

1835 Town Hall Committee

Minutes

November 18, 2020

FINAL

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM and present were Christine McCarthy, Carol Stewart-Grinkis, Ron Pichierri and Carl Corrinne. Rob Barwise was attending by phone and Lynn Shepard was a guest at the meeting.

The minutes from October 21, 2020 were read and accepted with the correction of Matt Majakis's name. Motion by Christine, seconded by Carol, passed unanimously.

Christine updated us on the status of the Massachusetts Cultural grant. The grant was submitted on November 13th, 2020 and we requested a \$200,000 match towards ADA improvements, mini-splits, etc.

We received an occupancy permit from the building inspector! It is for 80 people upstairs and 80 people downstairs. The occupancy numbers were limited by the number of bathrooms, not floor strength, exits or anything else. There was a brief discussion about how we could increase that number by adding a second stall to the ladies room, adding a urinal to the men's room or by converting the Lady Marion Wilder Room into a third 'family' bathroom.

There was a discussion about the recreation Committee moving back to the 1835. While we continue to get mixed signals about this the general impression is that they want to move their office back here and use the building for Recreation activities. Carl will set up a joint meeting with the Recreation Committee.

There was a discussion about naming the rooms so that we would have a reference during discussions and when people want to use various rooms. The attached list was distributed by Rob of names that had been suggested previously.

There was a discussion about the 'rates' charged for using the various rooms. Carl will check with Kristen of the Rec department to see what we charged before and then we can review the rates. We also need to see what groups can use it for free, etc. We also need to see where this income went within the town coffers. Is there still a revolving fund for the 1835?

We discussed the need for chairs for the Great Hall. We currently have the old wooden folding chairs which are gangs of three chairs that need to be cleaned, possibly refinished, and checked to make sure all the feet have felt pads. They are also awkward to move around. Longer term we would like to get some stacking, standalone chairs that would be a lot more comfortable! Patrice had a place in Devens where we could get used ones that were relatively inexpensive. We want to make sure that whatever we get looks good!

Carol had Laura Barone from Smashing Windows in Upton come in to give us a proposal for window curtains that we may be able to pay for with a Preservation Grant that would have to be matched with an article at Town Meeting. The grant would provide for window shades for the first floor windows, accordion style Duettes window treatment by Hunter Douglas for the upstairs windows, and Roman shades for the windows on the stage, that would be bigger than the others. She thinks the cost will come in around \$15,000.

Matt Majakis and Arden Sonnenberg were looking at acoustical panels that would help reduce the echo in the Great Hall. We want to make sure nothing that takes away from the looks of the Great Hall is considered.

We have not heard anything about the grant that Matt and Arden were putting in for audio visual equipment for the Great Hall.

We discussed the possibility of getting an ADA grant that might cover the costs of replacing/upgrading three outside doors including the rear handicap entrance and the two fire escape doors; bathroom upgrades and possible the conversion of the Lady Marion Wilder Room to a family bathroom.

There was a discussion about the small brick building behind the 1835. It was discussed trying to move it or tear it down and use the space for parking, which seemed to be the best idea. Anything would most likely have to be approved by the BOS.

Our next meeting will be 12/16/2020 unless Carl sets up a special meeting with the Recreation Committee prior to that.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 on a motion by Carol and seconded by Christine. It passed unanimously!

List of room names is below:

- The Edwin Conant Room (Meeting Room 1) – Plaque is currently in place.

EDWIN CONANT ROOM

Born August 20, 1810 to Jacob Conant and Relief Burpee Conant. Edwin grew up in Sterling attending local schools until he was 12 years old and then attended Leicester Academy. In 1826, he entered Harvard University and Harvard Law School graduating in the famous Class of 1829.

He returned to Sterling to teach school at the Chocksett Hill School and opened his law practice here in 1832. His heart always remained with the people of Sterling. Such a prominent citizen, in 1832, he was asked to give the 4th of July speech honoring the anniversary of the Town of Sterling. He spoke:

"...In the upnright and honest discharge of public and private duty within our narrow spheres of action, let us do what we can... that the fair model we hold up for the world to admire and imitate may ever be kept in the freshness of original beauty,"

In November 1835, Edwin made the dedicatory address for this Town Hall

He was father to Elizabeth Ann Conant who died in 1883. In her memory, he donated the funds for the building of the Conant Public Library in 1885. Edwin died at his home in Worcester March 2, 1891.

- Arthur P. Rugg Room (Large Room on first floor)
- John Springer Hallway (Hallway) – John was the builder of the building
- Lady Marion Wilder Room (The New Conference Room and SHC Room – prior Veterans Office)
- C. Vernon Gaw Room (Rec Department Office)
- The Great Hall (remains the Great Hall upstairs)

At the June 29, 2016 BOS meeting, the Selectmen thought it should be opened up to Town suggestions (or the idea should be trashed lest we upset anyone).

Ebenezer Pope is a great suggestion. We had discussed Mary Sawyer, but the Committee thought the lamb in the center of Town was sufficient. Burpee is also a good suggestion.