

*Wales Historical Commission*  
*Wales, Massachusetts 01081*

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## Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, December 15, 2023

Time: 11:00AM

Location: Virtual

Present: Rod Kincaid, Robyn Chrabasz, Lynn Greene, Rebecca (Becky) Smith, Carolyn Boehne.

Members Absent: None.

Public: Michael Valanzola, Spencer Preservation Group (Lynne Spencer, Doug Manley, Meghan Rodenhiser)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:00AM.

### Meeting Minutes:

**MOTION:** To approve the meeting minutes from 10/21/2023 as amended. Motion made by Smith, seconded by Kincaid, Boehne absent for vote. 4-0-0. Motion Passed.

**Feasibility Project:** Meeting hosted by Spencer Preservation Group (SPG) to review findings to date on Old Town Hall, including slides.

### Minutes Transcribed from Virtual Meeting Recording:

00:00:52 Smith: Well, for our purposes today, since we sort of got a late start, if we could kind of just concentrate on the structural.

00:00:59 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yes, we would.

00:01:00 Smith: That would be great.

00:01:28 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): I do have in this presentation a break built in for kind of any structural questions, so, if need be, we can end it there. If we have a desire to keep going with the architectural stuff, we can go in, you know and keep going through that. You guys let me know when you want to break this off so.

00:02:25 SPG (Lynne Spencer): So, Doug, just by way of introduction, Michael is a selectman, but he is also chair of the Capital Planning Committee for the Town of Wales.

00:03:30 SPG (Lynne Spencer): All right. Well, so I was actually I made a statement at the beginning that this is a building of great heritage and meaning to the town. It's a building that is also standing somewhat by habit. And I think when we look at the structural, you'll have a better understanding of what I mean by that. Okay Meg, it's your screen.

00:03:56 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): All right. Uh, so as you guys know, October 18th, we came out there with our team which included Structures North consulting engineers and one of the main pieces of this building, they did take a holistic look at the building, but one of the main pieces that they were looking at was the roof. So, I wanted to kind of start at the exterior and then bring you back into the building to take a and walk you through some of the things that they were seeing. And kind of the first thing that

they noticed when looking at the exterior of the building was the way that the roof was sort of undulating so that you can see this is what we're referring to as the north side of the building. You can see how the roof kind of comes up and down. The high points are where the original walls kind of go up, the east end kind of that main facade, the front of that portico is dipped down, and then you do see another pretty big dip going throughout the center out of the roof. If you look on the south side of the building at the cemetery side of the building, another really noticeable dip in sag in the building happens right about here, just west of this first window. And you can see that dip coming down really right here. So that was something that they wanted to get up into the attic and really start to examine for themselves.

In terms of how the roof is structured, just to walk you guys through it really quickly, the roof is held up by four what we call king post trusses and so those are evenly spaced throughout the building. And then across those trusses, you have horizontal members, which I'll point out on the screen.

So, all of this right here that you're seeing that is the truss, the horizontal members that I'm referring to that run east to west. So, from the front of the building to the back of the building are the purlins. And then on those purlins are the rafters that hold up the rest of the building. And so, the first issue that the structural engineers are starting to notice will focus on the trusses first - Is that the top cord of the truss, this diagonal member right here, is actually slipping outward toward the walls and toward the exterior walls of the building.

So, you can see that here, where the truss is supposed to be sitting kind of flushed toward here. And what happened was there was so much outward and downward thrust on these that this top cord has actually slipped and sheared off the piece of wood that was supposed to be kind of holding it back. And that is actually caused the outside plate of the wall that top beam that kind of sits on all the studs to start to rotate out and kind of act on that outward thrust. So, that's affecting the south wall and you can see elsewhere in the attic that this has happened before and there have been some attempts to repair it, which is where you see, kind of, all these cables tied in together. You see some support happening here where this diagonal top chord has started to bow in a little bit. So, these were attempts that were made in the past. And essentially Structures North is saying we have to do something that's working along in a similar idea of this, we have to stop that outward thrust, but it has to be a much beefier, much stronger, much more permanent connection. The other issue that they're seeing in a couple of spaces, but this one was the most obvious of places - was they're having a lot of cracking, a lot of shearing and a lot of slipping of these kinds of intermediate vertical members that you see on the trusses. So, this one you see, they're calling it truss #4 just in the way that they're ordered. This particular one was attempted to be repaired using this clamp at the top of it to kind of stop any of that stress cracking that was happening and coming down through the vertical members. This clamp is actually not working the way they want it to. They believe that the cracking is still ongoing. They're seeing a lot of fresh wood in that cracking. And then other vertical members have actually continued to slip away and down from the top cord. So that's another thing that they're very concerned about. They're looking at reinforcing those connections.

