

BROOKLINE MEETINGHOUSE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 6:00 PM @ Brookline Meetinghouse

Members present: Lee Anne Parker, Kerry Bourne, Dan Towler

Lee Anne brought the meeting to order at 6:13 PM -- our first meeting in almost 8 months. Draft minutes of our last meeting on Sept. 29, 2020 were reviewed. DT made a motion to approve as written, Lee Anne seconded, all were in favor.

LA reported on the results of the grant application submitted to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation last October. The grant would have provided matching funds towards the rehabilitation of the steeple and bell tower, however our application didn't make the cut. LA and DT had a joint conversation with Caitlin Corkins of the Div. for Hist. Pres. who explained the criteria and the areas where our application was strong and where it fell short.

This information will help us greatly next time we submit an application.

LA and DT reported on a meeting on May 4 with 4 members of the Athens Meetinghouse Committee at the BMH. This was initiated by the Athens group who wanted to see the work that had been done in our building, because theirs has similar needs. Present for this meeting were Dot Maggio and Bruce Mello as well as DT and LAP. We were extremely glad to share contact information and talk about our mutual challenges of rehabilitating these historic churches and repurposing them into gathering places for today's residents.

We agreed to collaborate in the future whenever possible on events, outreach, fund-raising, and sharing of resources. They are having their annual plant sale in Athens on Sat. May 29, which at least a couple of us plan to attend to show support and see their building again.

We are still waiting to hear from the state on our application for National Register status for the Meetinghouse. We have made several copies of the 36-page application completed by historic preservation consultant Paula Sagerman of Brattleboro. She did a prodigious amount of research on the Meetinghouse, which will be very useful to us in future grant applications. Copies of the application have been left in the Town Office and at the Meetinghouse for the public to review if interested.

Mike Staats, professional sign painter of Brookline, at our request, has given us a design for a new sign to go out in front of the building to replace the 2009 one that says "Historic Brookline Church". His proposal is for a slightly larger sign on a new post that says "Brookline Meetinghouse". Members present decided his design was largely acceptable. He has very generously offered to create and install the sign with no compensation for time or materials. DT and KB will confer with Mike in the near future to fine-tune the design and will report back on a plan at our next meeting.

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There was brief discussion of who in the area might have reminiscences about the Meetinghouse when it was a church and the importance of getting those stories on tape for the Moore Free Library Memory Project.

We would like to begin a schedule of Open Houses at the BMH on the first Saturday of each month beginning on June 5, from 10 AM to 1 PM. Discussion about how to publicize (Front Porch Forum, The Commons, flyers at local markets, sandwich boards), and whether to offer any activities or refreshments as enticements to visit.

The tri-fold brochures we created in late 2019, which were mailed to all Brookline tax-payers, advertise a schedule for Open Houses in 2020 which were aborted by Covid. We still hope to distribute our remaining brochures to area businesses with updated information about Open Houses.

We will have a table at the Windham County History Fair on the Newfane green on August 14.

Building improvement plans for 2021 will prioritize small-scale projects we can do ourselves or for minimal cost. Discussion included painting the walls in the kitchen (prep work already begun) and meeting room, possibly purchasing a new gas range for the kitchen, and researching storm windows to protect the restored windows in the Meetinghouse. Also refurbishing windows in the annex and purchasing storm windows for those.

LAP reported that we have a balance in the building restoration account of \$24,547.

Next meeting date was scheduled for Wed. June 2, 2021 at 6:00 PM.

Lee Anne moved to adjourn at 7:55 PM, Kerry second, voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Towler