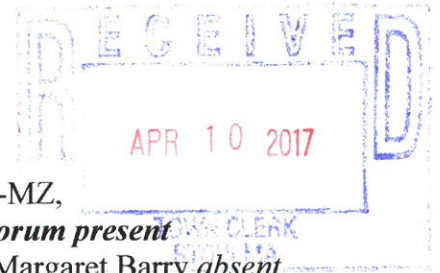


STOW HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Minutes of special meeting on March 9, 2017

Members present: Dot Spaulding-DS, Patrick Hopkins-PH, Marilyn Zavorski-MZ,
Rosemary Bawn-RB, Vellyn Antonelli-VA-*absent- quorum present*

Assoc. Members present: Lew Halprin, Barbara Clancy, Andy Crosby - AC, Margaret Barry *absent*

Others present: Sharon Brownfield, Rick Lent, Mike Busch, Maureen Busch, Kathy O'Brien,
Tim Reed, Atli Thorarensen, Marianne Sharin

Meeting convened at 7:35 pm.

Meeting called to order at 7:35 pm.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes from the March 2, 2017 meeting were approved. Motion to approve was made by PH; seconded by MZ/unanimous.

Building Permits: February building permits read without comment.

Randall Library Restoration: The Randall Library Restoration Warrant Article approval request was continued from the March 2 meeting. To begin the meeting Marilyn read the Commission's five page statement (*see attached*) which covered: the sequence of meetings, the SHC mission statement, the March 7 Stow Historical Commission statement, reflections on that March 7 informal meeting, a proposed compromise, and finally the Commission concerns. Since the informal meeting at the Library on March 7 was attended by only two Commission members, the Commission chairperson opened the meeting up for member discussion on the proposed Library restoration project. Following member discussion, the meeting was opened for question and comments from attendees.

The Commission and the Library Building Restoration Committee both agree with the proposed restoration of windows, electrical, wall and flooring. The topic of conflict is the 1925 addition built to house the Whitney Historic Room. The Commission shared the historical document bequeathing the donations to build the Whitney Room, which state that the intent of the donation was to build the 1925 library addition for the purpose of exhibiting historical artifacts for its Stow citizens.

In partnership with the Stow Historical Society and in keeping with the Commission's mission to preserve and to ensure public access to Stow's history, the Commission confirms that the Whitney Historical Room must continue to be used to display Stow's historical items.

Based on communications from the Library Building Restoration Committee, Library Trustees and the Library Director, the Commission understands that the Library's intent is to minimize or eliminate the historical display in the Whitney Room and to use the room for other purposes.

The March 7 informal meeting's proposed compromise was that the Whitney Historical Room's artifacts, and artwork would be carefully packed, moved into temperature/humidity controlled bonded storage, and carefully returned to their original place when the restoration is complete.

The costs associated with these actions would be incorporated into the Warrant Article put forth by the Randall Library Restoration Committee at the 2017 Spring Stow Town Hall Meeting.

As part of the March 9th discussion, a committee is proposed, as the Commission currently understands the purpose, to review and resolve all issues concerning the use of the Whitney Room, the display of historical items in the Library and other related topics. The committee, as the Commission understands the current proposal, will have 2 members from the Historical Commission, 1 member from the Historical Society, 1 member from the Library Building

March 9, 2017

SHC Meeting to discuss and vote on the Randall Library Restoration

This is the only item on the SHC's agenda tonight.

Whitney Room acoustics can render hearing difficulties – SHC asks all to speak clearly and slowly.

The Sequence of Meetings

August 6, 2015: The first and only time the SHC was presented information about the library restoration was on August 6, 2015, when Melissa Fournier introduced the overall renovation plans: plastering, wiring, lighting, woodwork, flooring... At this time, the SHC gave general support for these plans. There was no mention by the library of the repurposing of the Whitney Historical Room, which is at issue tonight.

Within the past month and a half, the Randall Library brought their funding request to the CPC before the SHC saw and reviewed their latest plan.

February 16, 2017: The Library Trustees and Building Committee were added to the February 9, 2017 SHC meeting. However, this meeting was cancelled due to a snow storm. The trustees and building committee met with the SHC the evening of February 16, 2017.

