

At Town Meeting in March, 2010, an LCHIP Planning Grant was accepted to plan for the future preservation and rehabilitation of our Town Hall. Following that vote, the Selectmen dissolved the existing Future of the Meetinghouse Committee and promised to form a new Selectmen's Meetinghouse Advisory Committee. They invited anyone who is interested in preserving our building to join the committee.

The committee has held monthly meetings since May. Following a study and report by Dr. James Garvin which was done in keeping with requirements of the LCHIP grant, the Selectmen and members of the Committee felt it was time to bring the architect back into the discussion. Architect Richard Monahon attended the last meeting which was held on September 30. The Minutes from that meeting follow.

## **TOWN OF WASHINGTON SELECTMEN'S MEETINGHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 28, 2010**

#### **1.0 ASSEMBLY:**

**1.1** Meeting called to order at 7:10 P.M.

**1.2** Chairmen: Guy Eaton, Ken Eastman, Tom Marshall

**1.3** Members Present: Phil Barker, Bill Cole, Jim Crandall, Arline France, Gwen Gaskell, Ronald Jager, Drew Queen, Carolyn Russell, Jim Russell, Jed Schwartz,  
Members Absent: Lionel Chute, Allan Dube, Sandy Robinson, Robert Wright

**1.4** Minutes taken by: Carolyn Russell

#### **4.0 NEW BUSINESS:**

**4.1** Guy Eaton began the meeting with an introduction of Committee Members to Mr. Monahon.

**4.2** Architect Richard Monahon led a discussion of options for a rear entrance and for placement of office spaces.

Mr. Monahon began with reference to his letter to the Selectmen which considered the recommendations from Dr. James Garvin's Historical Assessment report. He explained the need for an Historic Preservationist and an Archeologist as part of the planning team. In anticipation of testing the soil under the building for ledge, Mr. Monahon inquired from Amy Dixon of LCHIP about different methods of performing this test. LCHIP does not approve of using a backhoe before an Archeologist has completed his work. Drilling test holes with an auger is acceptable. The question was raised of whether an archeologist could do his work first and then use a backhoe to test for ledge. Use of a backhoe would be a cost saving since the work could be performed by DPW. Mr. Monahon thought that the first step is to determine whether the site is suitable for excavation for the lower level. Until that is determined any planning will be delayed. The Selectmen have contacted a contractor regarding an estimate for drilling the test borings.

Two considerations to keep in mind regarding the borings and the archeologist: if we find that ledge will prevent us from creating the lower level, we will not need the archeologist because we will not be disturbing the soil; if we do not get a grant, we will not need the archeologist. It is most practical and necessary to do the borings first to test for ledge.

Mr. Monahon referred to schematic drawings to discuss windows that would be installed in lower level. He suggests that windows could be placed on the north wall of the lower level in line with the windows on the main floor. These windows would have less height since the ceiling would be lower than that of the main floor. These windows would have a large areaway with a retaining wall on the outside that would disguise the lower level and maintain the original

appearance of the building. A discussion followed about drainage issues and Mr. Monahan said that addressing those issues would be part of the planning process but that it would not be a concern. Smaller basement size windows would be installed in locations where openings now exist in the foundation.

Mr. Monahan said that the lower level would be appropriate for office spaces on the north side where there would be natural light and ventilation. The area on the south side would have neither natural light nor ventilation and would be more appropriate for the mechanical space, storage and possibly a small meeting room. Mr. Monahan reminded the committee members that the allocation of space on the schematic drawings was only suggestive and should be ignored. Actual assignment of spaces would be based on updated requirements for each town function. He said that there would not be sufficient comfortable space on the lower level to accommodate all offices.

He discussed the need to determine the spaces required for each office and the need for offices to interact so he can suggest appropriate and most desirable placement of different departments. Placement of offices also needs to consider the location of the selectmen's administrative assistant and her interaction with other departments. The ground level would also have to have two means of egress, one would be provided through the new tower and the other by an extension of the stairs under the bell tower. Entrance to the new tower could be both at ground level and at the main level or just at the main level, depending on the site development.

Mr. Monahan said that we need to discuss the mechanics sooner rather than later in order to provide adequate space for those functions. He said that heat pumps have been significantly improved and can now be used in our climate. Projecting into the future, he said that energy conservation and costs could be significant over fossil fuel systems. He also said that the delivery of heat to the building with a heat pump system would eliminate any need for large venting ducts.

Mr. Monahan then discussed the addition that would be placed on the north side to house the stairway and lift and would provide entrance to the building. There could be an entrance at the ground level and/or the current main floor level. He then returned to the topic of the appearance of the north side of the building and how the windows would look. A question was asked about having larger windows that would be completely revealed. He feels that it is undesirable to create the appearance of a three story building on one side of a building which has always been completely symmetrical.

A question was asked about the way the windows are installed at the WCC rear lower level. Mr. Monahan remarked that the difference is that the dimensions of the church are different and that the rear window wall is on the shorter side, making less of an impact on the overall appearance.

New traffic and parking patterns will affect entry to the building whether main floor or lower level. Handicapped parking could be provided adjacent to the main level entrance of the new tower. Traffic patterns inside the building should be considered so that those departments that draw the most visitors would be most accessible. Mr. Monahan said that one-half to two-thirds of the office space required can be provided on the lower level.

A question was asked about using partitions rather than permanent walls. Mr. Monahan said that such partitions do not allow for phone privacy and are generally less satisfactory than full walls. A discussion followed on how spaces that require auditory privacy can be provided. There are different ways to provide light and ventilation when interior walls are designed.

The discussion also addressed the ground level of the new lower floor. Drew Queen had taken some measurements of the land behind the building and down to the parking lot. The parking lot is slightly higher than the proposed floor level. The location of the septic system also needs to be identified.

Where would the main entrance be? How would the current front entrance be changed? The current entrance has a small foyer to create a wind break. Would this be removed? The most likely main entrance would be through the north side of the building but that is an issue to be addressed.

Mr. Monahon reminded us that one of the important results of the plans will be the accessibility of the upper level which will provide a very large meeting room. The addition on the back wall would be the same width as the current addition but approximately 22 feet long.

Concerns about drainage from roof runoff and precipitation can be addressed during engineering design.

Mr. Monahon said that he needs to develop a site plan for the next time to facilitate further discussions. He will then be able to better address entrances to the building and possible layouts for the tower.

Arline France presented a drawing made several years ago proposing a tower design that would have provided a lift to the upper level and included some office space as well. It did not have a basement level and would have eliminated two windows from the north side of the building.

A question was asked about the playground that was built with a National Park grant and whether it could be removed. Lionel Chute had previously contacted DRED about this question and was advised that the park could be relocated or dismantled. A copy of that information is available for review.

Mr. Monahon asked that a copy of the septic plan be provided to him before the next meeting.

## **5.0 ADJOURNMENT**

- 5.1** Next meeting will be **Oct. 26**, at 7:00 P.M.  
The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Russell  
Secretary, Selectmen's Meetinghouse Advisory Committee