



Historic Sites Committee

(a work committee of the Hyde Park Planning Commission)

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Present: Jim Heath, Monica Heath, Duncan Tingle
Absent: Kevin Fitzgerald
Guests: None
Staff: Ron Rodjenski

1. Welcome
2. Overview of Committee. Duncan offered his concerns for the community and questioned this committee's work, wondering if the committee's work on the oldest barns in town and updating the historic sites inventory would be worth his time on the committee. Duncan felt that town history could be a tool to bring the community together, rather than separate the community as other town issues have over time, such as the school strike, the sexual harassment lawsuit and Selectboard resignations and the recent road committee report. Duncan suggested that having the historical society building in North Hyde Park was not the best location and it should be on Main Street, noting that the Johnson Historical Society's building on Route 15 is impressive and important to that village. Duncan was also concerned about the failing conditions of the Main Street churches and hoped those structures can be preserved. He suggested that the committee's work could be used to bring the community together rather than coming to talk about old barns. Duncan is very happy with the current efforts of some community members, such as the library directory's community & history events and the area churches' efforts to bring people together at food and music events. Duncan wondered if the historic stage curtain at the Grange Hall in North Hyde Park could be sold to then use those funds for community projects. Duncan mentioned the community discussion regarding ownership of the town clock at the courthouse was resolved with ownership now by the Town. Now, the clock can be used for town history educational purposes with school children, noting that Vermont history is no longer taught in the school system. Monica agreed that many of the curriculum objectives in schools these days should be reevaluated. Duncan noted that the Hyde Park Village Improvement Association will be meeting with the Town Tree Warden Jared Nunery at their October 19th meeting regarding a proposed town tree ordinance. Duncan noted that HPVIA has done 105 years of work in and near the Village Center on trees, flowers and donations to community groups and fondly remembered the Main St restaurants and other services that used to operate along Main Street. Duncan would like to see more community events bringing residents together. Monica and Jim agreed that society is changing and getting residents together was important and when events are planned, this committee could increase outreach efforts by spreading the word to increase participation. The Committee agreed to seek an assessment of the value of the stage curtain at the Grange Hall to then discuss whether or not it should be sold to support community projects. Ron noted that the Selectboard has taken over the maintenance of the Grange Hall, but the deed to the parcel has not yet been secured from the State Grange Society.
3. Grange Hall – Ron reported that Kevin was unable to attend this afternoon but had passed along his notes on a recent site visit at the Grange Hall. Kevin visited the building with a contractor and they identified three areas needing attention; collectively the work is about \$5,000:

- a. Roof – A tree appears to have fallen on the roof and punctured a hole, allowing water to enter the building. The committee agreed that this was a number one priority and could not be deferred. Ron noted that funds available are \$2,700 through June 30, 2016.
 - b. Chimney – The chimney is not secured against the building and may fall and the brick need to be pointed at the same time. The committee hoped that one contractor could perform both repairs within the \$2,700. Ron will seek out some quotes for the work as this was also a high priority and could not wait. Ron will contact the town's insurance company to see if the damage is covered.
 - c. Basement – The overall structure is very sturdy and the found is in great condition. However, along the basement and sill are air gaps that could allow moisture in and those should be sealed. The committee felt that this was a lower priority than the other two items and possibly could be done this year if funds allow.
4. UVM Interns for Summer Inventory & Web-based Inventory Tool – Ron reported that Kevin received an update on the web-tool. Norwich and Hartland just started piloting the new software – Kevin expects Hyde Park may be able to access the tool in Spring 2016 and if so, the committee could seek the assistance of an intern. Ron noted that the benefit of the web-based tool would be to complete an inventory of the entire town and immediately make it available to the public.
 5. Hyde Park Historic Barns Submittals – One submittal from Robert Jones was received on the two barns on Jones Road owned by the Joneslan Farm. Duncan felt that preservation of barns was important, but due to the location on a lightly traveled road, it would not be a community show piece or improve the character of the Hyde Park. Duncan had concerns for the costs to preserve structures, especially if there was no new use of the barns. Jim Heath encouraged Duncan, and the HPVIA, to attend the community event on Sat. October 10 at 9:30 a.m. at the library – the oldest barn information received by that time will be presented to the community and there should be plenty of Hyde Park history shared by the attendees. Duncan agreed to pass along the invitation to others. Duncan noted that Gus and Mary Elfer had received an Historic Barn Grant and old barns do represent the community's past, but re-doing barns in a field without community access should not be a priority. Ron noted that the committee's goals and projects are set by the committee. Monica stated that the committee members should continue to reach out to others to participate in community events, especially considering that the Hyde Park Historical Society is no longer active. Monica noted that additional committee members would be welcomed as well as project ideas.
 6. Certified Local Government – Ron explained that Kevin was preparing a letter for the planning commission to review tomorrow night. The letter will recommend to the Selectboard that the town begin the formal process of receiving CLG status. Ron noted that if designated as a CLG, the town will be eligible for additional preservation and historic program grant funds to move projects forward such as the historic sites inventory, barn and other structure preservation and increasing public outreach. Duncan noted that the Lamoille Valley rail Trail is a big improvement for the community and adding CLG status could be another potential good improvement. Ron noted that the incremental steps being taken will eventually better the community and Jim noted that it does take time. Jim stated that he is on the committee to help work on those projects and he sees value in this committee to set a foundation for future projects that impact the whole community.
 7. Adjourn – Adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 3, 2015 at 5:00 PM