

1835 Town Hall Committee



Report to the Board of Selectmen
November 2, 2016

The 1835 Town Hall Committee continues to make slow progress. We are optimistic that recent changes in the administration of the Town of Sterling will foster an environment of possibilities and renewed hope for the 1835 Town Hall. We continue to rally for 1) structural repairs and resurfacing of the roof, 2) access for all to the second floor and 3) a septic connection to the fire house leaching area as originally planned.

Roof Restoration:

The ceiling area surrounding the beam showing signs of damage have been uncovered and the pictures have been taken. The Committee thanks John Kilcoyne and especially Rich Lane for making this happen. The pictures reveal a major fault in the rafter support section of the second support bay which is worse than the structural issues we already knew about in the first support bay. There are four support bays and it is assumed that there is no damage to the third and fourth. However, until the entire ceiling is opened up, we do not know the full extent of structural damage or integrity. The Committee would like the entire ceiling excavated in the near future.





The engineer, Peter Reynolds, reviewing the damaged area has suggested back to back steel channels surrounding and supporting the existing rafter with welded plates for existing tie rod. This is similar to the 2012 study which called for steel I-beams supporting all existing rafters with steel collar ties. The Committee agrees conceptually with the method of reinforcement but believes that a better alternative to steel reinforcement would be laminated veneer lumber (LVL¹).

It is the hope of the Committee that structural repairs cause minimal damage to the existing roof decking. However, reinforcing the rafter and collar tie structure will certainly require opening up the structure from below (ceiling) and possibly from above (decking) as well. Therefore, the repairs to the structure should be concurrent with the resurfacing of the roof.

The Building Sub-Committee is working to create a plan to permanently reinforce all rafters and collar ties with laminated veneer lumber as needed. As part of that plan, a description of how installation will be performed.

¹ (Laminated veneer lumber is a structural product manufactured from thin peeled veneers of wood usually 3mm thick, glued with a durable adhesive with the grain running parallel to the main axis of the member. LVL is uniform and comparable in strength to solid timber, concrete and steel. It is also more durable and less prone to shrinking or warping than solid lumber. LVL is a widely used structural composite lumber product. It is produced by bonding thin wood veneers together in a large billet so that the grain of all veneers is parallel to the long direction. The LVL billet is then sawn to desired dimensions depending on the end-use application. Because LVL is made with scarfed or lapped jointed veneers, LVL is available in lengths far beyond conventional lumber lengths. Major advantages of LVL include its dimension, shape, high strength properties and low cost. The size of LVL is not limited by log size, due to its manufacturing method. LVL is one of the strongest wood-based construction materials relative to its density)

Architectural Access Board

Disabled Access: It has been clearly pointed out that the roof repairs will trigger Massachusetts 521 CMR 3.3 (repairs to the roof will certainly exceed the threshold of 30% of the cost of the building) and require compliance with CMR 521 for disabled access to the building and its second floor.

AAB: We have contacted the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board with the hopes that we could obtain a delay in complying with the provisions of CMR 521 until 2020. Mr. Thomas Hopkins has suggested a meeting would be in order and has requested we contact Kate Sutton who handles his calendar. We will pursue this meeting and will very likely apply for a variance in time or conditions from the architectural access board requirements. The Minutes of the AAB monthly meetings provides an indication that the AAB has a degree of sympathy and understanding of extenuating circumstances.

Funding: In the interest of time and considering improved access to the second floor would allow for more programs using the Great Hall on the second floor, we are also pursuing an opportunity for funding from the **Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund**. Committee members are attending an information session on November 9th at the Shirley Meeting House to get up to speed.

Award maximums for Capital Grants have not been set at this time but, in the past, maximum grants have ranged from \$250,000 to \$675,000. All grants less than \$1,000,000 awarded by the Cultural Facilities Fund are subject to a 1:1 matching requirement. Similar projects have been funded in Berlin (1870 Town Hall Elevator project: \$242,000)

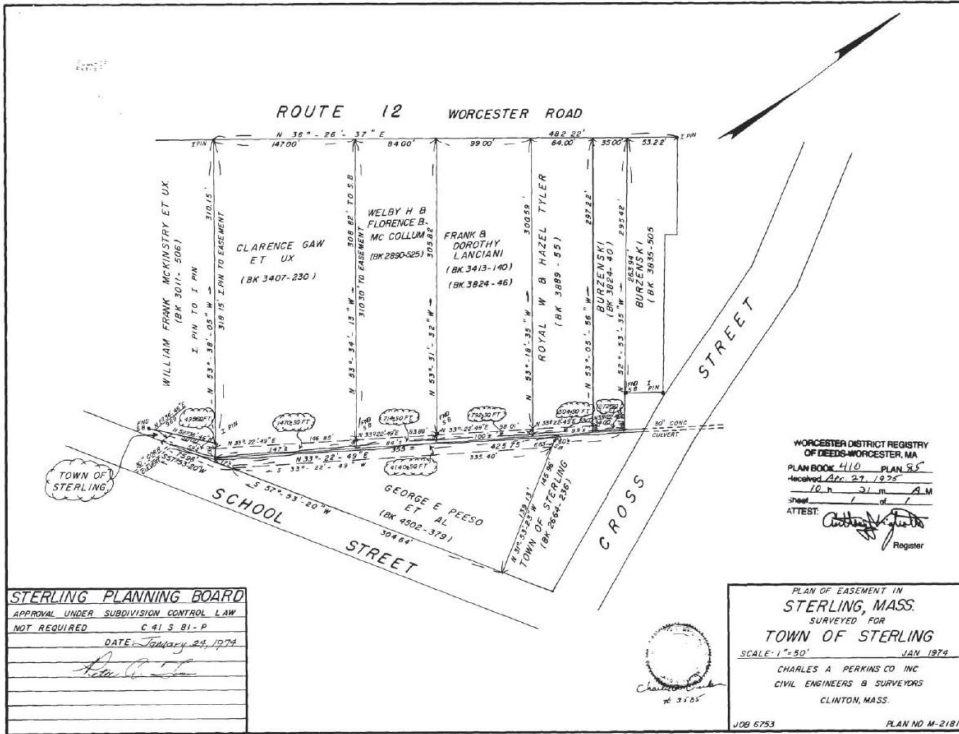
The fund distributed \$10 million in 2016. It is not yet known what the 2017 appropriation will be at this time. We need to submit our intent to apply by November 18, 2016 and submit our final application by January 13, 2017. Grant announcements are made June of 2017.

