



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 23, 2020
4:00 P.M.

Selectmen Present: Daniel Baker, Robyn Bates, Charles Kenison

Guests: John Fitzwilliam, Claire Borowski, Marcia Camden, Bill Davis

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRIMARY:

***** MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
- Steeple**

Mr. Baker shared that the Selectmen wanted to meet with members of the Historic District Commission to help them make decisions. Mr. Baker shared the decisions that the Selectmen have already made. They had started on the path to do more historic restoration but have now done more of a rebuild. The Selectmen are trying to replicate what was there but there are a handful of exceptions.

Mr. Baker shared that it was to be a historic restoration and determined that 75% of beams have rot – once taken down, it was evident that it was going to be a reconstruction. In looking at the exterior – sashes were replaced in 1970 and the spire was replaced in the 30's or 40's, it was mortise and tenon and nailed in.

John Fitzwilliam thought it was amazing that it survived the hurricane of 1945. Mr. Baker stated that he wasn't sure how the spire survived. Mr. Baker would like to have Historic District Commission members go to the Highway Barn to see what remains of the steeple.

Mr. Baker recognized that more of a reconstruction than restoration was being done. Mr. Baker mentioned that the Town didn't receive the grant from L-CHIP. The reconstruction was estimated to be not more than \$750,000 but the restoration was probably more than double that amount. Mr. Baker shared that the Town received a Moose Plate grant. Funds raised are approximately \$650,000. Mr. Baker shared that the work was coming in significantly under budget. It was noted that the Town Highway guys have been incredible – helping with material, assisting where needed, and it has been nice to have them support the project. Mr. Baker shared that the project was now at a point where we want to save some historic moldings – looking at the exterior – at the clock face – section below the bell tower – the moldings were covered to preserve them. Southgate Steeplejack workers tried to remove them. One small piece on the strip of molding broke in 3 places. It can be restored but we would be looking at several thousand dollars to restore that small piece of molding. So now, we would be reconstructing the molding and it would look exactly the same.

Mr. Baker mentioned the pictures that have been taken of the work done to-date. Mr. Baker shared that a door was added in order to do painting with a safety harness. Mr. Baker also shared that due to the pitch of the steeple, it would be copper roofing because shingles can't be hung at that angle. Mr. Baker stated that the Selectmen felt that they should have come before the Historic District Commission before now as the contractor was moving fast. Mr. Baker showed the Historic District Commission members some pictures of the work done by Southgate Steeplejacks. Ms. Bates mentioned that copper would also be added to the sills. Mr. Baker explained that the wood was Spanish cedar. Ms. Bates stated that Jay Southgate has preserved the weather vane and was proposing to preserve the bell and the clock. Mr. Fitzwilliam talked about what was in the "clock room". Ms. Bates and Mr. Baker shared that what was in the room was preserved and numbered to be put back exactly as it was.

Bill Davis stated that it looked like Mr. Southgate was doing beautiful work. Mr. Baker mentioned that any of the Historic District Commission members that wanted to visit Mr. Southgate's shop were welcome to go and he would schedule a date. Ms. Bates thought about putting a section on our website so people can watch the progress.

Mr. Baker shared that the best economic value was using the best materials and that was how the Selectmen have made their decisions. Mr. Baker noted that the engineers have designed how the structure would be built and what materials could be used.

Ms. Bates mentioned the possibility of raffling off the pieces that weren't being used. Mr. Baker has talked with Mr. Southgate about when sections were delivered, to have people come in and sign the beams before they were installed. The Selectmen were asked if any pieces would be available to have people bid on. Mr. Baker explained that he split the two best pillars. Mr. Fitzwilliam asked if they were trees. Mr. Baker stated they were trees and they were all turned. It was one 30 foot tree. Members were amazed at how people long ago were able to do that precise work. Mr. Fitzwilliam discussed the lathe that he saw at a museum up north. Mr. Kenison stated that according to Bob Corrette the work was done here. Mr. Davis shared that the decisions the Selectmen have made have been great and he didn't think the original Town fathers or the original architects would object to the decisions that have been made. Mr. Baker shared that copper would be used in place of shingles.

It was noted that funds have been appropriated for the past several years. This year because we are running below budget, the Selectmen were going to ask for \$50,000 and authorization for the Selectmen to take \$100,000 out of surplus, if needed. Mr. Baker shared that we were running more on the high side of what the State recommends to be held in surplus. Ms. Bates shared the lesson learned is that it is better to take care of the buildings. Ms. Bates noted that the Selectmen have gone around to some of the buildings to determine what work would need to be done. It was noted that a schedule for maintenance and painting would be helpful. Ms. Favreau shared that painting one side has always been done except for the past couple of years because of the steeple. Mr. Baker shared that the Selectmen have prioritized the repairs needed on a 3 year basis.

Mr. Baker shared that the Town has a Code Enforcement Officer that is building savvy. He would go around to the buildings.

It was mentioned that if someone builds a house, Justin Killeen should go look at it. Mr. Baker explained the code enforcement responsibilities and noted that the Town hasn't adopted the State electrical and plumbing codes.

Mr. Davis asked about the Selectmen's plans for the funding and what has been discussed about George Emerson Elementary School. Mr. Baker stated that hasn't been part of their decision making.

Ms. Bates shared that the 3 Selectmen and Ms. Favreau were at George Emerson Elementary for a lock down drill and she didn't see that there was anything wrong with the building. Mr. Baker shared what he read about the discussion at the School District level with regard to combining Troy and Fitzwilliam elementary schools. Discussion was held on the Town's ownership of George Emerson Elementary School, the deliberative session, taxes, the closing of George Emerson and Troy Elementary, the 50/50 formula, and the lawsuits at the State level regarding funding. Mr. Baker shared that the Town has maintained its budget within 2%.

Mr. Baker stated that he would notice the members when he would be going to Barry, Vermont. Mr. Fitzwilliam shared that Mr. Davis would be their representative.

Mr. Baker shared that the lower section would be done probably in June - late summer timeframe.

Ms. Bates shared that if anything comes in regarding construction they would bring the Historic District Commission in to get their opinion.

Mr. Davis shared that Southgate Steeplejacks do beautiful work.

Ms. Bates made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Mr. Kenison seconded and the motion passed. 3-0

Submitted by:

Sheryl White
Secretary to the Board of Selectmen

Daniel Baker, Chairman

Robyn Bates

Charles Kenison
Board of Selectmen