**1835 Town Hall Committee**



Report to the Board of Selectmen

February 20, 2016

**Overview**

The Committee, now full, has an enviable base of knowledge and experience providing insight and guidance. A lot has happened since our last report of January 26th.

**Roof Repair and Restoration**

We have run up against a stone wall in our quest for matching grant funding from the MHC. After conversations with Paul Holtz, Staff Architect and Co-Director of the Grants Division of Massachusetts Historical Commission, it was indicated that the only suitable roofing materials that would qualify for grant funding would be slate or wood shingles. Paul was clear and uncompromising when he stated that an application specifying a material other than what was originally used, slate or wood, would be rejected by the Commission.

The Committee believes that neither slate nor wood are appropriate solutions. We voted that the demands for architectural roof treatment of slate or wood were undesirable in their functionality, practicality and cost. Although they might be appropriate from a historical aspect, they both had attributes the Committee would not support.

Further, Mr. Holtz advised us that a permanent preservation restriction would be required. The Committee is unwilling to accept a preservation restriction for perpetuity for the building at this time, although this can be revisited in the future. The Committee seeks a cost effective solution that can be supported by all within Town government and the tax payers of Sterling.

It is for these reasons the Committee has decided not to move forward with the MPPF Round 22 Grant Application.

We have consulted with Lynne Spencer, who was the lead on the 2012 restoration plan and she is very willing to assist us technically in our future grant requests. We will continue to seek guidance and support from MHC on future projects involving the 1835 Town Hall and hope they will financially support us in subsequent rounds of funding.

We have not given up hope of securing grant funding. We are working very hard to seek out and develop other sources of support. That said, we remain steadfast in the request we made to the Finance Committee requesting an appropriation of $85,000 for the structural repairs and restoration of the roof and suggest an item in the FY 2017 Warrant something along these lines:

1835 Town Hall RoofTo see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, including the Capital Fund, the sum of $85,000, or any other sum, for structural repairs to the roof of the 1835 Town Hall, said sum to be expended by the 1835 Town Hall Committee with the express approval of the Board of Selectmen; or take any action in relation thereto.

As we explained to the Finance Committee, we believe this represents half of what will ultimately be required to fully restore the roof structure and replace the roofing material. We believe Architectural Asphalt slate look-alike shingles is the best material as it is economical, long-lasting and substantially lighter than slate.

We are still working through the structural restoration options and the Building Sub-Committee will provide guidance for our next meeting in March.

**Septic**

The Committee had an informative and positive meeting with the Board of Health regarding connecting the 1835 Town Hall Septic to the Leaching area provided for us in the firehouse septic system. We all agreed that a path behind Main Street makes the most sense. An engineering plan will be required and easements will be needed to traverse the land leading to Waushacum Avenue and the Fire Department leaching system.

The property involved is

* 27 Main Street (property owned by Hung C. Tran, Manager, Hand Star LLC, 26 North Main Street, Millbury, MA 01527), and
* 15 Main Street (property owned by Leon Woodcock, PO Box 193, Sterling, MA 01564); or
* 2 Pine Street (property owned by Jonathon and Caroline Willman, 2 Pine Street, Sterling, MA 01564)

There may be a drainage pipe already existing along the route as evidenced by man-hole covers, but no existing records can be located to support this. Even if it does exist, it is believed that a 10 foot separation would need to be maintained and therefore some easement will be required to add a sleeved pipe system between the 1835 Town Hall and the firehouse leach field.

There is also awareness that we will need to evaluate nitrogen load limits of the systems. The Board of Health will be working closely with the 1835 Town Hall Committee and engineer to insure compliance. As we move closer to a plan, we will ferret out the details of our options.

The 1835 Town Hall Committee is currently working with Chuck Budnick of Cabco, Inc. to assist us in securing initial terms and diagrams for the easements so that we can contact the appropriate land owners and obtain initial approval for the easements. Chuck will also meet with Ross Engineering as there is no evidence that a line currently exists between the leaching area and Waushacum Avenue but it is in the plan.

We have a proposal (attached) from Cabco for $9,700 for the engineering plan with $3,200 required as a retainer. We are requesting payment of this retainer so that preliminary plans can be drawn.

**Doric Columns**

The 1835 Town Hall Committee has secured a proposal from ACH Construction, Maynard, MA to repair, clean and paint the Doric Columns and add weep holes for proper ventilation and clean and paint the front of the Town hall and portico ceiling. The Building Sub-Committee is reviewing this proposal and may secure additional proposals. The Committee is planning to vote on the proposals at our upcoming March meeting so that the work can take place in spring, hopefully early April. We plan on using a portion of the remaining 1835 Town Hall Painting Account funds for this project with estimated costs less than $5,000.

**Fire Escape**

From a safety point of view, the existing fire escape is in need of scraping, painting and improved bracing, rails and guards. Tom Rutherford has been working hard to formulate the best plan for the repair, stabilization and painting of the fire escape. He has met with an engineering firm to design the proper cross bracing, welding needed for proper stabilization, improved hand-railings and balusters. He has secured a firm quote from a local welder and he will request the sheriff’s department scrape and paint the entire structure.

Tom is managing the project which will ultimately cost somewhere less than $8,000, the funds to come out of the building maintenance budget. The 1835 Town Hall Committee voted unanimously in support of this project and Tom’s plan as the alternative is a new fire escape costing in excess of $24,000.

Respectfully submitted February 20, 2016

**1835 Town Hall Committee**

Robert McKay Jones

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Rob Barwise

Carl Corrinne

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