

Notes of Bethel Town Hall Restoration Committee

Oct. 22, 2009, 7:00 PM

Bethel Library

In Attendance: Susie & Gregg Fedak, Chris Masters, Neal Fox, Mary Floyd, Kep Taylor, Geneva Gaiko, Janet Burnham, Nick Nikolaidis, Kevin Flynn, Joe & Carol DeFreitas

Neal opened the meeting at 7:05PM

Bathroom location was one of the topics of discussion. Where, on the ground floor would be the best location for a bathroom, that didn't require the public to navigate through other rooms to get to a bathroom, was the question. From a plumber's point of view it would have made sense to locate a bathroom directly under the one for the floor above which would be located under the balcony, on the left as you face the front of the building from the stage. It was suggested that it would be towards the back of the building near the bottom of the stairs. All three bathrooms in the building would be handicap accessible and hopefully, unisex if regulations allow.

There was discussion about the division of the basement and how the weight bearing walls would be affected, if at all. It was determined that the present partition that divides the basement in half, is not a carrying wall. Folding partitions for the downstairs were suggested as a means of breaking up the larger spaces into more moderate ones sized for smaller meeting areas. To that end, Neal suggested that we begin to define the actual space that people will need for the various activities projected for Town Hall use. Nick said he would like to have the space from the front of the building to the rear for the BHS. This would exclude the vestibule but he would like to have a glass exhibit in the vestibule area dividing the vestibule from the museum.

The space behind the vestibule will be for the Bethel Historical Society. It was suggested that a glass wall display case separate the vestibule from the BHS museum. Nick would also like a small office area in the rear of the space allocated for the BHS. Joe recommended that Nick figure out where power outlets would be needed before the building is completed. Neal wanted Nick to know that the town will be as flexible as possible in accommodating the BHS.

Suggestions for the location of the Eagle were made ranging from a shadow box, to a recessed nook, or perched on a column in the BHS area but wherever it is located it was decided that it should be, behind or in, shatterproof glass to protect it from theft and to preserve the gold leaf finish. Question of a Security System was brought up at this point but nothing definitive was decided.

Janet inquired about a Visitor's Center and would it be manned or unmanned.

Nick has 2 of the original front doors that he would donate back to the restoration of the Town Hall but we would probably have to find someone who could make the third door to match.

It was also noted that the chairs, that are presently on the second floor, are not original to the building. They were bought from the Lost Nation Theatre in Montpelier. It was suggested that we could probably sell them and apply the money to the building fund. There are a few of the original chairs available that need refinishing and we should get a price on that project. These could be put in the vestibule to retain some of the old flavor of the building.

Joe brought up the dumb waiter that Sally Truckenbrod had previously suggested and everyone thought that was a really good idea.

Kepp suggested that a row of lights over a long, deep, counter, directly under the front of the stage, would be helpful for applying makeup for stage productions. The counter should be about table height, as suggested by a note from Susan Rule, in order that the actors can sit to apply makeup. Susan also suggested outlets all along the back wall of that counter, storage cabinets and a portable costume rack. Kepp suggested small mirrors that could be leaned against the wall as opposed to permanent ones in what is essentially evolving into a combination Green Room/Kitchen area. This counter has to do double duty for the kitchen, therefore, putting up permanent mirrors with lights all around them would not be feasible. Susan suggested a mini-fridge, however, there will be a fridge in the kitchen which could be utilized by production participants. There may not be too much room left for comfy furniture per Susan's suggestion in her note.

Location of storage room for tables and chairs would be in the center, under the balcony.

The subject of fund raising and how to go about soliciting people who would be willing to make large donations to the building fund was broached. Mary Floyd suggested that we contact the Finance Committee and ask them to step up their fund raising efforts either by direct approach or arranging fundraisers, dinners, etc. Joe felt that more people would probably donate once they saw that the project was moving forward and actually saw workmen on the premises. Neal suggested that we could sell personalized paving bricks for \$40-\$50 apiece that would be used to pave the sidewalk leading into the Town Hall. The VA in WRJ had done this and raised quite a lot of money. Mary said that Sandra Levesque had volunteered to head up a fund raising event for the Town Hall. It was suggested that we make a Wish List of the items with approximate cost that we will need for the Town Hall: chairs, tables, dishes, utensils, 6 burner gas stove, refrigerator that is all fridge and no freezer, small freezer, commercial pots and pans, kitchen cabinets – and post this in the newspaper to let potential donors know that they could pick one or more of the listed items to donate.

Kepp Taylor told us that Chandler Music Hall had many yards of velvet curtain material that he felt they would part with for a moderate donation. Curtains on the windows would be helpful not only for acoustics, but would also help to conserve heat in the winter. Kepp will check with Chandler to see what arrangements can be made for the curtains.

Kepp asked for a target date for the opening of the Town Hall and Neal felt that the construction may start in December and should last 6-8 months. Kevin has talked to the N. E. Fiddlers about having them play for an opening concert and it was suggested to contact Dick Ellis, also, for an opening appearance. No specific date was given as we are still waiting for the stimulus money that was supposed to be available on July 1, 2009.

The meeting closed at approximately 8:30PM

The next BTH Committee Meeting that was scheduled for Nov. 19th, 2009, 7:00PM, has been changed to December 10th, 7:00PM at the Bethel Library. It seems that there was a conflicting event at Whitcomb High School scheduled for that evening that most of the people at the BTH Meeting would like to attend.