And then other concerns that they're seeing are general cracking and checking throughout the Members. So, there's going to need, there's going to be a need in the future, when you go to do work on them for Structures North to do load tracing, they're going to need to check the bearing capacity of a lot of these members. But so that's sort of what you're looking at in the realm of the trusses that are holding up the roof.

When you move on to the secondary and tertiary members, which are your purlins that I talked about and your rafters, really. What we're dealing with on these guys is that they are over spaced and undersized. So, with the purlin, which again I'll point it out. This is a good example of a purlin, and you'll

see that that purlin is really bowing in, and part of the reason is that it's undersized and another part of the reason is that the end connections are really poor.

If I scroll on to the next page, you can see that this end connection is kind of we call it a mortise and tenon joint. It's kind of locked into that top cord and it is the connection is so that it's actually starting to crack the end of the purlin, and that's what's causing this crack right here. And this crack right here to kind of go throughout the member. So, in addition to its being too small that stress that's putting it is actually compromising the purlin.

So, what you're looking at there is needing to create new end connections with new hardware and then possibly sistering some of these purlins as well. You can read more about it in the structural report and kind of dive into it more if you have more precise questions for the structural engineer. But this is kind of your general overview of just for your understanding.

The other thing that I do want to point out with the rafters. Is that not only are they under sized, but they're really over spaced for what we would recommend. Typically, what you see with rafters is that they're about 16 inches on center, so they have 16 inches of space from the center of one rafter to the center of another. These rafters are anywhere from 24 inches to 27 inches. So, combining that with how small they are and with how far apart they are, they're not really where we want them to be for the snow load, particularly in this area. So, all of that combined is what's getting you, you know, the sagging and the undulation and that kind of stuff that's happening in the roof right now, it's creating a pretty dangerous situation for your roof. In addition to kind of the original roof structure that you're seeing, because that's a lot of the original roof structure, you have an area of somewhat new construction that was included when the steeple was removed. I think in 1985.

That new construction was not the best construction, according to our structural engineers, this kind of we call it a ridge beam right here is too small for the rafters that were placed underneath it. It's actually not supporting the full weight of the rafters, so that could lead to the rafters actually cracking and shearing in the future. And then the purlins that they were attached to are actually just toenailed into. So basically, just nailed directly into the members that supporting it. So, all in all, it's not the strongest form of construction and they actually recommend redoing that form of construction. Because the steeple above that was above there for so long had so many consistent, perpetual, chronic, issues of leaking and just water damage, which was the whole reason that it got taken down in the first place... we do have residual issues of rot and moisture damage and just general structural framing damage, which you can actually see in the bottom photo that's kind of tucked in between some knob and tube wiring here, but you have a lot of moisture and rot that's happening on that east end of the building so that that front gable end of the building.

00:12:17 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): The other thing that I wanted to point out to you on this one as well, at the very beginning of this kind of structural assessment, I mentioned the fact that the front of the gable end, that portico was dipping down a little bit. That's because this front plate right here, the one you're seeing right here is actually rotating outward a little bit due to uh rot that's going on. So that's another one that structural engineers have identified and that they're going to have to go into and see is this something that can be sistered is or is this something that's going to have to be replaced in the future. So that's kind of what is going on in the roof some of what they wanted to look at, they couldn't get to because the conditions in the attic space were really treacherous, so they didn't want to put themselves at risk. So, a lot of the kind of west and north side of the building, they could not get to.

But so that that's the story of what's going on for the roof. So, the ceiling that is kind of that you can still see in the attic and what is the second floor that is that is visible from the underside on the second floor of the meetinghouse. That's kind of the next topic that our structural engineers hit upon. And again, you have another case of where your structural members are undersized and overspaced.

Based you can see here these are, you know, the original roof joist, sorry not roof ceiling joists right here. They're about the size of a 2 by 4 today and they're about 20 inches on center, which again is a little over spaced. But the issue that a lot of these ceiling joists are having is that they're actually being pulled out of their pockets. They're pulling out of the pockets, whether of the wall plates or out of the bottom cords of the trusses. And that is actually creating a lot of sag in that plaster ceiling that is above. It's relying currently a lot on that secondary strapping that the lath is attached to actually keep the plaster sealing up. And so that's part of the reason why you're seeing so much damage to the plaster ceiling below in that kind of main meetinghouse area the other reason is had so many prolonged water damage issues up in the attic that you can definitely see on the old sheathing, especially that that board sheathing that was probably original to the building at some point you can see where there was a ton of moisture damage issues so.

