

Town of Wheelock
Town Hall Accessibility Project Committee
October 11, 2021 6:00 pm at Town Hall and via Zoom
Minutes: Unapproved

Meeting Purpose: The Project Committee was appointed by the Selectboard on Jan. 4, 2021. Its purpose is to assist the Selectboard in managing a grants-funded project providing funds for community outreach and architectural concepts to help solve the Town Hall accessibility issues.

- ◆ This meeting was called to discuss impressions of the 9/27 Community Meeting and decide next steps.

Present: <u>Selectboard</u>	Ann Lawless, committee chair (at Town Hall)
Project Committee Members at Town Hall:	Liz Muckerman
Project Committee Members on Zoom:	Steve Amos, Enid Ellis, and Eileen Boland, scribe
Not in attendance:	Marc Brown, Project Committee member
Project consultants on Zoom:	Paul Simon: VISCC LLC, project manager
Not in attendance:	Christopher Kennedy: MAKE Architects, architect
	Brandy Saxton: Place Sense, planner

Kaitlin Flannigan of Lyndon’s “News 7” provided video coverage of the meeting.

Meeting called to order 6:26 pm (technical difficulties delay) with a welcome and review of the agenda by Ann Lawless. Marc Brown’s emergency shelter comments will be considered under the first agenda item.

Review Sept. 27 meeting and comments to date: The comments box in the Wheelock Village Store yielded 2 comments (one was two-sides with 12 bullet points outlining many objections) but the Town Hall box had none. Brandy will be sending comments placed with the PlaceSense website later this week. Ann felt that inviting people who object to the project to join the committee could be very helpful in promoting understanding.

Ann also shared a 3-page “pros and cons” handout about the options that she received from Carol Rossi at the community meeting (modifications and mostly pros for Option 1; all cons for Option 2). Eileen noted that at the community meeting she mentioned the need for a larger vault, however, researching background on vault size, the town clerk, Vanessa Sequin, stated that the current vault is of adequate size. Records are “being moved to the cloud” and will continue to be moved over the next five years, thereby reducing the need for vault space.

There was general agreement that the presentation was well-done and the discussion and questions helpful to better understand where there may be confusion, misunderstandings, and objections about the project. More information and education on the purely financial impact, i.e., potential effect of bonding/borrowing on property taxes are needed. Support for an accessible Town Hall to host events and make “the town like it used to be” is another positive dimension of the plan to emphasize (suppers, lunches, weddings, etc.).

Who will show up to vote and what motivates them to vote will be key to the success of this effort. Past history on motions to address the Town Hall were voted down and serve as a cautionary tale. Liz made a strong case for emphasizing the positive and having neighbor-to-neighbor conversations. Enid noted residents see the bottom line and simple “shut down” further discussion.

Steve observed the town’s support of the Millers Run school bond (\$1.5 million) and how that surcharge and the one for the Town Hall roof remediation are no longer included in Wheelock’s property taxes. Eileen wondered about Brandy’s 9/27 presentation that costs of the proposal would be within the 6¢ increase preferred by survey respondents and suggested that we revisit this discussion when we have data to review.

Paul shared that Brandy only included likely grants and that others will come along. He also said there are elements of the two proposals that could be phased in, such as moving the stage, to reduce initial costs. Steve wondered if Vermont’s congressional delegation could be approached to provide ideas and support for additional funding. Ann said that considerable ARPA funds (*American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*) will be

coming to Wheelock in the range of \$225-\$240K, although their use is very prescribed, it might lessen the budget burden in some areas and balance the increase of a construction bond. She has also been in touch with Ben Doyle of the Preservation Trust about the Town Hall project (the trust has a fund that might be appropriate).

Eileen shared that Danville's train station is also 150 years old this year and they kicked off a restoration and renovation project for the structure with a birthday cake and gathering at the station (recorded on YouTube by KATV <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekircmR-VNo>).

The committee stepped back to review its charge from the Selectboard and the goals that flow from it and have guided the work. The question: to focus solely on a barebones ADA fix or to make recommendations about what the town's infrastructure needs looking 20+ years in the future?

Update from the Consultant Team: Paul called attention to the July/August invoice (September/October ready at the end of the month) and shared that Brandy and Chris's hours have exceeded the scope of services. He presented Chris's offer to provide the 3-D architectural renderings and the technology needed to view them (BIMx app). He can make available additional jpegs that we might want to use for slideshows or grant applications (he will choose some good images). It was agreed that the committee accept this offer. Paul also highlighted that the garage design was not in the original scope of work emphasizing that his team really likes this project and working with the committee. He noted that Brandy had incurred some small direct expenses that will be included in the next invoice. Ann wants the opportunity to review expenses, the remaining funding, and how closely (or not) the NCIC monies (\$5000) need to be tied to the MPG.

Next Steps: Ann shared she will prepare a proposal for a second municipal planning grant with a strong focus on outreach/communications with the community, perhaps engaging the assistance of Vermont Storylab. She clarified (with the email exchange in the committee packet) that an application can be filed while another MPG is open, but two grants cannot be open at the same time. The deadline for filing a proposal is November 2.

Eileen asked for the committee members' ideas about what to emphasize in the October newsletter. Paul said keep retelling the story in a positive way and reminding readers that residents selected the two options. Liz advised stress excitement, positivity, and high interest. Enid asked to request the need for feedback and ideas.

Adopt Minutes: Steve made a motion, seconded by Enid, to accept the minute from: September 13, 2021, September 16, 2021, and September 27, 2021. The motion unanimously approved, with special appreciation to Ann for the 9/27 Community Meeting minutes.

Other Business: None

Adjourn: By unanimous consent, the meeting ended at 8:04 PM.

Next Meeting
Monday, November 8, 2021
6:00 PM Hybrid format in person at Town Hall and via Zoom
Meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of the month

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Selectboard adoption
