

## 275<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021

6:00 PM

MEMORIAL CONFERENCE MEETING ROOM

MERRIMACK TOWN HALL.

**Members Present:** Matt Casparius, Paul Micali, Chuck Mower, John Lastowka, Rosemarie Rung, Jordan Guagliumi, Anita Creager, Carl Ellis

**Call Meeting to Order: 6:05 pm**

**Review Minutes of June 14, 2021**

Chuck made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, 2nd by Rosemarie. 4-0-4

**Old Business:**

- Historical Society Scavenger Hunt Update: Matt reported that as of this morning 78 scavenger hunt cards have been returned.
- Commemorative License Plates Sales Update: Matt reported that as of this afternoon, we have sold 159 plates to date with 41 plates remaining to sell. We have covered the cost of the license plates at this time.
- Recipe Book Sales Update: Matt reported we have sold 65 cookbooks to date and have 35 left. We have covered the cost of the initial books at this time.
- Town Hall Photo gallery update for August? John reported that he is still working on the next gallery but it won't be ready for the beginning of August. The topic for the next gallery is Bridges & Mills.
- Matt reported that the talking circle program with Auntie Crow event went well. We had 13 people registered and of those 11 people showed up on a rainy Saturday night. Those who attended seemed to enjoy the event and Auntie Crow has asked to do the event again in the fall and will get back to us with a date.

**New Business:**

**Fundraising Committee Update**

Rosemarie reported that a marketing plan has been drafted and the plan is to point people to the new website that Jordan has created with the option to donate. The project has several goals including building awareness with the website and provide a project overview, history of the park, a project plan and links to other covered bridges in NH. She is also hoping to have a convenient way to donate thru the website and to purchase related items.

Jordan said he is happy to add whatever information we need for the website but someone has to send him the details. He said he also spoke to Petrocelli looking for a direct link for people to purchase items thru his store and was told he had never planned to make an online store for our project as it wasn't worth his time to generate the store to for such a small order.

Matt expressed concern about having to buy a bunch of inventory and sell it by hand as it's expensive to buy all the inventory and then we would need people out there actively selling items.

Rosemarie mentioned that Laurie was putting together a brochure on the Grist Mill Bridge in order to create a marketing brochure and a donation letter with a pledge card. Rosemarie said that she would check on the status of this. We need to start actively making presentations to any and all groups willing to have us to pitch our project. Chuck offered to speak wherever and whenever he was needed and said that he is scheduled to speak to the Merrimack Rotary Club on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Chuck said that while he is happy to speak, he needs someone to set up the speaking engagements.

The new website - <http://merrimack275th.com/>

Jordan - has this feeling that we need more substantial materials to help sell people on what they need it. Common Man do good book - Coupon for every month idea. Or similar to Sports Teams - have professional printed and pay

\$20 get this (donations from businesses). We really need to appeal to people and get businesses to help sell for us. It helps bring them business. Another idea Jordan had was encouraging kids to donate and presenting them with a certificate for donating and is a way for kids to feel like they are part of project and hopefully then their parents will also donate. Rosemarie thought both ideas are good and she was also thinking about something like a sponsorship program such as boards with names on it in the bridge, or bricks or something along those lines. Paul expressed his serious concerns with a brick fundraiser. He said they tried to do that for the Fraser Square Memorial and it went nowhere and they ended up having to return what money they did get. Paul feels that what they for 250th with Levels of support on a single plaque would be good.

The discussion turned to trying to figure out where our money needs to come from. This led to the formation of 8 categories of donors and the start of a list of businesses and organizations that might fall into those various categories.

Overall it was felt that we need to raise at least \$550,000 which we are hoping to get from the following categories of donors:

- **Banks: \$30,000**  
Possible banks include: Citizens, TD Bank, DCU, People's United Bank, Franklin Savings Bank, Triangle and Credit Union
- **Corporate Donors/Sponsors: \$75,000**  
Possible businesses include: Simon Malls, Eversource, Anheuser Busch, Comcast, Consolidated Communications, Pennichuck, Fidelity, BAE, Getinge, SGPP and Dunkin Donuts
- **Small Local Businesses: \$75,000**  
Possible businesses include: Haywards, Thirsty Moose, Abel Ebenezer, Real Estate Brokers
- **Non Profit Service Clubs: \$10,000**  
Possible groups include: Rotary, Lions Club, Merrimack Friends & Families

If we met our targets, then the above groups would hopefully net \$180,000. Paul stated that the bulk of our money isn't going to come from businesses it's going to come from individuals and families and that is where we should be focusing right now. This would mean that we would still need to raise \$360,000 for the following groups in order to reach our goal. This breaks down to 3600 households each donating \$100 or an average of \$12 per resident.

- Residential donors – donations more than \$1,000
- Individuals and families - \$100 average
- Students – less than \$100
- State Groups or Historical Groups.
- Foundations

Rosemarie talked about sending a letter home with an envelope to every household in Merrimack. Paul stated that there are 10,000 homes in Merrimack and to print that many letters, envelopes and then pay for postage you may spend \$5,000 to raise \$10,000.

Jordan had a suggestion to looking at digital marketing (online advertising) which is what he does professional. He is able to offer us a discounted rate which breaks out to \$3 per thousand (ad shown 1000 times or \$300 for 100,000 website visits. The committee liked this idea and said we should do conduct a 2 month test and see what kind of results that we get. Carl made a motion for a 2 month test at \$150 per month and then we can revisit and see what the results are. The motion was seconded by John. It's a low risk way before spending a lot of money on a direct mailing. The Committee voted 8 – 0 in favor. Matt reminded the committee that we need to get the rest of the missing materials up on the website before we move ahead with the ads. We don't want incomplete information on the website.

### **August 3<sup>rd</sup> – National Night Out Event:**

Matt reported that National Night Out is next Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. This is an event that typically draws 200 – 300 people and possibly more. It's a good way for this Committee to get out faces out there to sell plates, cookbooks, and promote the bridge project. It would be great if we could also get Chuck's Covered Bridge Model.

Yvette offered to help staff it, but who else is available? John, Chuck and Rosemarie thought they would be available to help. Matt will provide a table for the Committee for the event.

**October Festival Planning – October 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Matt brought up the idea of the Fall Festival that we tentatively had penciled in for October 2<sup>nd</sup>. We need to get working on this and figure out exactly what we're going to offer. We have talked about Music, Militia Reenactment, Vendors, Parade and Fireworks. He also said that we probably can't use High School for fireworks since it's in Football Season and between them and other Fall sports the field probably isn't going to be available.

Rotary had previously expressed an interested in partnering with us, but Carl reported that the Rotary Club is planning on a Rib Fest Event in Mid October but that the date hadn't yet been finalized. We will need to figure out what their plans are in order to figure out what we're going to do and that will be the focus of our next meeting.

**Next Meeting Date:** Monday August 16th or Tuesday August 17th

**Motion to adjourn:** Motion made by Rosemarie and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Carl. Motion approved 8-0 at 8:12 pm.