What you're seeing, especially on the underside, with that that plaster that cracking the result of the last detaching, it's a result of the ceiling kind of bowing because of the undersized members and that's slipping out of their pockets. In addition to the moisture. Another thing to note that because of the leaks coming in from the roof and the ceiling and things like that, the second floor, so the floor of that meetinghouse, especially under the areas where you see damage like this and like this, there's actually beginning to be a sag and a dip to some of those floors and this is something that Structures North has advised you guys to continue to monitor. If this gets worse, that's when you bring them on again and get them to get up into that ceiling and really take another look at that because that's not something that you want caving in and coming down with you guys.

00:15:51 Chrabascz: Megan, is the is the ceiling assembly acting in our favor in in, like as a sheathing as a as a solid. Like as if it were, if the ceiling were removed, we'd be in a worse condition. Do we know?

00:16:13 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): Actually, if I'm remembering correctly from the structural report for corrected for Structures North to take corrective action, they are actually recommending that you remove the plaster ceiling so that you can go in and fix the ceiling joist and things like that if the plaster ceiling is not precious to you guys.

Considering that it is, uh, a plain plaster ceiling, there's not, like, stenciling or anything like that on it, at least not that's visible, because currently it's covered up with acoustic tile. I think it would be to your benefit to do the necessary structural repair work to the ceiling, get the ceiling joists to the size and the spacing that they need to be and go back in with fresh plaster. That'll look that will, you know, give the look and the effect of the original ceiling, but would be much safer for you guys in the long run.

00:17:14 Chrabascz: Thank you.

00:17:18 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): OK. So that that is the ceiling I wanted to. Uh briefly touch on walls for you guys. For the walls. There was a lot of things that we are kind of question marks and is unexplored mainly because we did not do what we call destructive investigation. So, we didn't go through you know tear off clapboards put holes in walls to see what was going on in there, that was not, you know, part of our scope the day we went there. But based on what we were seeing in the meetinghouse hall and on the exterior of the building, there are a couple of questions coming up that we need to have explored in that destructive manner before we get into more repairs.

So, looking again, this is the south side of the building closest to the cemetery where I have the two arrows are actually where Structures North leaves that the second and third truss for the second and third ceiling truss. So that second truss lands just to the west of this first large triple hung window and the third truss, they believe lands just over top of this center triple hung window. What they're seeing on the interior that led them not only from going up into the attic to believe that this is where they land is a lot of this stress cracking in the plaster. So, what they believe is happening, especially over that

center window, is that because the truss is landing over top of that window that the load is now forced to be transferred over that window and into the surrounding wall and that transfer is not happening as smoothly as they would like it to be. So that's what's causing a lot of the stress cracking above the window, and it's also causing this bulging that you see, I don't know how well you guys can see my mouth, but that bulging between the center triple hung in the smaller window below it and you can actually see. I pulled out a much larger photo for it here, so that's what they suspect is happening in that area of the building.

The other thing that I had mentioned before to you guys was this real dip that you see in the cornice and the roofline and in the fascia board. This is also where Structures North believes that that second truss lands and you see a very similar thing happening at that window, with the stress cracking at the plaster. Now going through historic photos that were provided to us by you guys, we saw that in 1991 there had been some structural repairs done in that particular area, and I pulled some of those photos out to see that the post that is likely supporting that truss above in the roof had some serious what looks to be termite damage to it. The question now is kind of because we don't know what repairs were done to that post. Have these, has this post gotten worse? Has the repair started to fail? Has history repeated itself kind of thing? So, these are the things that are going through our mind that are going through Structures North mind. And it's what is requiring us to kind of go back in there and take a peek and see, OK, what's going on? That's we need to take the cladding off and see what's happening with that structure. So, that that would be their recommendation to do some destructive investigation on that front.

In terms of the basement and the foundation, there is a number of issues that are happening in kind of that crawl space level that's accessible from that front foyer, the biggest of which that is happening is a lot of burrowing and undercutting of soil; you can see up here where you have these tunnels that are going through that was that were created by animals. And when I say burrowing and undercutting, some of it was done by animals. Others was done when the HVAC was installed. So, soil was taken out and was never replaced. So, the bearing in these posts that are actually supporting the beams of the first floor are resting on stones that are resting on that soil. When you take that soil out, it no longer has anything to bear on, and it's at risk of collapse. So that is something that Structures North is very concerned about.

