

Panton Town Hall Committee Meeting
October 27, 2016

Present: Howard Hall, John Viskup, Deb Hartenstein, Norman LeBoeuf, Gerianne Smart, Katie Werthmann, David Raphael, Chair.

Minutes were adopted from the previous meeting on 8-30-16.

The meeting began with David Raphael suggesting that he withdraw from the committee or create a separate entity just to focus on the cupola grant and restoration effort, as had been suggested by the Selectboard in the SB meeting earlier in the week.

It was acknowledged that Katie Werthmann has been designated by the Selectboard as Project Manager for all Town Hall Improvements. This fact was in part the impetus for the suggestion by David R.

The discussion then focused on the priorities and interests of the Selectboard with a number of long standing and/or pressing issues and needs for the building aside from the cupola restoration. The needs range from access improvements to the energy efficiency of the building, to making the upstairs meeting space a year round facility. They voiced concerns that focusing on the cupola was “putting the cart before the horse”- John V. wants to see the interior issues addressed first and Howard H. also had concerns about the long term maintenance of the cupola, once put back on the roof.

The results of the recent town plan survey were highlighted as an acknowledgement of widespread support for seeing the cupola restored and the Town Hall renovated for year round use.

The guest at the meeting, Gerianne Smart, discussed the experience surrounding the restoration and renovation of the Vergennes Opera House and the critical importance of the community support and the support of the city officials in successfully completing the project. With the volunteer fundraising effort the City then agreed to assume all maintenance responsibilities, and the theatre is managed separately from the city by the Opera House group. Both Gerianne and Norman discussed the challenges associated with the Opera House Project and how Panton is so far ahead at this point with both the grant in hand and with the community support in place.

She expressed that, with the grant in hand, and a separate fund raising effort for the cupola could be a powerful statement that could also help with community support and involvement in the building renovations as a whole.

Then a discussion ensued regarding the potential for a non-profit community organization to raise monies and separate the fundraising from the town – a concern the selectboard

has. Howard Hall voiced support for exploring the cost of forming a non-profit that could serve several purposes over the long term.

The group then discussed the notion of a long term plan that identifies priorities and phasing for addressing all of the building needs, and this was articulated, in closing, by Deb Hartenstein who stated that “ We need to work together to come up with a long term plan for the entire Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 7PM and follow meeting scheduled for