**1835 Town Hall Committee**



Report to the Board of Selectmen

January 26, 2016

**Overview**

We have made some great strides since our last report in November 2015. We thank the Selectmen for their assistance and cooperation enabling us to move forward on major issues facing the Town Hall. We would also like to thank the Town Administrator, Mike Szlosek, for his time, interest and assistance in coordinating meetings between the 1835 Town Hall Committee and the Finance Committee. We also appreciate that Tom Rutherford is working and communicating exceptionally well with the 1835 Town Hall Committee. Tom is a real part of the team. He has voiced his concerns with respect to the building and we have worked together to set priorities on some maintenance and safety issues and that face the Town Hall.

The Committee has created two sub-committees as working groups to spend the necessary time on accomplishing many of the tasks required to progress. The first is the Building sub-committee which will develop recommendations pertaining to the structural and safety issues facing the Town Hall. We also created the Historical Review sub-committee to review all changes, repairs, renovations and improvements to the building and insure compliance with the Sterling Historical Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of the Interior / National Park Service. This sub-committee will also handle the investigation and preparation of grant applications.

**Priorities**

1. **Roof repair**; as we all agree, the roof is in need of structural repairs, removal of slate roof, repair and replacement of suspect roof sheathing, resurfacing and insulation. The 1835 Town Hall Committee has taken the following actions:
   1. The building sub-committee has already met and provided valuable information as to the sequence of repairs required for the roof repair.
   2. The 1835 Town Hall Committee has met with the Finance Committee and requested $85,000 in FY 2017 (this year) for the repair of the roof. We advised the Finance Committee that we would be seeking a matching grant from the MPPF. We advised them we will also be seeking funds from other sources..
   3. In our meeting with Finance, we stated that we did not want the $85,000 to be contingent on the grant. In the event that additional funding is not granted, the $85,000 would be used to perform repairs to the structural underbelly of the roof which needs to be completed prior to the removal and replacement of the sheathing and slate.
   4. We thank the Finance Committee for welcoming the 1835 Town Hall Committee and asking some great questions. We are hopeful for their understanding and support.
   5. We have not fully decided on the material to be used to replace the slate. It is largely dependent on the cost, expected life-span and compliance with NPS Department of the Interior requirements which we need to follow carefully in order to secure grant funding.
   6. During roof repair, the ceiling of the great hall will be stripped completely, drop ceiling removed to provide complete access to the roof structure, turn buckles, cables, collar ties and joists allowing for the proper repair, insulation and reconstruction.
2. **Septic**; tie in with septic behind fire department as originally planned
   1. The 1835 Town Hall Committee has researched the Septic tie-in issue in depth. This issue has been on and off the table since 2002.
   2. It is our conviction that we will resolve this issue once and for all.
   3. We have met with the Board of Health and an outside engineering firm. We have scheduled a joint meeting between Board of Health and 1835 Town Hall Committee for February 17th.
   4. We believe at this moment that we will seek easements behind 27 Main Street and 15 Main Street to bury the pipe that will connect the 1835 Town Hall to the Fire House septic system.
   5. We will be seeking funds (in the area of $10,000) to secure formal engineering plans, plot plans, easement language and cost estimates.
   6. We may need the assistance of Town Counsel.
   7. We hope the technicalities of this project will become crystal clear in the next couple of months.
   8. Once the plan is in place, deemed legally viable and approved by Board of Health and Board of Selectmen, we will seek to fund the project.
3. **Minor maintenance;** 
   1. Many of the issues in this category have been addressed by either the Rec department or Tom Rutherford. Those not yet completed are on the working list.
   2. Tom will be working on some important safety issues in the near future including;
      1. Securing the fire escape to the building in a more permanent and significant way.
      2. Placing protective gable roofs (designed and approved by the Historical Review Sub-committee) over fire exit doors so that these doors will remain clear of snow and ice
      3. Signage for sides of building to prevent parking when snow is on the roof.
      4. Repair of the gap between the rear access door and the floor
      5. General repair and storage/surface space for bathrooms
4. **Lighting**
   1. We have met with the Sterling Municipal Light Department and Sean Hamilton in order to put the lighting needs of the 1835 Town Hall on their radar. Sean has advised us that he will be working to upgrade interior lighting to better and more cost-effective LED lighting as he is able to in conjunction with other buildings he is upgrading. We have requested lighting in the REC offices and the meeting room to be upgraded first followed by the rear meeting room. We are not looking to upgrade lighting on the 2nd floor at this time.
5. **Funding alternatives**;
   1. The 1835 Town Hall Committee is progressing on grant applications. We are attending a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund conference in Dorchester and will develop relationships with the people making the decisions like Paul Holtz, Historic Architect and Co-Director Grants Division.
   2. We are also researching other funding sources including:
      1. Massachusetts Cultural Council
      2. US Department of Agriculture Community Facility Grants
      3. American Express Partners in Preservation Grant Program
      4. American Institute for Conservation
      5. Block grants
   3. *Friends of 1835 Town Hall* non-profit 503(c)(3) organization will help with fund raising activities. We have pinpointed some individuals that may play an integral role in the establishment of the organization and further enhance funding initiatives. We expect real progress before March 2016.

Respectfully submitted January 27, 2016

**1835 Town Hall Committee**

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