$1M grant, and in fact the Town Finance Dept. would likely combine both into one bond should the project be approved. His next comment questioned the cost of ensuring the structural stability of the building which then allowed the discussion to devolve into a question of when the amount of partial renovation work would

trigger the need to bring all aspects of the building up to code. The ultimate agreement was that the cost of an elevator and other ADA compliance work would definitely reach the trigger level. Jay's suggestion that the cost savings of using Pilgrim Hall might be \$300,000 vs. \$200,000 was not accepted as most felt the lower amount was more representative. The final question on the two letters was who would agree to sign them. Kirsten recorded agreement by all THBC members, ex, Tim and Patrick and Jack who was not present. Kirsten will seek Jack's approval.

Mike next brought up his action item of a looking at a comparison of our project vs. building new. His research allowed him to find a new Town Hall project in Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard that had a cost of \$600 per square foot. Patrick commented that all materials for that project would have required to be brought there by barge which would increase material prices by 20%. (Mike agreed.) Mike also mentioned similar new building projects in Boxboro at \$474 per square foot and Marion at \$703 - \$722 per square foot. Mike continued by suggesting that it might be possible to build new and be less expensive than our project but then there would be the cost of the land to consider and most importantly what to do with Town Hall. No one could envision demolishing Town Hall with its history and Memorials. John noted that if sold to a developer that they would need to do the same things our project was proposing to do. Mike finally noted that there was no way that a similar building could be built cheaper. Kirsten noted that this would be true, especially with the loss of CPC funding. Mike emphasized that the committee was directed by the BOS to address renovating the current building vs. building new. Darcy suggested that past Town Meeting approvals of funds for the project was a sign of approval from the voters that we were on the right course of action. John suggested that comments such as the need to consider building new were nonstarters and that we should stick to the facts as to what the Town Hall means to the Town and get the info out. Tim wondered what the voters will lose or not get if something happens to Town Hall. The list could include loss of in-person meetings, especially if all meetings could not continue via zoom. Darcy suggested that as a result of our negotiations with the MA Architectural Access Board (AAB) that we have detailed our current lack of ADA access in the building to the state. She wondered what will happen if we do not follow through. Mike then explained that unless there were a change of building occupancy that there would not be any state mandate to meet ADA requirements. However, he admitted that we were one fall or one judgement away from a problem. Mike also mentioned that he had had asked Town Manager, Joe D., as to the existence of a disaster plan should something happened to Town Hall. Joe was looking into it.

Next Meeting

Mike set the next meeting for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 1:00 PM via Zoom.

Adjournment

Darcy made a motion to adjourn at 2:35 PM that was seconded, and then voted Yes by roll call vote 6 - 0. (Patrick had already left the meeting.)

A True Record,

Jay Butler, Secretary