The other thing that they have a big concern about is the number of piers. So, like this, that are actually rotting at the bottom, especially if they are sitting directly on the soil, that moisture from the soil is getting wicked up into those piers and is rotting the base of them. If they become rotten and only have a couple of areas of good wood left, then the amount of bearing capacity of that pier goes down by quite a bit and instead of that whole surface supporting it, you end up with point loads supporting the load from above. You have a number of instances where you have floor joists, like this one, that are starting to develop major cracks running through them, and then you have a couple of beams as well that have scarf joints in them that are actually starting to bend that are starting to split apart. So here you can see this piece of that beam that has been scarfed joint into this beam, this entire piece is hanging free. That's not supporting anything, and the only thing that is supporting the entire weight of this beam is actually this piece right here and the rest of it is being carried into this beam right here.

Kind of the most concerning part about this when I talk about the undercutting of the soil and things like that is you have situations like this in your basement where you have a post that is carrying your second floor coming down through the basement through the first floor and resting on a stone that is then cantilevered and not supported underneath by any sort of soil or other stone. And so, Structures North is actually very concerned about, you know, building occupancy, how much this building is being used; and they're recommending that you do not allow the public into this building at this time.

In general, in terms of your exterior foundation wall, we I will talk about it a little bit in the architectural assessment, if we get to that point today. But in terms of the exterior foundation, which is mainly, you know, granite block and rubble stone and a couple of other patches of mixed masonry, you have a lot of mortar issues where it's crumbling and deteriorating, a lot of gaps where stones have fallen away.

And where masonry has been eroded away by water, these are leaving large gaps in your foundation that's not only allowing water to come in and have moisture issues like you see up there with your piers, but it's also allowing those animals to get into your building and actually make those tunnels and burrows. And actually, you know, kind of undercut the soil that's supporting your entire first floor and second floor. Those are those are the highlights, the structural highlights, for The Old Town Hall.

00:24:40 Boehne: Ohh God.

00:24:43 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yes, I know that that is a sobering report and when I said at the beginning it's a building of heritage, it's thereby and sometimes buildings stand up for a very long time. I use the term by habit. But you know when you ask a team to come in and do you know an analysis you, you're likely to come up with this kind of story. So, I know it's a tough one to hear about. There's a substantial amount of structural work that is has been identified as being critical.

00:25:26 SPG (Manley): And we're not the first to have seen this as evidenced by the repairs that you do see in the attic.

00:25:36 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Right. So, it's, we can see that there's been efforts to take care of this building. You know, getting into the guts of that roof framing has revealed a lot that needs attention.

00:26:00 Smith: Does anybody have any questions? Is everybody just trying to absorb it all?

00:26:09 Valanzola: Well, I'm glad you didn't say you started with the good news because I was afraid what hammer was going to drop next.

00:26:15 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Thank you, Michael, I was actually waiting here. The good news is, is a good old building the, you know, the not so good news is that it needs a lot of attention. So, our work will be continuing. I mean, Meg and Doug have been working on the architectural, which is basically the building envelope and interior finishes. You know, we've got findings in from the Mechanical Engineers. But really, searching for you know the kind of a direction to address this these issues is what we will be doing. We'll be assembling basically the number one, the critical priorities and the associated with costs, and then giving you a basically timeframes for when things should be attended to.

00:27:12 Smith: That's perfect. I was just going to ask for you to sort of map that out for us, you know, from the most political areas and what you know what in your opinion needed to be addressed first and then what order so answering question there.

00:27:28 SPG (Manley): Megan, do you have available the table of contents of our report? It might be good just to show everyone what will be in in the final report.

00:27:37 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): No, I do not have a table of contents available for you right now, but I can sort of give you an outline right now. Let me stop sharing this for a moment. But in terms of outlining this for you right now, what will be in the report I will have for you kind of a building chronology of your history based on that wonderful binder that was given to Lynne at this very first meeting. I wish all of our clients gave us that binder. It had so many gems. Tools in it.

00:28:05 SPG (Lynne Spencer): That and yes, and that's a compliment. Please take it. It's a compliment.

00:28:11 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): Yeah. So, it'll have a kind of building history and significant portion of it in it. What it will also have in it is what we call a character defining feature section of this building. So that is in our estimation what we believe are the features that really define this building make this

building what it is and what should be saved at any point during a restoration project; what should be preserved, and mainly like the stylistic direction that should be taken when we do. If we do, you know any sort of changes to this building.

We'll then go through and do this conditions assessment report, which is what you got, the over partial overview of today, at least on the structural side of it, but we'll have our architectural conditions assessment report, which will focus heavily on the exterior conditions assessments - everything from roof and weight rainwater control, Through the walls and siding down to the foundation of the building, we will go into the interior of the building focuses on finishes and there, we will also include in that report all of our consultants reports. So that'll be the structural report, the HVAC, Fire Protection, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. We will give you prioritized treatment recommendations, which is kind of the big portion of what a lot of our clients want out of these reports that we give them. So, in this section of the report and this is the one I'm kind of going to focus on for...

00:29:40 Smith: That's what we need.

00:29:41 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): ...for you guys in that section of the report, we will identify what is the most urgent. These are the things that have to get done within the next one to two years and in this case a lot of that is going to be your structural work before anything else happens. This is life safety issues. This is we need that to get this done to keep the building standing.

The next thing will be the short-term repairs. Typically, when we do short term repairs, these are our three to five year three to seven-year depending on the building and a lot of that includes rain. It includes building envelope what do we need to do to keep the rain out of this building, what do we need to do to keep the animals out of this building, that kind of stuff. And then our long-term repairs are going to be like little more aesthetic changes, more maintenance changes, things like that. So, we'll give you that prioritized treatment recommendation and then we'll give you on top. After that, we will be giving you cost estimates based on our treatment recommendations and those can get...oops, sorry.

00:30:58 Chrabascz: I was just going to say so when you do the cost estimates and you kind of do the short term, I guess keep in mind for us that we have this 50,000 to spend by June 30th and anything we can knock out and take advantage of that the funds that Michael got us through the state before they expire on the 30th of June, fiscal year, that would be super helpful.

00:31:26 Smith: Well, I think they're going to be slated to be spent by June 30th. They don't have to, actually. Right? We have to have a contract. They don't have to actually be spent by June.

00:31:35 SPG (Lynne Spencer): OK.

00:31:36 SPG (Manley): So, we have, we have been doing some thinking of that along those lines. Obviously the structural concerns are of the major concerns of your I feel that your major needs as the structural engineers and that said, usually structurally you like to start at the bottom, so the a lot of those things at the foundation level, things like that, those columns that are, you know balancing on rocks and perched there, things like that I think would be a good place to start with the money you have in hand. Just start right at the building's base and work your way through would be my recommendation.

00:32:20 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): There was a discussion that we had with our structural engineer that basically resulted in focus on shoring up the basement, putting a little bit of backfill into that basement to make sure that everything was stable in there and then to also consider maybe do doing repointing...

00:32:21 Smith: Makes sense to me.

00:32:39 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): ...of the foundation as well to make sure that you keep the moisture out of the basement to keep the animals out of the basement. That was the main thought of that process. And then from there plan the larger capital, the capital needs funding program, things like that.

00:33:04 Valanzola: The needs kind of in order of priority and with time frame will be really important because we need to ingest that into the town's Capital Improvement Planning Committee, so there's not currently a building committee in place for the Old Town Hall because we don't currently have a, you know, an investment or commitment of funds to go do a large-scale project. So, you know the Capital Improvement Planning Committee will have to manage where we place the most critical needs and then ultimately how we fund those. Now the 50K will offset obviously year one, but I imagine it's going to be greater than 50K. So I think the sooner we have that break out, the faster we can get the Capital Planning Committee to review so that we can start to determine, you know, inclusion into our plan because the challenge we're going to have is there are other competing needs from a capital perspective and we're not going to have you know a significant amount of additional dollars available to us without making some trade off decisions. So, we're going to really need to be able to look at that in order to proceed. But what? What's timing on that, that report or the breakout, at least in that manner being provided?

00:34:37 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Oh, I think that we actually can. Well, there's two factors. One is, you know, just dealing with the building as it is today, OK, which is used on the first floor for the Cable and some Historical Society display. But otherwise, it's pretty much a vacant building. Part of our charge was to recommend potential appropriate use and so that was one thing that we've started to give some thought to but I think what we could do is really amp up the cost estimating for the building as it is today and dealing with the structural and envelope work. And to that end, we should proceed to do that in January and February and get that in, because I'm hearing you, Michael, you know you're chair of that committee. I'm hearing, you know, get it into the town, sort of planning process as soon as possible because we want to keep the building intact. Its reuse is another thing.

