



Town Manager
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**Municipal Building
Committee for
Prescott School**

Greg Sheldon, *Chair*
Anna Eliot, *Vice Chair*
Halsey Platt, *Clerk*
Gary Green, *Member*
Alison Manugian, *Member*
Becky Pine, *Member*
Lynwood V. Prest, *Member*

Meeting Minutes for Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School

Meeting Date: April 6, 2015
Meeting Time: 5 p.m.
Meeting Location: Town Hall, First Floor Selectmen's Room, 173 Main Street, Groton
Members: Becky Pine, Greg Sheldon, Gary Green, Lynwood Prest
Others: Ann Wortman, Don Campbell (videographer), Alberta Erickson, Bruce Easom
Handouts: Agenda, draft handout for May 2nd

Greg Sheldon opened the meeting at 5:05 pm. He introduced Don Campbell to the group. Don Campbell is connected to the Pepperell Cable Channel and is an eight year volunteer for the Groton Channel. The Committee members were appreciative of his offer to work on the video project. Greg Sheldon clarified that the April 27th Town Meeting is not the goal for the initial showing since this Committee is only being given three minutes to speak to its work. That is not enough time for the planned video to be shown.

Greg Sheldon wondered if a drone camera could be used to gain aerial shots of the Prescott School building and property.

Friends of Prescott update from Alberta Erickson. Alberta Erickson said that her group has divided up the contact list and each person is reaching out to five or so groups. Their group is gaining new interested attendees each successive meeting. Alberta Erickson suggested that the May 2nd Open House might have a family friendly or family day component to increase interest and attendance. Alberta Erickson has several sandwich boards that can be used to advertise the May 2nd event.

Greg Sheldon raised the topic of the banner advertising Prescott School Open House/Public Hearing. The specific costs will be important to gather so that Greg Sheldon and the Committee can evaluate the cost/benefits of the response. Fran Stanley will share contact information for a banner vendor with Becky Pine.

Public Engagement update by Becky Pine

Becky Pine contacted the Groton Public Library (GPL) and the GPL staff gathered a list of unmet meeting space requests: classes that carry a charge, parties of all kinds, maker space, space available 24/7, community kitchen facilities, indoor play space for children. Also, the GPL meeting room holds 80 people. A flexible meeting room that accommodates 150 people would be useful.

Research and Analysis update by Gary Green

Gary Green updated the group on the research and analysis subcommittee meeting that they had with the Town Manager on March 30, 2015. Gary Green shared one idea that came out of the meeting. Specifically, the Commissioners of Trust Funds could be polled about group grant requests which may uncover additional groups to contact regarding their interest in the Prescott School building. Utilization rate for public meeting space may be less significant than the incidents of conflict when there are not enough meeting rooms to accommodate the requested meetings at particular times.

Greg Sheldon referenced the quarterly report and the survey of out-of-town buildings. Greg Sheldon said that the effort to collect useful information on other Massachusetts towns who have renovated and re-used old buildings for use of the Town or as a public/private partnership is underway. The group discussed elements of financial accounting information and amount of public subsidy that would be especially useful to report back. Committee members volunteered to write up buildings for which they have specific knowledge.

What do other towns budget for cultural and recreational line items? Becky Pine's impression was that Lexington, for example, had a broad support of various cultural and community activities. Gary Green will look for other town's budget information.

Planning for May 2nd open house/public hearing event

Greg Sheldon reviewed his draft handout – which was also provided as handout for today's meeting -- for the day that could be given to attendees and used as a guide for the Committee members who are running the event.

Becky Pine commented that the committees and the Friends group have already assembled a long list of potential uses. Can these potential uses be pre-written and displayed so that new uses can be added to the list?

Becky Pine noted that the willingness to have tax money spent on the school building could be an area to explore. Group discussed the goals of the meeting which would drive the particular direction of the crowd sourced efforts. Gary Green said that the ideas have to be up-leveled from just an expressed desire for arts group activities. Lynwood Prest suggested that the public may need to be pre-educated to the goals of the meeting so that individuals in the general public can mull desired uses and then bring their considered opinions to the May 2nd meeting. Becky Pine said that we would like to come out of the meeting with support for a direction.

Greg Sheldon recommended that pre-publicity be planned and initiated as we have four weeks until the event. Alberta Erickson said that using Cable TV can be a way to start informing the public. She said that the Committee needed to try to be very visible. Ann Wortman suggested that a flyer go out to all the students electronically through the School District. Bruce Easom recommended serving food if you would like to get people to a meeting. Bruce is willing to help get some cookies made by local restaurants available to the public. Ann Wortman suggested writing a series of letters to the editor that might provide a few interesting bullet points of topical information.

Lynwood Prest said that the Prescott School is not a veneer brick over wood stud wall. Instead, the walls may be three bricks thick or in places two bricks thick. Solid brick walls were typical with old mill buildings that were made of brick.

Greg Sheldon announced that there have been several individuals who have indicated private sector business uses for the Prescott Building. Greg Sheldon said that he has heard from at least two businesses and there is a rumor of a third business. At the next meeting, one person may come in. If others make themselves known, they will be invited to attend a Committee meeting.

Greg Sheldon drew the Committee's attention to a list of deliverables for the Committee's report to the Board of Selectmen.

Gary Green left the meeting.

Lynwood Prest moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 pm. Greg Sheldon seconded and motion carried 3:0.

Next full committee meeting: April 21, 2015 at 5 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley