

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Feb. 2, 2024, Tarbell Library

Members present: Stephanie Roper, Lou Rota, Mark Chamberlain, Robert Rogers, Robert Howe. Also Leo Trudeau

Stephanie opened the meeting at 7 p.m. for a discussion of repairs to both Citizens' Hall and the Town Hall.

At their meeting on Jan. 24, the Selectmen asked the Heritage Commission to look into two areas: a contract for structural designs to repair the foundation beam and attic roof deficiencies in Citizens' Hall. a follow-up of a study done by John Turner of Team Engineering of Bedford last summer, determine if that company met the "approved" status for applying for grants, and to determine if a similar study should be done at the Town (Center) Hall by the same company or someone else.

Leo agreed to do both. Stephanie said she would help find a list of approved contractors.

Leo said he had talked with Team Engineering; found they had done work on many historic buildings in neighboring towns and said they should satisfy requirements. The Commission agreed to recommend to the Selectmen that they continue with the Citizens' Hall project with a vote at Town Meeting.

Leo made an inspection of the town hall, he said, "crawling around upstairs," and, in his opinion, "it is in much worse condition" than previously thought. He said Scott Roper had provided him with a history of work on the building which was very helpful. (It was constructed in 1845). No one should go upstairs, he said. The upper-level floor is "underbuilt." Because of the width of the building, there isn't enough support. There is "up to five inches of sag," and not just at the stage end. He viewed the floor at eye level from the top of the stairs to see the plane of the floor. The building "was not well built."

He found the foundation stones are "tipping enough to cause alarm, "but couldn't see the footing. It is probably okay to use the ground floor, he said.

Bob Howe asked if we could get a grant to do a full inspection, and Stephanie said yes. It will be expensive, Leo said, and take some work, but I say, "Save the building." The others agreed.

A short discussion was held about previous work done, from when the roof was raised to add a dining room upstairs through the repairs overseen by Phil Brooks. Leo will talk to Phil about what was done when.

Will the roof collapse? Probably not.

Do we need a professional evaluation? Yes, in order to get grants. A report will be given to the selectmen at their next meeting on Feb. 7

In other business, Walter Holland has acquired several “pretty well documented” pieces of Clark Pottery possibly made in North Lyndeborough. He will put them on display in the town office case.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35.

Secretary