- At this time, the library shared the McGinley Kalsow & Associates, Inc. plans.
- There was no time to review them.
- The SHC noted that all glass display cases (A1.0) were included in the plans along with the architect's statement (A7.0) to "protect all existing glass display cases."
- With further discussion with the trustees and building committee the SHC realized that most of the historical artifacts were not going to be permanently displayed upon the completion of the restoration.
- Plus, the SHC learned that there was no planning or funding for bonded, climate-controlled storage for Stow's museum pieces.
- At this point the SHC voted to further study the plans and research archival, storage facilities.

March 2, 2017: Sharon Brownfield of the library building committee returned to SHC on Thursday, March 22nd to discuss the building plans. At this meeting the SHC voted to have 2 members, Dot Spaulding and Marilyn Zavorski, meet informally with Melissa Fournier and Sharon Brownfield at the library on Monday, March 6th 2017 at 4 PM.

March 7, 2017: The library asked to change the meeting time to the evening, which neither of the SHC representatives could attend. Therefore, this meeting was held on Tuesday, March 7th at 7 PM. The library added 2 individuals to their representatives, trustee, Marianne Sharin and selectman, Jim Salvie. The SHC contacted SHS board members to add another representative and Linda Stokes attended.

March 9, 2017: Tonight's meeting.

STOW HISTORICAL COMMISSION MISSION – March 6, 2017

http://www.stow-ma.gov/pages/StowMA_BComm/StowMA_HistoricalComm/index

- “Town Meeting established the Stow Historical Commission by accepting Chapter 40: Section 8D of the General Laws, for the preservation, protection, and development of Stow’s historical and archeological assets.”
- It is the charge of the Stow Historical Commission, our obligation to the Town of Stow, to protect and preserve the historical heritage and resources of the town.
- **This charge includes the preservation of the Whitney Historical Room.**

SHC STATEMENT – written March 6, 2017

SHC unanimously supports the efforts/ideas for restoring our historic Randall Library – updating the windows, electricity, woodwork, flooring, fireplace, chimney, etc.

1. As steward of Stow’s historical artifacts, the SHC has the responsibility to ensure that Stow’s history continues to be accessible to all Stow residents.
2. The Whitney Historical room was specifically funded and built by Stow citizens to house the town’s historical collection.
3. **Therefore, the SHC is required to ensure that the use of the Whitney Historical Room, as the town’s repository for historical items, continues as it was originally intended.**
4. **CPC funding is for historical preservation. This includes the restoration of the original library building and the restoration of the library’s mid-1920’s addition, the Whitney Historical Room, to its former glory as the town’s museum.**
5. **Restoration** is defined as returning something to its former condition.
 - The main library was built in 1894.
 - The Whitney Historical Room was totally funded by the estates of four Stow Whitney siblings in the mid-1920’s for the sole purpose of housing Stow’s historical collection. (added March 8, 2017)

SHC ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST 3 WEEKS

SHC:

1. reviewed the documents between 1925-1930 which were enclosed in the estates’ distributions of 4 Stow Whitney siblings’ funds. These funds were “to be used in building and furnishing a suitable addition to the library for the purpose of housing and preserving historical works.” Four of these documents are housed in the library and one is in the Town Clerk’s office.
2. obtained and reviewed the SHS archival spreadsheet of all the historical artifacts.
3. photographed this said collection of artifacts and framed hangings, creating a 13-page PDF, so that vendors specializing in bonded, climate-controlled storage would be able to give estimated quotes for the packing, moving, storage, return and unpacking.
4. contacted 3 archival companies and spoke in-depth about their storage capabilities.

5. developed the March 6, 2017 SHC 2-page statement about the library restoration.
6. developed tonight's summary of our meetings and gathered information.

Reflections on the Evening Meeting at Randall Library

March 7, 2017, 7 PM – 9 PM

TOPIC: The Whitney Historical Room

In Attendance:

Melissa Fournier, Librarian

Sharon Brownfield, Library Building Committee

Marianne Sharin, Library Trustee

Jim Salvie, Selectmen

Dot Spaulding, Stow Historical Commission

Marilyn Zavorski, Stow Historical Commission

Linda Stokes, Stow Historical Society

Sharon Brownfield aptly chaired the meeting. She asked the library representatives and the SHC members to present their views of the Whitney Historical Room.

The vision for the room was vastly different.

The SHC and SHS felt manipulated. To bring up new ideas just days before the process needs to be completed is not acceptable.

Neither the SHC or the SHS has been informed to the library's intent for the Whitney Room. To be informed means that the library trustees would have had sit-down meetings with the SHC and the SHS, presenting a schematic, gridded diagram, to communicate their future vision for layout of the Whitney Historical Room. Last night there was talk but no diagram to illustrate their vision.

