

## **Topsfield Town Hall Building Committee**

February 4, 2015

Chairman Jackson called the meeting to order at 9:25 AM at the Town Library. Committee members present were Boyd Jackson, Gregor Smith and ex-officio members Kellie Hebert, Martha Morrison. Community Development Coordinator Roberta Knight was also present.

**Visitors:** Selectman Dick Gandt; Richard Smith, William Finch.

**Funding:** At this time, Chairman Jackson informed the members that the \$100,000 in earmarked funds were no longer available. The funds were lost as part of the Governor's November 2014 9c budget cuts. Further, he noted that the Committee should press forward with the bigger picture relative to the total restoration of Town Hall with warrant articles for Town Meeting, the pursuit of funding for the window restoration project with a MPPF grant application, and addressing the immediate stabilization needs of the building envelope to prevent further deterioration.

**List of Items:** Chairman Jackson proceeded to go over a list of immediate projects and associated costs that he had determined based on previous meeting discussions to be high priority for the stabilization of the building's exterior envelope. See attachment for specific details. In summary, the repairs to three second floor windows, limited front façade repairs to deter water infiltration and side portico demolition were the top priority items.

**MPPH Grant Application:** Consultant Bill Finch advised that all the windows should be included in the application in order to have the best shot at getting a grant award. Pulling out windows would undermine the immediate need which is a determining criteria for the grant award. He suggested that if awarded a grant, the town can then advise Mass Historic that due to the urgency of the deterioration, the windows had been already repaired.

**Other Earmarked Projects:** Mr. Finch noted that the roof repairs and foundation repointing were low priority items for the building envelope repairs as compared to the priority windows and façade leakage.

**Long-Term Planning Goals:** Member Gregor Smith noted that he agreed that limited repairs were required to stop deterioration due to water leakage and the need to stabilize three critical windows; however, the Committee needed to look at the bigger picture and long term planning goals for the building. Moreover, the Committee needed to develop a strategy for the May Town Meeting to present a plan to get a sense of the Town. Based on previous discussions, the Committee should put forward a four step phased program and submit a warrant article for a schematic design as phase 1 programming.

Selectman Martha Morrison noted that under the schematic programming phase the architect would use the previous program and assessment studies as the basis and develop

a space / need program based on the functionality needs of the departments. In addition, three other issues would need to be reviewed including the functional needs of the Council on Aging, storage requirements for the various departments and parking if COA is part of the project.

Member Gregor Smith stated he was in total agreement and that there was enough background information for the hired architect to do the schematic design and refine and update the program space. However, the missing piece is to get the public's support and opinion as to what is the right plan for Town Hall in order to seek funding at next year's town meeting for design construction funding. He agreed that certain stability projects were necessary such as the flashing repairs to the front façade, but the Committee needed to remain steady on the long-term goals and objective.

Chairman Jackson agreed that the Committee needed to address items that required immediate repair such as the water infiltration issue of the front façade and the three unstable windows on the second floor. However, the Committee should focus on the larger picture at the Town Meeting for funding for the Phase 1 schematic design and the window restoration project. Putting aside the list of envelope repairs, the Committee would proceed with the MPPF grant application and work on articles for the May town meeting.

The Committee members then discussed the schematic design process. Member Gregor Smith explained that the selection of the schematic design architect would be a competitive bid process that would also be qualification based and the fee would be a separate proposal based on the scope of work which the Committee would need to develop. The schematic design's scope should be a cost effective approach to dealing with the functionality needs of the building program.

Selectman Morrison noted that the Committee should approach the Council On Aging on an informal basis since the Council has discussed and is working on a proposal for town meeting action for a study to determine the needs of the Town's senior population. The Council would need space for staff and for programs. The message should be one of cooperation for the two groups to achieve a united goal of functional space for the Council on Aging and general government needs.

**Consultant Work:** The Smith/Finch consultants were directed to continue work for the MPPF application. If the Town was not awarded funding, the window restoration would be completed with Town funds. A warrant article would be submitted for this work to be placed on the 2015 ATM agenda. The flashing work on front façade and demolition of side portico would be completed as emergency repairs.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight  
Community Development Coordinator