Update: Septic connection to Firehouse leaching area:

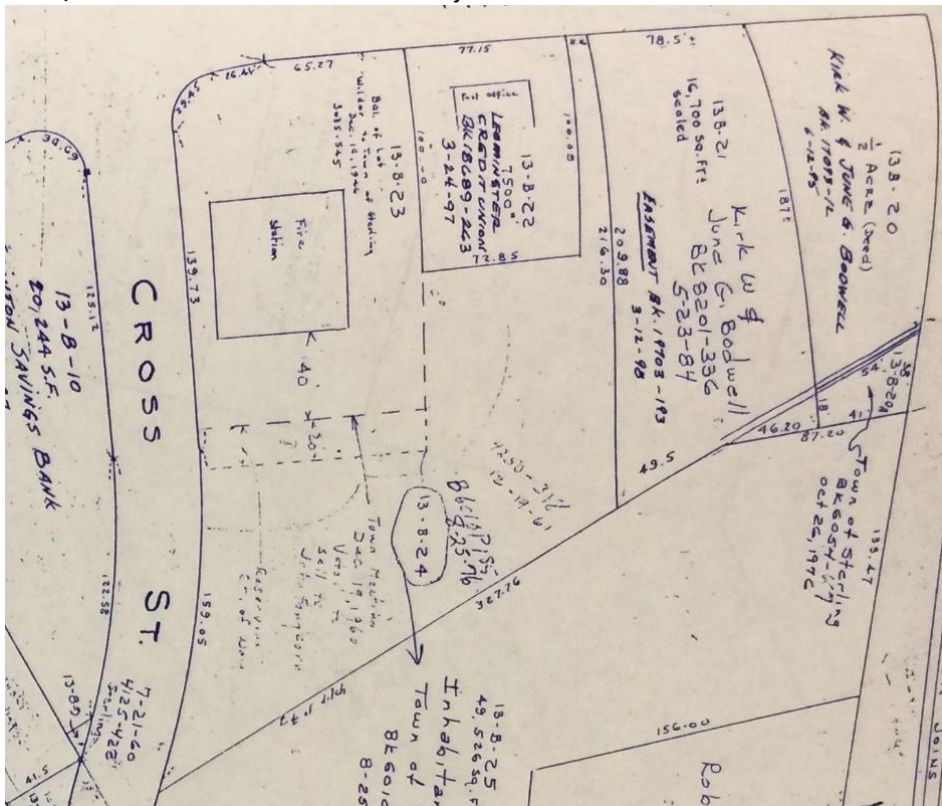
We continue to seek the second portion of the original \$9,700 proposal for the septic plan provided by Cabco to continue with the plan development. This will involve some digging in and around the location of the Ditch, now drainage line between the Town Hall and the Fire House. Here are the recent developments:

- The Committee has reviewed records back to the early 19th century. We have not found an easement for the property known as the town ditch between Maple Street and Waushacum Avenue although it is referenced in some deeds as a border.

- There is an easement dating to 1975 between Cross street and School street. Book 410 Plan 85



- The Assessors map 13-B (circa 1945) depicts in an unclear way the continuation of the ditch/culvert behind the Firehouse adjacent to Memorial Field



- A drainage line with catch basins runs along the route of the old town ditch.

- We requested the plans from DPW for this drainage line, but they do not have any plans going back that far.
- We requested to review plans/maps stored in the vault but were advised that December was the soonest we could have access due to the election.
- We have sought assistance from DCR to see if they have plans that might show this drainage as part of their “Cider Mill Ditch/Sterling Filter Beds” There is some evidence that the ditch has always been the property of the Town of Sterling and it is vaguely supported by Assessors Map 13A which shows an area behind 27 Main Street connecting to Town Hall property that has no known owner which coincides with the line of the town ditch.



Funding

Funding remains a challenge for the 1835 Town Hall. Recapping possible expenditures for roof repair, septic connection to leaching area and disabled access to the building, we may be in need of nearly \$500,000 over the next 3-years. Although we can make an effort to stagger these expenditures, we need to accurately determine the cost of structural repairs and resurfacing of the roof in order to present to the Town. The 1835 Town Hall Committee requests the Selectmen and Town Administrator to assist.

Respectfully submitted November 2, 2016

1835 Town Hall Committee

Robert McKay Jones, Chair

Members: David Gibbs, Ron Pichierri, Joann Drown, Rob Barwise, Carl Corrinne, Danielle Ray