

Mont Vernon Heritage Commission
Public Meeting Minutes 1/14/2021
Approved

In Attendance: Charles Baker, Rebecca Schwarz, Brian Billow, Tim Berry

Absent: Randy Wilson, Zoe Fimbel, John Morison

Called to Order: 7:03pm

LCHIP: Baker asks Berry if he has heard back from them. Berry states he sent out an email to Baker and Schwarz looking for a time to meet in the second week of January or later. Schwarz, Baker and Berry agree on 1/26/21 as a date they can all meet.

Town Report: Baker asks if everyone has had a chance to review. States he is waiting on the accrued interest from Laurie Brown and then the document will be complete.

Budget: Berry states that at last night's meeting of the Budget Committee meeting they formally approved our budget request as submitted. Town Meeting will be delayed til May or June so it can be held outdoors. Berry states that there has been some discussion about the Town Hall preservation strategies, and the Board of Selectmen has decided to use the funds from Building Maintenance and Repair in addition to the request for more funds from the Town at the Town Meeting to fund the replacement of the windows. Berry states the Board of Selectmen are going to ask the Town to fund a design that involves Town input. In addition to the design, the Board of Selectmen want a phased plan drawn up as to how to complete the project. The most pressing need is the first floor, then the second, then the exterior. This process will cost more and take longer but it is the most feasible. Baker asks if the funds request will be a bond issue or warrant article. Berry states it would be a warrant article.

Certified Local Government: Baker asks if people are turning in their resumes for the Certified Local Government application and Schwarz states Billow has turned his in. Berry asks if he can view Billow's in Google Docs and Schwarz states no, they are private so they are being sent to her personally. The information requested is in the Certified Local Government file on Google Drive. Berry says he'll have it ready before the next meeting. Baker states that it is important for this application that we complete our Historic Resource Survey list which has been started on Google Docs. Schwarz disagrees and tells the group that again, this program offers funding for the Historic Resource Survey. Schwarz agrees the list we have begun to compile is important, it is not a prerequisite to becoming a Certified Local Government. Billow states he will pull information from the Historical Society's documents and upload it to the file on Google Docs. Berry states the Historical Society also has a Facebook page with posts and information on historical resources in town.

Fundraising: Schwarz asks Berry if there is a way we can enter the building to get a count of windows, stairs etc and identify items that might be worth "selling" to the public as a fundraising strategy. She states this will be imperative to planning a fundraising strategy of this type and being able to project what level of income could be hoped for. Berry says this is very doable, just let him know when we'd like to get in the building and he will meet. Schwarz also states that she has spoken with the principal of MVVS regarding a walking program where the students would walk laps etc and be sponsored by their family members and family friends for a dollar amount per lap. The principal said she was very interested in collaborating but it would have to wait until spring so the walk could be held outdoors. Schwarz states this program would have costs associated like providing water for the children walking and perhaps the purchase of t-shirts to give out to the participants. Schwarz states that in addition to those fundraising efforts, she has identified a grant that we would be eligible for as a municipality, but that the grant is an interior only program and she has no idea what any of the projects of the rehabilitation cost. Schwarz asks Berry if he has made any headway on an itemized project list as it makes it really hard to identify grants without it. Berry confirms, in order to get grants, you need a plan. We should put effort into obtaining a list of projects and their costs from the Town. Baker mentions that we should get the information on the tax deductibility of donations to the Heritage Commission. Schwarz states that we already know that donations made to the Commission are tax deductible and that anyone looking to donate should consult their tax preparers as we will never be expert in that area and don't want the liability of providing the wrong information. If we give the wrong information to a donor we risk alienating them in the future. Baker states he feels it would still be nice to have the information so he will continue to research it.

Fundraising Subcommittee: Baker asks are we acting prematurely and Berry states no, he thinks the fundraising is more important right now because we can fundraise now, but we're going to have a hard time getting grants without a plan. Baker agrees and states corporate funding also will not come without a plan. Baker will send out dates for the subcommittee to meet. He states that he wants to make clear that we need to be working hard to raise funds to build the Heritage Fund. Baker says he'd rather have the subcommittee work and move forward with fundraising projects instead of trying to work with the entire group.

Facebook Page: Baker would like to create a Powerpoint Presentation about what we're working on to post to the page and keep townspeople up to date on our work. Baker states that the Town website needs to be updated and that the minutes from 2019 are no longer on the minutes page. Schwarz checks the page and says yes, the member list should be updated and those minutes from 2019 are in fact gone. She speculates because they were input by another person before she had access to the website that there may have been an expiration date added, but no matter, she has the hard copies on file if requested. Berry asks if Billow has been added as a member and Schwarz states yes, but we do not have a full panel of regular members. States we do need to add another regular member and elect a Vice Chair. Baker asks if there is much interest in the page. Schwarz states we currently have 69 likes/followers on our page currently and we get a few here and there, but she doesn't really post anything because we haven't had much to post since Seven to Save. She says she does post the meetings as events so people can click into the meetings from there if they like. States that once we start working on programs and grants again etc she will post more which will attract more attention to the page. Berry says he will try to come up with some verbiage about the upcoming plan for hiring a design firm/completing a phased project plan etc. that we can post on the Facebook page as well. Billow asks do we have a platform for online donations and credit card processing, have we considered a GoFundMe? Schwarz says she can boost posts on facebook, there is a cost associated with it. As far as online donations she states we do not have that capacity because in order to do that the funds would have to be dropped right into a town

account and she doubts the town is going to give us access to their bank account and routing number for credit card processing when you consider the security concerns. It is also inadvisable for us to open a Heritage Commission bank account because we don't have our own tax id and the funds are Town money. It gets confused and unsafe. Berry says we cannot open our own account.

Other Business: Baker asks if the Commission members saw the write up in the Amherst Citizen and Schwarz said no, but she did forward the Preservation Alliance Press Release to them. Baker says he will forward to the group for review. Schwarz states she needs to request reimbursement for her final classes of her Grantsmanship courses. The total cost for this round was \$868. Baker states we probably need to wait until final approval at the Town Meeting and asks Berry if that is correct. Berry says we will need to figure this out because we can't make a member wait 6 months for reimbursement. He will call Laurie Brown to figure out the process of getting the reimbursement taken care of before the currently unscheduled upcoming Town Meeting. Berry asks what is the status of the Seven to Save Banner. Schwarz states she has not heard back from them as yet. She did place the order, but has had no response since then. Schwarz will email NH Preservation Alliance tomorrow to check in.

Minutes: Billow motions to accept the minutes with amendments, seconded by Berry. All in favor, no further discussion, motion passed.

Motion to Adjourn by Berry

Meeting Adjourned: 8:43pm

Next meeting: February 11, 2021

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Schwarz

Secretary