1. How has this renovation been presented to the voting citizens of Stow? Were there surveys?
2. Have we somehow missed these informational sessions?

Neither the SHC or the SHS had any inkling until the past few weeks of artifact removal. It was not until Tuesday night, March 7th, that the library stated that the restoration meant the permanent removal of the original Whitney glass display cases. These cases' replacements appear to house possibly 20% of the collection. This is a SHC estimate since cases are only visions of what might be. Like the reading room, the SHC and SHS were told that this room would include multiple outlets for our tech-savvy 21st century, soft chairs along the walls.

- Is making space for people to use their computers an acceptable use of the room created to display the town's historical artifacts?
- People coming to the reading room, could just as easily wander over and get to see a much bigger collection.

It was stated last night that this library restoration project has been a 2.5-year process. During this extended period, the fate of Stow's historical collection was not a consideration other than to put it in storage and have a few items brought out from a non-existent storage facility. The library suggested that the artifacts be put in storage for a year. The idiom *out of sight, out of mind* applies here.

The March 7, 2017 Meeting

1. To address the library's thoughts about the artifacts' arrangement, the SHC and SHS suggested that there certainly could be different ways to organize them and we would be open to suggestions. The artifacts are labeled, but this did not seem to be the issue. Their plans were for the permanent removal of the long, glass display cases.
2. The SHC and SHC asked how much space they wanted in this room. There was not a definitive answer. Yet, it seemed significant, since their need was to only display core objects. The library stated that the new exhibit would be rotating, with the SHS retrieving artifacts from a non-existent climate-controlled storage space.
3. The library objected to the lack of lighting in the present cases, which makes it difficult to view objects. Plus, the library had a safety concern about the glass in the historic cases.
4. Lighting could be added.
5. To address the library's safety concerns about the original display cases' glass, SHC suggested having the glass surfaces covered with clear mylar film which will prevent the glass from shattering if accidentally broken.
 - An example of such film is sold by ShatterGard
<http://www.shattergard.com/home.html>.
6. The library desires comfortable, soft chairs against the walls. They didn't say how many. There was not a blueprint for these plans. They plan for the Whitney walls to be lined with electrical outlets so that computers can be plugged in, as patrons sit in the soft chairs. These plans are the same as for the adjacent Reading Room. Presently, the Whitney Room has two outlets.
7. SHC/SHS suggested the outlets be placed behind the cases with wires running to the table. The library did not feel that would be safe. The SHC/SHC suggestion of floor receptacles was nixed, because there will be hardwood floors.
8. Between the comfortable chairs the library envisions two, narrow (30") and vertical display cases, one on each wall. No research has begun about locating archival cases to match this historical room, nor is there any funding.
9. At one point the library stated that the large antique table would stay. How do the comfortable chairs fit? If this room would also continue to be a meeting room, won't the computer cords from those sitting at the table still contribute to a safety hazard?

The repurposing of Stow's historical museum is a major dilemma. Tuesday's night it felt like the problem was technically placed on the SHS and SHC. Had these two organizations had any inkling of the library's intent, research and discussion would have begun years ago.

IT WAS A STALEMATE.

Jim Salvie and Sharon Brownfield suggested to establish a compromise so that the restoration of the library interior can go forth.

THE PROPOSED COMPROMISE

1. The two, long, historic, glass display cases will be returned to their present location with the artifacts returned to their museum spaces for the time being.
2. There will be a committee formed to seek alternatives.
 - The library's goal is for the removal of these display cases and have the artifacts in put storage.
 - The Town of Stow's historical museum would ease to exist.

CONCERNS

1. Has the town been given an opportunity to weigh in on the repurposing of the Whitney Historical Room?
2. A heavy and formidable burden has been thrust upon the SHS, a small, non-profit organization if the artifacts are put in storage.
3. There is the major question as to whether the long, historical, glass display cases can be moved. They are about 14 feet and 12 feet long. This fact has not been addressed, since the library does not want them.
4. If these long cases can be moved, to where will they be moved?
5. There is the question of proper, specialized moving and storage of these cases, of the 3 existing, old, locking small, glass book cases and the smaller, glass display case, holding the Randall family artifacts, all of which could require funding. These are not part of the library's plans.

This takes the SHC back to its mission: The SHC is responsible for communitywide historic preservation planning.

The library trustees and building committee would like to compromise. The goal of tonight's meeting to determine the SHC's position on the Randall Library Restoration article.