

Sutton Planning Commission Meeting

**Sutton Town Offices**

August 27, 2014

DRAFT

Attendance: Paul Brouha-Chair, Hank Parker, Joe Witt, Celeste Girrell, Scott Spencer

Paul Brouha opened the meeting at 7:00 pm in the parking lot of the Town Offices and all assembled walked to the Grange Hall where Scott Spencer joined the group. No additions/deletions to the proposed agenda were made. The objective of the Grange Hall visit was to evaluate what future uses it might best be put to now that the Sutton Volunteer Fire Dept. has moved to its new quarters on Burke Road.

The group visited the upstairs meeting room/kitchen/bathrooms/attic crawl space first and then moved downstairs to the garage/utility room. The outside of the building and its situation on the lot was also examined.

From this initial examination the group agreed on several conclusions: The 30 x 60 feet building appears structurally sound and is worth renovating. The vinyl siding is in good shape and may be underlain with wooden clapboards. The metal roof, while still functional, is reaching "replacement age." The building extends into the right-of-way of Calendar Brook Road/Underpass Road and presents an additional vision obstruction hazard to the already hazardous five-road junction in the middle of the village. The stage at the east end of the meeting room is not needed. The building would have to be gutted and brought up to current construction codes as well as made "ADA-accessible" under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Renovation costs might approach \$500,000.

While the building may not technically be a "historic structure" (it was originally built in 1917 but burned around 1937 and was rebuilt on the same location), residents view it as an important structure which contributes substantially to village center. A general consensus emerged, however, that the building must be moved away from the road and intersection.

Future suggested uses included a community/meeting center for smaller functions, before and after-school daycare, senior/student resources center with internet and library, and a Sutton history center. Obviously, some of these uses could be combined in one renovated structure.

Since the structure is on "town" (as opposed to "school") land, it was agreed any project should remain a "town" project. It was suggested the structure could be moved uphill and turned 90 degrees so it could be situated on the edge of the school staff parking lot.

Agreement was reached that grant funding for a feasibility study should be sought as soon as possible. Joe Witt volunteered to complete drawings and do renovation estimates for the building (he might be able to get his construction management class @ Vermont Technical College to take it on as a project).

After completing its visit the group (except Scott Spencer) returned to the Town Office to finish the agenda. Hank Parker presented potential grant opportunities (handout and email) for the Grange Hall. The group agreed grants from the Vermont Community Foundation's Northeast Kingdom Fund and from USDA Community Facility Grants seemed the best fit. Initially, the Northeast Kingdom Fund will be approached to underwrite the feasibility study.

Minutes of the July 23, 2014 Planning Board Meeting were read and corrected. Hank Parker moved to accept them as corrected and Joe Witt seconded the motion. All voted in favor of acceptance.

Paul Brouha stated that Brandon Mazur has agreed to be the new Clerk of the Planning Commission and Development Review Board. He lives in and is renovating a home in Sutton Hollow. He is also an English teacher at Burke Mountain Academy. He was invited to the meeting but could not attend because he was out of town. It was agreed that some appropriate expression of gratitude should be prepared/presented to Karla for her service to the Commission/Board.

There was general agreement that during the school year meetings should convene on the fourth Monday of the month to accommodate members' schedules. That schedule is therefore formally adopted and the next meeting will be September 22, 2014.

The agenda having been completed, a motion was made to adjourn at 9:00 pm by Hank Parker. Joe Witt seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.

Draft submitted August 29, 2014

Paul Brouha, Chair