**1835 Town Hall Committee**



Report to the Board of Selectmen

November 4, 2015

**Overview**

The 1835 Town Hall Committee is finding its way as it transitions from a committee dedicated to the maintenance and management of the Town Hall to an advisory committee working with the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the people of Sterling.

Our objective remains maintaining the Town Hall, the oldest public building in Sterling, which includes enhancing its value to the community, restoring and improving its functional beauty inside and out and preserving the building as a focal point of our community for future generations.

We look to the Massachusetts Historic Commission, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service for the proper guidelines. As such, we have a prepared a list of priorities. The 1835 Town Hall Committee stands ready to collaborate and cooperate with the Board of Selectmen to accomplish these tasks.

**Priorities**

1. **Roof repair**; as we all know, 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 recommends:
   1. Architectural asphalt that emulates slate is the recommended product to replace the slate roofing for a variety of reasons. See example photo.



* + 1. It conforms to Massachusetts Historical guidelines
    2. As seen here, it can look very similar to slate
    3. It is economical
    4. Lighter than slate
    5. It will last 35 or more years
    6. Less expensive than metal
    7. It will hold the snow cover unlike metal
    8. Not prone to leaks, tears or pooling water
  1. During roof repair, the ceiling of the great hall should 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. The balcony should be revealed as an historic artifact and opened to view the full grandeur of the great hall.
  3. Lighting should be reviewed and replaced at this time with deference to high powered LED chandelier lighting.
  4. A structural engineer should be consulted prior to and in concert with a building/roofing contractor to review and assess the proper repair of joists as well as the proper use of turn buckles, scissor truss, cables, collar ties and joists to insure structural integrity, aesthetics and functionality.
  5. It has been suggested by engineers that we install new supplemental truss framing and purlins below existing to strengthen roof framing. These would be visible in the Meeting Hall. The trusses would be encased to create architectural elements. The tie rods would remain, but new sag bars would be installed that would be more architectural.
  6. In the past, we have had assistance from Menders, Torrey & Spencer, now Torrey Architecture, Inc. and Spencer & Vogt Group. Both from Boston. We have also had the building reviewed by Architect David Whitney.
  7. Over the next 3 months, the 1835 Town Hall Committee should secure bids from structural engineers and associated contractors specializing in the preservation of historic structures so we can present them to the Board of Selectmen.

1. **Septic**; tie in with septic behind fire department as originally planned
   1. The 1835 Town Hall Committee has obtained a proposal for an engineering plan from Cabco Consult to evaluate the engineering of that connection in two possible ways, down Main Street or behind the Main Street building strip. The proposal was given to Tom Rutherford at the September 16th meeting of the 1835 Town Hall.
   2. The Committee recommends the Town proceed with the connection of the 1835 Town Hall to the septic system along Waushacum Avenue as originally prescribed.
2. **Doric Columns;** the columns under the portico are in need of repairs to eliminate rotting caused by pooling water at the base of the columns, cracking paint as well as the separation of some column segments. As such;
   1. The Committee recognizes the necessity for very careful repair and preservation of these columns as each segment of the columns are original and were shaped by hand by local carpenter John Stevenson in 1835.
   2. These columns help define the historic character of the Town Hall.
   3. The Committee is procuring an inspection using a telescoping micro camera to see inside the columns to evaluate the internal support to better consider proper repairs.
   4. The committee is in favor of using a portion of the remaining funds in the 1835 Town Hall painting account to address the repairs of the columns as soon as is practical.

1. **Minor maintenance;**  needs to be addressed by the Town include
   1. Water stains on curtains and ceiling tiles in ladies room
   2. Peeling paint on lower portion of north side exterior
   3. Repair / insulation of upstairs Gallery window to prevent cold air from entering building
   4. Review of intake for furnace to replace current intake coming in through a window
   5. Service lines on side of building is pulling siding off building
   6. General messiness and collection of debris in basement especially after painting of south wall
   7. The Committee recommends Tom Rutherford address these issues as soon as possible
2. **Funding alternatives**;
   1. The 1835 Town Hall Committee recognizes the need for alternative funding sources to help defray the cost of required repairs. We have been in contact with Paul Holtz, Historic Architect and Co-Director Grants Division for the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. MPPF Round 22 has not yet been announced as it is awaiting authorization from the Governor’s Office. We are watching closely and members of the Committee are attending a Grant Writing Workshop on November 6th presented by the Massachusetts State Historic Records Advisory Board and will be prepared to seek funding through this Grant as soon as possible.
   2. We are continuing to discuss, research and evaluate establishing a *Friends of 1835 Town Hall* non-profit 503(c)(3) organization to help with fund raising activities. We have some work to do in this regard and are seeking input from all interested Towns’ people.

Respectfully submitted November 4, 2015

**1835 Town Hall Committee**

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