

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE COMMISSION
Minutes of March 9, 2013 Public Meeting

Present: Maureen vonRosenvinge, BJ Carbee, Barbara Caskie, Michele Ferencsik, Betsy Hardwick, Elly Miles

Absent: Becky Meattey

Others: Warren Kiblin

Maureen opened the meeting. The minutes for the 01/26/13 meeting and the 2/15/13 public meeting were approved. The 2/9/13 regular meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

For those who could not attend Maureen summarized what happened at the 2/15/13 public meeting. Most people want to keep the historical facade, keep the "cloakroom" for event support, have an addition housing at least 2 bathrooms and a lula and be able to use the building as they have in the past.

Commission members agreed that no extensive discussion of design plans would be productive until there was more input from the residents as to exactly what they want and are willing to support. Maureen said the question put to her from the 2012 Town Meeting was what the total cost would be.

It is only possible to estimate the cost at this point since what will actually be approved is not known. Estimates have ranged from \$550,000 to one or two million dollars. She has discussed a really bare bones renovation with Susan Phillips Hungerford projected to cost \$350,000. First the work to make the building structurally sound which includes finishing the basement supports, and the as yet unfunded support of the ceiling and removal of the 6 support posts from the first floor needs to be completed. At that point minimal restoration would include 4 bathrooms, a lula, bathroom plumbing, rewiring and heating.

BJ expressed an opinion that even \$550,000 is probably not sufficient to complete a renovation the town will be truly satisfied with. Labor and material costs escalate over time and cutting corners during the process usually prevents realizing the original planned design. She suggested visiting restored public buildings in other towns to see how and to what extent they have been renovated and to take photos to further discussion. Everyone agreed this would be very useful.

Maureen said she was very proud to report that after the truss work was completed there was less than 1/16th deflection on the 2nd floor. In other words the floor barely moved at all. She says the remaining basement post will be finished in the spring when the weather is warm enough for the cement to set.

Maureen addressed the subject of what to expect at Town Meeting. Warrant Article #5 to complete the basement support modifications was approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee. She believes it should pass without much controversy since funding is already in place (grant funds applied for and received by the Commission and the Undesignated Fund Surplus) and there is no direct tax impact.

Article #13 requesting \$45,000 (1/2 from taxation and 1/2 to be raised by the Commission through grants and donations) to support the 1st floor ceiling and remove the six temporary posts is not recommended by a majority of either the Board of Selectmen or the Advisory Budget Committee. In this case Maureen expects both opposition and alternative proposals.

One possibility would be to hang the ceiling by bringing steel rods down in place of two supporting posts upstairs which Glen Dodge estimates would cost \$5,000.00. This would allow removal of the posts downstairs but only a very minimal load on the second floor. Eventually if the 2nd floor were to have any substantial use this work would have to be redone. Commission members voted unanimously to be on record as against this proposal.

The second possibility costing \$28,000.00 would be to replace all 6 steel rods (2 are in side walls). This repair would not need to be redone later but further strengthening according to the first \$45,000 proposal could be undertaken later if funding was acquired. Commission members voted 4-1 in favor of this alternative with one abstention.

Greg Cope's report on the Town Hall windows indicating what it is feasible to do, such as putting all of the old glass windows on one floor, should be received soon. The report is paid for by the last of the LCHIP grant which they requested the Commission use in full.

The next regular meeting will be April 13, 2013 at 9 AM.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elly Miles