

Town Hall Rejuvenation Project Meeting Summary

October 1, 2019

Attending: Butch Sutherland, Alison Clarkson, Peggy Kannestine, Susie Stutz, Serena Nelson, Jill Davies, Gary and Angela Moore, Sandy and Karen Gilmore, Sally Miller, Wendy Spector, Frank Heald, Charles Degener, Alita Wilson, Mary Riley, Tesha Buss, Mike Skuro, Ray Bourgeois (late) and Jay White, architect

Objective: Given work done to date by structural engineer and citizen groups the goal is to discuss and agree upon the development of a Master Plan.

Jay White reported that the main building is sound. Given that the addition is separating from the main building and built on unstable ground, he explored the possibility of eliminating it entirely and proposes restoring the third floor to accommodate the performance and municipal needs of the town. He cited the Barre Opera House, which had been closed for 40 years as an example of how a bold vision can be implemented.

Key Points: (includes presentation and discussion)

The building motion monitors were installed in 1985. The building had already moved and stabilized before then; moved again since then. Despite the movement this is one of the best historic buildings, structurally, in VT.

- Restore full function of main building
 - Relocate all the municipal functions to the first floor, to improve the routine access to town business.
 - Meeting rooms, large and smaller, could be below in the basement, possibly accessible through a central atrium. Blocked basement windows would be reopened.
 - The theater could move back to original location on the second floor resulting in more seating with the existing third floor balcony seats plus a sloped orchestra floor.
 - Glass wall overlooking the river could replace the addition.
 - Dressing room would be under the stage, with elevator access.
 - The design would most likely accommodate the current locations of the vaults, which can be very expensive to move.
 - Without the addition, parking would increase.
- Maintenance and operating expenses should be included in the cost estimate
 - Replacing the antiquated HVAC system would save space and operational expense.
 - Thoughtful selection of materials can facilitate maintenance and reduce the cost of repairs. Porcelain tile, for example, is more durable and easier to maintain than linoleum.
- Access
 - Dedicated elevator for ADA accessibility would be in a prominent and welcoming location.
 - Separate elevator and loading dock for stage sets, instruments, etc. would be in the back.
 - Separate fire stair exits.
 - Possible reconfiguration of front entrance. At Barre, the front steps were moved forward and a ramp installed so that all street access would be from the front.
- Ongoing usage
 - Plan would accommodate current/ongoing use while making phased renovations. Removing the addition, installing a glass wall, replacing the HVAC could be the first phase, which would not disrupt ongoing use.
- Funding
 - Will the community support the plan and its funding?
 - People are motivated to give when presented with a grand vision that promises quality.
 - There are many State funds for various aspects of revitalization and cultural projects.

Sense of the Meeting:

- All present supported the development of a Master Plan.

Next Steps:

- Determine cost of developing a Master Plan
- Architectural master plan could be done in a couple of months.
- Will need renderings and diagramed plans to get committee and public feedback
- Will need to consult with Structural Engineer, HVAC contractors, etc.
- Coordinate with Community Master Plan, which may include the schools, EMS building, etc.