

1835 Town Hall Committee

Minutes

October 21, 2020

FINAL

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 PM and present were Christine McCarthy, Carol Stewart-Grinkis, Ron Pichierri and Carl Corrinne.

The minutes from July 22, 2020 were read and accepted after eliminating the line about permission by The Brick and by changing the title of Joe Booth from former chairman to supervisor/manager. Motion by Ron, seconded by Christine, Jack abstained from voting as he was not present at that meeting.

Minutes from September 23rd were unanimously accepted as corrected on a motion by Ron and seconded by Christine.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed meeting that was to have taken place on September 30th as a farewell to Ross Perry. When the Great Room was being set up for the meeting the tables were scratching the newly finished floor and, afraid of further damage until all tables and chairs could get adequate scratch protection added to their legs, it was decided to not have the meeting there. In addition, there is still an issue with the occupancy approval from the building inspector. Sara the inspector had told Carl he needed to get all EXIT lights working, which he and Patricia had the fire alarm company do. However, when Sara came to inspect the fixed lights, she said she now wanted EXIT lights with back up batteries and emergency lights attached to them. So, we now need to replace 5 sets of emergency EXIT signs before we can get our occupancy. Once this is done, we should get an occupancy certificate and we can abandon the old emergency lighting system which is no longer working.

Leominster Flooring finished the large back room floor. They will be back to add some molding under the heat registers where the old flooring covered the walls.

Great Hall audio visual: Arden asked Carl if she could have Matt Majakis come in and look at what we needed for an Audio Visual (AV) system. Matt did this and Arden has submitted for a grant to cover the costs of this.

Septic System. Ross had prepared the second and third easements for the septic line to run to the fire station but had not met with the property owners to get them approved. Now that he has left Carl is going to work on getting the easements approved by the two property owners. Carl has met with Terry Heinhold, who is the representative for the owner of the block, to discuss placing the pipe through their parking lot. Carl and Terry talked about the town repaving the whole parking lot while placing the pipe as most of it is going to be destroyed while we add new tanks and then run a line through the middle of the parking lot. The town was hoping to get a 99-year lease to use the parking lot as long as the town plows it in the winter. The town has to maintain the drainage system which runs through the parking lot anyway so this would be a win-win for the town.

We reviewed the recent article that ran in the Meetinghouse Hill news and have included it as part of the meeting minutes:

1835 Town Hall ready to make its debut

By Carol Stewart-Grinkis,
committee member

After several years of renovations and changes in committee personnel, the final steps to bring new life into the once vibrant town meeting house is nearing completion!

Taxpayers who have shuddered at the yearly expenditures will shortly have a chance to visit the centerpiece on Main Street and will be pleased to see just how their dollars have been applied.

Months of contracted work on the new roof and needed restructuring of upper floor beams seemed an endless disruption on Maple Street traffic and precious parking, not to mention noise and debris containment regulations that caused concern for many walkers, neighbors and police staff.

The ADA requirements for accessibility further delayed movement as the front hall lift was designed and installed to make second floor rooms available to all.

Behind the scenes, vigilant committee members were evaluating existing interior finishes and researching safety features to bring the building into the 21st century and beyond. An engineered sprinkler system has been installed and tested.

Thanks to the Sterling DPW for completion of the required water main connection at the street. Connection to a newly installed alarm system with notification to Sterling Fire, puts the second piece of the puzzle into place.

Final reconnections of EXITS now complete requirements for occupancy by the Sterling building inspector. The diligent committee has secured nearly \$300,000 in grants to fund these needed upgrades. All specifications to date have been successfully completed with allocations already approved by voters, which should put a smile on everyone's face.

Committee members continue to compile a list of upgrades for the next phase. Floor sanding and finishing just completed, as well as some scheduled painting and baseboard radiator rehab will put a final polish on the upper floor.

Upgrades to existing restrooms and new durable flooring on areas of the first floor are moving to the top of the "to do" list. Design plans for expansion of the septic system are underway with easements from neighboring businesses, allowing a tie-in to the tanks already working at the Fire Station.

Inquiry into regulations for a Preservation Property 'exchange' to offset the need for a costly nitrogen based system would allow this work to move forward at far lower costs.

Sterling Light Department is also lending a hand by looking into energy rebates for lighting and air conditioning units; a sure sign that this facility will soon be the perfect venue for a variety of community groups and activities.

The committee has already begun receiving requests for use of the space and welcomes all inquiries and ideas as the grand re-opening date approaches. Please join us to learn more at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday each month in the Conant Room of the 1835.



2018 File Photo

Christine updated the status of various grants she is either working on or has identified. She is working on a Massachusetts Cultural grant that needs to be submitted now. If approved, we have two years to get the matching funds.

Lancaster received \$250,000 through the Green Community Act, but Sterling is not part of that program.

Ross never told Matt Morrow that we were interested in applying for an ADA grant for the 1835 and the grants went out October 8th. Matt is going to see if he can put one in for us now.

The MPFF Grant program has earmarked money, Lancaster received \$100,000. We should apply to that as well and no matching funds are required.

We should reach out to our State Representatives to see if there are other grants and funding mechanisms that we might be able to go after for additional work on the 1835.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 on a motion by Ron and seconded by Christine. It passed unanimously!