

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE COMMISSION
Minutes of February 15, 2013 Public Meeting

Present: Maureen vonRosenvinge, BJ Carbee, Elly Miles

Excused: Barbara Caskie, Michele Ferencsik

Absent: Betsy Hardwick

Also Present: See Attached Attendance List

Maureen vonRosenvinge opened the meeting at 7 PM. She indicated the main topics of discussion would be how residents want to use the Town Hall, what renovations in keeping with the building's historic aspect would make sense given the land we have, and possible funding sources.

The conceptual drawings for the Town Hall renovation of architects Susan Phillips-Hungerford and Michael Petrovick first presented at the November 15, 2012 meeting were again displayed against the wall.

The concensus among those present was that the complex of buildings on the Common was central to the town's historic identity and should be maintained. Most people do not want the exterior of the Town Hall to change except for removing the exterior fire escape and replacing the bumpout on the back with a full-width addition to possibly house bathrooms, a service kitchen and lula access to the first and second floors. As one resident put it, "There is no need to restore the entire building to an elegance it never had."

Mike Petrovik fielded questions regarding public access requirements and design specifications such as the number of bathrooms required would be based on maximum occupancy. He suggested that it really made more sense to determine use and then adjust the design for the actual use of the building stating that an addition in back would have the least impact on the main building.

Sarah Pyle said the results of the Planning Board Survey indicated residents wanted to continue using the Town Hall as they always had. Town Meeting, classes, theater productions, and availability for private functions headed the list. Those attending the meeting were in agreement.

There was discussion concerning the advisability of keeping the current cloakroom available as a multi-purpose room to support staging events. If the second floor were available for smaller events such as private parties it could be a significant source of income and assist with the ongoing stewardship and maintenance of the building.

The question was raised again whether or not the space under the stage could be used for storage. It would require the installation of a fire suppressant system which would be part of the overall renovation.

It was reported the front doors are leaking and in need of repair. If they need to be replaced it was suggested that Alan Thulander has the history of the facade and specifications for the doors.

Maureen reported that the truss repair work was completed. All columns have been removed from the 2nd floor. The deflection was under 1/16th inch.

Maureen also said two major structural projects remain. The first being the installation of 6 beams and 22 lally columns in the basement to bring the first floor up to assembly load (Article 5 of the 2013 Town Warrant) at a cost of \$23,500, \$11,800 covered by grant monies and \$13,500 from the Undesignated Funds Surplus. This would allow the building to be opened with some use of the first floor.

The second project is the removal of the six temporary posts supporting the 2nd floor and replacing them with steel beams and reinforced sides, at a cost of \$45,000 with the Heritage Commission to raise half the amount through grants and donations and the Town raising the balance (Article 13 on the 2013 Town Warrant).

There was a request for an overall chronological long range plan with approximate time line and costs. Maureen said she has worked on a plan and will continue to update it as more information is acquired as to what the residents of Francestown want with respect to usage and design and as potential funding sources are identified, including the town's ability to financially support the effort.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elly Miles