



## **Gihon Valley Hall Committee - Meeting Minutes - Monday June 22, 2020**

Attendees: Liz Courtney, Monica Heath, H. Dale Porter, Andy Race, Laura Race, Al Spitzer, Mary Walz  
Guest: Ron Rodjenski

*Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, this meeting was held via teleconference*

Liz called the meeting to order at 5:35pm

### **July 4<sup>th</sup> Event Planning**

- Dale and Andy updated the committee on plans for hanging the antique garrison flag for July 4<sup>th</sup>. It appears to be logistically possible, so event plans can move forward.
- Liz requested feedback on the draft event flyer and description that she had shared via email. The committee recommended adding more emphasis on the enormous size of the flag.
- Discussed the pros/cons of having food and drinks as part of the event. The committee decided that given the ongoing pandemic, it would be best to forego food and focus on drop-by elements of the event versus activities that would encourage people to gather and linger.
- Ron said the Sheriff's Dept is always happy to provide directed patrol of our events, we just need to contact them to get it on their calendar. Liz volunteered to make the call.
- Dale agreed to take care of signs – parking signs, 'open house' lawn sign.
- The committee agreed on having the flag on display from 10am til 4pm with members taking two-hour shifts to be host to any visitors and to monitor the flag. Dale, Andy, Laura, Mary and Liz all agreed to take shifts.

### **Grant Application – Project Scope**

- Mary summarized the various quotes she and Al have received from contractors to equip the first floor with heat and electrical to equip the building for regular use at least 9 months out of the year (expanding beyond summer into spring through fall)
- While we still need to refine the electrical ask and perhaps get one more quote for electrical so that we have a better sense of cost, the heating options include various quotes for electric heat pumps vs. hot air furnace vs. boiler heat.
- Everyone agreed furnace isn't ideal due to cost, noise, efficiency, etc.
- The majority of the committee agreed that heat pumps seem like the best investment at this stage for a number of reasons:
  - Mary noted the efficiency and not needing to clutter the interior with baseboard heaters. She acknowledged the challenges of heating the bathrooms but said she researched (per the advice of Efficiency Vermont) *electric* baseboard heaters that could add supplemental heat along with proper pipe insulation.
  - Dale mentioned going to look at the compressors on the exterior of the Hyde Park Opera House and feeling they weren't unsightly.
  - Ron felt that heat pumps were a good solution to start, and Laura added that a boiler could always be added for supplemental, year-round heat in the future while the heat pumps remain useful for their lower cost to operate.
  - Andy noted that if we can prove the building is a vibrant, useful space for 9 months of the year, surely community (and perhaps private donor) support will likely be there to help fund future heating upgrades.
  - Liz acknowledged that a boiler would be a better year-round solution (and noted this was Al's preference [who had not yet joined the meeting at this time] since it would be a one-

time investment), but given the higher utility cost and higher up-front investment, heat pumps seem like the appropriate option at this stage. Plus the grant judges may look more favorably on a heating solution that is environmentally sustainable as heat pumps can run on solar vs. fossil fuels. Heat pumps are also her personal preference for that reason.

- Mary asked Ron to clarify the building's status with regards to historic preservation status. Ron clarified that nothing in North Hyde Park is currently registered as an historic landmark, but all the buildings in the district were inventoried in 1982 and are *eligible*. To be registered would get us listed as an historic landmark and could open up new grant eligibility, however it also creates a lot of constraints in terms of meeting historic preservation guidelines.
- The committee discussed easement concerns for heat pump installation as 24" of space would be needed for compressors plus room for protective housing. Ron seemed to think it shouldn't be a problem at least as far as the grant application, however recommended we discuss with Bobbi Jo who owns the adjacent "old hotel" property when we pick up the discussion with her regarding leasing the back of her lot for parking.
- Regarding Bobbi Jo's property: Ron updated the committee that the brownfield testing of the proposed parking site is now in "Phase 2" and another round of groundwater monitoring has been recommended before the site can be cleared for development, something which will require environmental grant funding and won't likely be resolved until next spring. Clearing the brownfield site is a precursor to getting the 10ft of easement needed from Bobbi Jo for our fire escape, parking, and a potential walking path that could connect to the "overflow" parking area on the Manosh property. In the meanwhile, Ron will draft a letter of intent between the Town and Bobbi Jo and suggests Al reaches back out to her to pick up the conversation.
- Next the committee discussed outstanding questions with regards to electrical work on the stage. What might be needed or desired for stage productions? Liz said she'll ask her husband Zeph to take a look and make a recommendation from the musician's point of view. Mary is speaking with Cyd who did the lighting at Hyde Park Opera House to get her recommendation. Ron recommended we speak to the GMATV team about the upgrades they recently did to the community room at the town clerk's office.
- At this time Al Spitzer joined the Zoom meeting having not received the meeting link in time to join earlier. Liz and Andy recapped the prior discussion on heating systems. Mary summarized the preferred project scope of: heat pumps + electric baseboard heat for bathrooms + pipe insulation for the basement + structure to protect the condensers + maybe a replacement hot water heater.
- Al voiced his preference for boiler heat as investing in heat pumps ensures we will have to invest again in the future should we want to get the building into use year round. But acknowledging the preference of the committee, he suggested we make a point to include new windows in our plans so that the grant judges and the taxpayers will see that we also have plans to keep the heat from leaking right out of the building.
- Liz suggested that we explore what it might look like to set aside enough of the annual budget to invest in windows while holding the rest of the budget for the 50% match of the grant. Then we can say in the grant application that we have plans (and budget) to replace the windows.
- Mary thanked everyone for the feedback and said she will continue to develop the project scope and grant application, reaching out with updates as we go.

### **Other business**

- Liz and Mary shared headlines from the Municipal Planning Grant kickoff meeting that happened on June 17. Several local residents attended and all seemed enthusiastic about the potential of the hall and voiced various ideas for programming. The second half of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion of traffic calming measures. Rob Moore provided info on how community members can volunteer to help with traffic, pedestrian and bike counts to provide useful data to VTrans.
- This prompted a side discussion of what it takes to get a light-up speed limit monitor sign in the village, and Ron said that voicing our interest is a key part of making it happen. Plus funding to the tune of around \$3500 per sign.

- Al mentioned that Friends of Lake Eden are hosting a boat parade on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Liz said she'd reach out to see if we can cross promote our July 4<sup>th</sup> event as a roadside attraction on the way to the boat parade.
- Liz informed the committee that the building's fire extinguishers were tested on June 17.
- Liz noted that the next regular (still virtual until further notice) committee meeting will be Monday July 13 at 5:30pm.

With no other new business to discuss, Mary motioned to adjourn. Liz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.