

Danville Train Station Committee Minutes

Meeting of October 12, 2021, 5:30-6:40 pm

Location: Danville Town Hall Meeting Room and via Zoom

Attendees: Michael Hogue, Rob Balivet, Kate Whitehead, Ted Houle, Patty Conly, Stan Pekala, Laurel Ruggles, Kitty Toll, ted Houle, Tim Ide, Alison Lowe and Peter Crosby, Lois Russo secretary, Greg Prior guest.

Meeting opened at 5:33 pm by Michael Hogue, chair. The Danville Train Station Committee (DTSC) is a subcommittee of the PC. Michael took roll and submitted the agenda for approval. Agenda approved.

Minutes from the September 14th meeting were reviewed and it was noted that a few syntax errors needed correction, Michael said he would correct them, and the minutes were approved subject to correction.

Chair-Michael Hogue

Michael opened the meeting with a big round of applause for Patty Conly and her team's effort in putting forth an amazing 150th celebration. The decoration of the station inside and out, the exhibits, and the program were fabulous and commented on by many of the attendees. A big thanks to Steve Wright for his vocals, particularly the St. J. and L.C. Line, to Gerry for his displays of the StJ&LC train replicas and for KATV memorializing the event. The presentation making Archie Prevost Chairman Emeritus of the DTSC was icing on the cake.

He also presented on behalf of Ross Meaders a fill of roughly 100 documents that a squirrel had archived in the roof rafters out of the agent's office. The Select Board approved of donating these to the Danville Historical Society for preservation and presentation, on the proviso if the Society ever decided to release the documents they would be returned to the Town.

Michael reminded the committee of the importance of capturing the hours each of us expend on the DTSC. He emphasized starting with September since it is fresh in your memory and then attempt to reconstruct back to the first meeting in 2020 using minutes, emails, and messages as a base reference.

He also reminded each team leader to develop a calendar of critical dates by task (such as signing a contract) as well as when funds need to be available to meet the time lines, including the amount. The first iteration will be a very rough but we adjust as progress is made on many of the outstanding issues. The Select Board had asked for this documentation.

Michael reported that he had provided a draft job description to the SB for hiring and managing an independent contractor for grant writing, administration and coordination. The Select Board deferred discussing the document until all members of the SB are present. At that time he informed them of the donations at the 150th celebration (\$70 anonymous), the \$1,000 from GMP at the E exhibit, and the \$82,500 from VHCB. He also received permission to move the bell and wood stove into the Town Hall for the duration of the construction.

The important focus for this meeting is to come to agreement on the preservation/construction of the station. A document outlining previously discussed Phases and the elements and costs of each were provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

The discussion opened with a review of the three phases:

Phase One: Preserve and restore the exterior of the building, adding back the platform and canopy, installing a wayfinding kiosk and some landscaping. In the interior, restore the passenger area with new bathrooms and essentially mothballing the freight room except for the restoration of the south side freight doors. All at an estimated cost of \$300,225

Phase Two: For the freight room add an ADA bathroom, refinish the floors, repair plaster walls and ceiling, and reconfigure the windows on the south and east sides. In addition buildout an entrance on the north side, develop a parking plan using Town assets and perhaps neighboring properties with landscaping on the north side. All for an additional cost around \$80,000.

Phase Three: Construct the missing east section of the freight area, extend the platform and canopy and extend the platform up the trail about 50 feet. Add windows on the south east and north sides. On the north side build a bump out entrance similar to the one that was demolished as the entrance to the combined freight room. All for an additional cost around \$106,000.

Patty Conly asked if there was additional evidence other than the carriage that a north bump out existed. In light of the fact Ross Meaders was not present; Michael answered a survey map from the 70s showed the bump out on the now removed section of the freight room. However since this is only an issue if we vote to include Phase Three.

Ted Houle questioned why windows were in the budget for both Phase One and Phase Two. Michael responded that the Phase One window estimate was for the existing windows of which only one is in the freight room. He indicated that the Phase Two budget included a window facing east and glass doors replacing the south facing freight doors, perhaps needing to be addressed in advance of a use/tenant.

Peter Crosby interjected a critical observation that fundraising needs to be one time, not multiple times,; breaking up the work and the ask would be challenging to say the least.

Kitty Toll asked about leaving the inside of the station 'bare' and use for community affairs. Michael pointed out that there are ample facilities available in the town for community affairs and if we were to use the freight room as such we would have to meet all of the fire code requirements as well as an ADA bathroom. Kitty also asked if \$80,000 is enough to make the freight room viable as a useable/rentable space. Michael responded that he and Rob reviewed the numbers and felt it was achievable.

Kitty felt Phase One and Two together was an achievable goal, but Phase Three not so as fit out for a business would be a hard sell for donations. Peter agreed stating it would feel like subsidizing a commercial enterprise. Michael felt that a minimal fit out would help attract a tenant, whose rent would help with capital costs.

Laural Ruggles questioned the need for 3 bathrooms, 2 being ADA. Since an ADA bathroom is required in each separate space, the discussion turned to the non ADA bathroom. Rob Balivet expressed the belief there is economy of scale to do it now versus waiting until demand outstripped the capacity of one bathroom on the passenger side. Laural agreed to that possibility and indicated she supported it if it doubles as the janitor's room.

Alison Low indicated that there may be funds available for one or both ADA bathrooms in the VOREC grant, assuming Danville was selected and asked if we had anymore information on the grant and its application. Kate Whitehead said that she had sent an email and was expecting an answer shortly re submitting an interest letter.

Michael summarized his sense of the discussion that we proceed with Phase One and Two, Phase Three is off the table, and that we needed \$400,000 to do the job right. This plan was unanimously approved.

Rob asked about funding for the survey of the station property, Alison indicated that municipal grants usually don't fund this expense. Michael thought that the VHCB grant might cover it out of the \$7,500 grant for the easement.

A conversation ensued as to what the spaces, particularly the freight side, would like at the finish. Michael reported Rob and Sally had a meeting with Ryan Edwards a preservation contractor recommended by VHC and PTV for architectural and engineering schematics and work list. There is an expectation that we might get this done prior to yearend. This would give us documentation of the outcome

At this point in the meeting Zoom cut out as we had exceeded the allocated amount of time.

Kate received an update from VOREC and they had approved out letter for a full application (selected 34 out of 104). Application is due end of November.

Rob returned to the need for a survey and would work on getting a surveyor and a cost. Michael agreed to go to the SB if we need to pay for it out of Town funds.

Michael thanked everyone for their efforts and asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

The next meeting, November 9th, will include Zoom that will not quit half way through the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Russo, Secretary

Building/Land Team – Sally Fishburn co-chair

Funding Team-Kitty Toll co-chair

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm..

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Hogue
Chair