

MERRIMACK 275TH PLANNING MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Matt Casparius, Bob L'Heureux, Barbara Healy, John Lastowka, Chuck Mower, Laurie Rothhaus, Paul Micali, Rosemary Rung, Yvette Couser, Carl Ellis, Anita Creager, Chip Pollard.

Meeting called to order: 6:01 pm

Review Minutes from Meeting from February 1st, 2021:

Bob made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Barbara. Minutes were approved 7 – 0.

Old Business:

- **Update on License Plates:**

Matt provided the group with an update on the status of our license plates. He reported that he is still waiting for an update from the State Print shop, but nothing new to report at this time.

- **Boston Post Cane Award:** Matt reported that a press release was sent out 2 weeks ago from the Town Managers office to find our next Boston Post Cane Award Recipient. As of this meeting, no submissions have come in yet but there is still time. Matt reported that last week he also sent an email out to the 200+ members of the Merrimack Senior Citizen's Club so hopefully that will help spread the word. The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 12th. Depending on whom the recipient is and their comfort level coming out in public during the pandemic will dictate whether we can hold the ceremony as a live event or whether we have to plan something virtually.

- **Historical Displays:**

John provided an update on his progress to create a curated historical display which would be placed at Town Hall. The plan is to have a different display for each month starting in April that would feature a central photo that is 3 ft x 2 ft.

For April he would like to feature Chief Passaconway

For May he is looking at Ayers Mill

For future futures he is thinking about Merrimack's Schools; Taverns, People, Industries, and Rivers & Brooks.

He has gotten pricing from one company but felt the cost was high and so he is talking to Spectrum Marketing to see if they can give a better price.

Lastly, John reported that he is recovering from an injury and is looking for additional help to create these projects. He is hoping to create 3 months at a time since he thinks it will help him get a better price on the printing.

- **Review Draft Banner for downtown:**

Matt presented the latest draft of the banners to be placed on Daniel Webster Highway and Baboosic Lake Road. This draft was created by Wendy Hunt from the Chamber of Commerce and is based off the suggestions we had from our last meeting. Everyone liked the new design. Rosemary made one suggestion which was to move the “M” at the top closer to the rest of the word “errimack”. Everyone agreed that that would be a good change.

Matt shared two cost estimates that have been obtained thus far. One from a company called Project Graphics which is a company Wendy had referred to us. The other is from Raleigh’s Outdoor Décor. Project graphics seems to be the cheaper of the two at the moment, but we will keep looking for additional companies.

Matt then began discussion the banner locations. The original idea was 14 banners which alternate with American Flags from Loop Road to Wire Road and the Daniel Webster Highway up to O’Gara Drive which should give us 14 banners. Bob made a motion to extend the route further and start at the Rite Aid Plaza to Wire Road and then from Daniel Webster Highway up to the Turnpike. Motion was seconded by Laurie and approved 10 – 0. Matt stated that he would go and count the additional telephone poles to see how many that it would add but felt it was in the 20 – 25 range.

The discussion then moved to the quality of the banners with the choices being a 10 ounce vinyl banner vs. an 18 ounce banner. Carl made a motion to go with the 18 ounce banner since it would last longer. Bob seconded the motion and approved 10 – 0.

There was a brief discussion about whether we should purchase even more banners and try to get sponsors or to sell outright. Laurie mentioned that this is an area that the fundraising group is looking into. Our rough costs on these are \$70 for each banner. One idea suggested by Paul was to sell the banner for \$100 to a sponsor, but they get the banner to keep when we are done with them and essentially we would get a \$30 donation. For now, we will stick with just the banners that we need.

- **Anniversary Cookbook:**

Barbara reported that she has received 14 recipe’s so far. She is finding that she has to reformat all of them as they come in to make it uniform. She is looking to create a Table Listing of Contributors and a list of abbreviations. Barbara stated that she is waiting on an estimate from the Copy Shop and Morris Printing on the printing price which she will then send to Paul to compare pricing with the Town Vendor.

Barbara reported that she has posted repeated notifications to 9 different community messaging boards to promote the cookbook. Matt reported that he send the information to the Merrimack Senior Citizens Club to be included in their electronic newsletter that goes out each week by email to club members.

Barbara reported that the deadline for submissions is March 15th.

- **Fundraising Update:**

Chuck presented a short presentation on the Covered Bridge project and talked about the estimate he received from Grayton Associates. The estimate is \$450,000 but includes a full turnkey operation including oxen to pull the bridge span across the river. Rosemary felt that this project is a bolt statement for Merrimack and a springboard for future development in the center of Town to connect to trail systems as well as provide an attraction for Merrimack that would become one of Merrimack's Town jewels.

Rosemarie felt that the committee would not only be looking at direct donations but also look into grant opportunities. Chuck stated that while the estimate is daunting he felt that it was doable. Once they get permission from the Town Council, then they can begin the fundraising aspect in earnest.

Bob asked the question "What happens if the fundraising goal isn't met". Chuck was firm in his belief that they would be able to meet the challenge and get this project done and gift it to the Town of Merrimack. Paul stated that the fundraising group was asked to do a lot of research on their project and come up with cost estimates and have met that goal. He cautioned them, that while he understood Chuck's answer to Bob's question; that he should be prepared for that question to come up from the Town Council because it will come up. He asked if the \$450,000 was all inclusive or would there be other costs in direct costs or indirect costs for example using DPW employees to help with aspects of the project.

Chuck asked the Committee for permission to bring this project forward to the Town Council for consideration. Paul stated we need to get it to the Town Council sooner than later to get this moving forward and made a motion to have it placed on the March 11th Town Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Rosemarie and approved 11- 0.

Barbara made a recommendation that the write up that Chuck presented at the beginning be sent to the Town Council in advance of the meeting so that Council members could have the background on the project before the meeting and that the presentation could focus solely on the specific nuts and bolts of the project – overall concept, the costs, potential uses, fundraising items, etc. Matt asked Chuck to send him the write up and he would include it along with the pictures and estimates for the Town Council's packet.

Next Meeting:

Matt stated that the Town Council Meeting is March 11th; the deadline for the Boston Post Cane Award Applications is March 12th and the Cookbook deadline is March 15th and so he suggested meeting again on March 15th so that we would have some decisions to make at that meeting. The group was in agreement that the next meeting would be Monday, March 15th at 6:00 pm.

Paul suggested adding to that agenda discussion of a Proclamation from the Town Council which could be read at the March 25th Meeting which would be the closest date to the actual anniversary.

Rosemarie asked if we wanted her to get a similar proclamation from State & Federal delegation and we said yes and so she will take care of that.

Meeting Adjourned: Rosemarie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 pm which was seconded by Laurie and approved 11 – 0.