

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

SELECTMEN'S MEETINGHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 26, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:30 P.M.

Chairmen: Guy Eaton, Ken Eastman, Tom Marshall

Members Present: Phil Barker, Bill Cole, Jim Crandall, Gwen Gaskell, Ronald Jager, Sandy Robinson, Carolyn Russell, Jim Russell, Jed Schwartz,

Members Absent: Lionel Chute, Allan Dube, Arline France, Drew Queen, Robert Wright

Minutes taken by: Carolyn Russell

The discussion began with Guy Eaton explaining that the test borings had been taken down to about 15 feet and that no ledge had been found.

Guy also mentioned that the Selectmen had received a letter from Lynn Munroe, Preservation Consultant, and that they would be scheduling a meeting with her soon.

Architect Richard Monahon presented sketches depicting potential layout of office spaces on both a lower level and the main level. He also presented revised possible details for a rear entry.

Lower Level Rear Entry:

Mr. Monahon re-drew the layout of the rear entry making it more in the style of the current front entrance in recognition that it would become a main entry to the building and not just a service door. In response to concerns expressed at the last meeting regarding drainage and snow accumulation in the window wells outside the lower level north side windows, Mr. Monahon suggested the following alternative. Instead of window wells he suggests revealing the entire lower level on the north side. The windows would be shorter than those on the two upper floors due to lower ceiling height. A more detailed entry door would be created in the style of the current front door. Grading around the rear entry would allow for drive-around and for handicapped parking near the entry. There would be a retaining wall on either side of the building extending out from the east and west walls of the main building to compensate for the different grades. There would be a rail or fence of some kind to protect the drop off created by the retaining walls.

There was considerable discussion regarding how the proposed entry would affect the existing septic system, the entry and exit for the lower parking area and the sense of doing business in an historic building. In the end it was decided that these topics will require further discussion and refinement of details.

The drawings for the existing septic system have been reviewed and earlier comments from Ed Thayer to the selectmen indicate that relocation will not be a major expense and should not inhibit the planning for future layout.

Lower Level Office Space:

In response to the need expressed at the last meeting for some kind of reception area for offices on the new lower level, Mr. Monahon extended and widened the lift/stair tower addition and included an entry hall for the lift and stairway. Then he provided a lobby area that would serve the proposed office spaces as a waiting and service area and would include two restrooms. He suggested two large office areas which would enjoy the natural lighting from the windows. The south side of the lower level which would have no exterior windows would serve for storage, mechanical space and a staff kitchen. A new climate controlled room below the current east porch would house the town archives. A new stairway and means of egress would be built under the bell tower.

Response to the suggested office spaces was limited since no one with experience in the those offices was

present at the meeting.

Main Floor Office Space:

Mr. Monahan presented sketches showing how spaces might be allocated if the current walls remain intact with the Selectmen continuing in their present office and allocating the current Assessor's Office as a space for the many town boards and committees. The Welfare Office and Food Pantry might be located in a corner near its present location. Restrooms would be located within the new lift/stair tower. The handicapped ramp currently providing access through the east porch would be removed. New access would be from the lower level and up the lift.

Most of the discussion about the main floor was in regard to whether the existing interior walls should remain or be removed. Some committee members understood that anything in existence for more than a hundred years should not be disturbed. Other committee members favored opening up the main floor to its original configuration and then re-creating new office spaces of the appropriate sizes.

A discussion about preservation, restoration, rehabilitation followed with no consensus. It was determined that this topic requires further serious discussion and guidance from the Preservation Consultant. It was mentioned that certain conditions must be met in order to qualify for construction grants for an historic building.

These topics will continue to be addressed at future meetings.

The next meeting will be Nov.30 at 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Russell
Secretary, Selectmen's Meetinghouse Advisory Committee