00:35:45 Valanzola: Yeah. I mean, if we don't have it for consideration to then have the capital planning team, they could determination on what the yearly allotments can even be, I can't bring it forward for appropriation at town meeting, which is going to be the place that ultimately funds the plan. So, and we and we you know, we already have the capital plan in place with you know a number of items over the next three to five years that more or less eat up our current projected allocations, so that's why you know we have to be able to look at this against the you know the broader plan for the town. And then ultimately in terms of the 50,000, you know, Board of Selectman will, we'll have to make that determination on how to allocate that, but we'll want to do that against the broader plan and also have that incorporated at the Capital Planning Committee. So yeah, the reality of it is the Historical Commission can't act on these building needs, right? The Board of Selectman have custody for all buildings in the town, so they need to be briefed on this, not just me, but my colleagues. And then in terms of being able to anticipate the needs and plan for the next three to five years. We've got to get those things into the plan so that we can get ahead of that.

00:37:08 SPG (Lynne Spencer): I hear you. And when it, what's your town meeting schedule?

00:37:12 Valanzola: May third Wednesday of May. But budget and capital plan are set in advance of that prior to the caucus, so, you know, figure mid-April.

00:37:32 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Well, I think that gives us a better sense of what your schedule is, and you know the accountability here because I think that's important.



00:37:41 Valanzola: Yeah, I mean, your January, February timeline makes sense. I mean that those are our most aggressive meeting months from a Capital Planning Committee perspective, Finance Committee, and again in anticipation of the town meeting, and the cut off for the warrant in April. So, you know in the January to March time frame makes a lot of sense. It's just this is this is not going to be a small undertaking. So you know that understanding what's most immediate, how much will it cost, and then the subsequent items, what our timeline looks like for that, what can we wait a year or two years or three years on, you know allows us to make some decisions on trade off because there's just not millions of dollars sitting around for us to go action this in one year.

00:38:27 SPG (Lynne Spencer): We completely understand that, believe me. Let me ask this question. You know, to me, a lot of this work constitutes emergency work and there is a grant program under the Mass. Historical Commission for emergency funding. And you know with that, comes, you know, with that comes, a preservation restriction. So, you can get, we we typically see \$50,000 grant, although recently we heard about \$100,000 allocation given to a building, that money could help match your \$50,000 in hand and really give a significant boost to addressing this critical structural work. So, there's two things that are a factor; one is, you know they normally look for buildings that are listed that are you know, recognized for their historical significance on the state register. I have had a situation where a building was not listed, but because of the nature of the emergency work they gave an emergency grant and therefore it became listed on the state register when the preservation restriction kicked in. Is that clear as mud? But I'm just saying that's an opportunity to actually seek some additional money.

00:40:03 Valanzola: Yeah, I mean, I look at, I think what we should explore any and every potential opportunity for additional money. Now you know I'm a big proponent of grants, but also leery of them at times, right. We've got to make sure that there aren't financial commitments required that are above and beyond, you know what the board of Selectman can commit to that, you know, we don't need a town meeting vote on. So, you know, we have to have our legal counsel look at what that grant application means, and if there's any locks for the town legally, but we should certainly explore it.

00:40:37 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Well, the lock for the lock for the town would be a preservation restriction that says you're going to preserve this building. So that that's, you know, always something that.

00:40:47 Valanzola: Which is, which is a financial commitment.

00:40:49 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So, there's, you know, that's oftentimes a place where, you know, people get, you know, we're not going to guarantee that.

00:41:00 Chrabascz: It's also a paper trail, so I have a building in in another town where we have that and every time I go to make a modification I have to submit for permission to make that modification on the building that has a preservation restriction.

00:41:14 SPG (Lynne Spencer): So yeah, it depends on the nature of the modification. I mean for general maintenance and repair, you know you you're able to go ahead, but if you are making an addition to the building, for instance, that would require review by the Mass. Historical Commission. So, you know, it comes with strings, but...

00:41:34 Valanzola: Which we've explored in the past, Lynn, we have in the past looked at getting this on the registry. We've not proceeded because of the financial cost to the town that we would have to come up with in a relatively short time frame in order to...

00:41:36 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, yeah. Right.

00:41:52 Valanzola: ...get that on the registry, right. That's been the inhibitor in the past it is.

00:41:57 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Right. And so, yeah, so I'm saying because of the emergency nature of what we've discovered now, you sort of kick into a different track, forget about going through the National Register process by going for an emergency grant and accepting it, and with it that preservation restriction, it puts you on the state register. And therefore, you're eligible for future grants from MHC and possibly other sources. But you know, it's something that you really do need to sort of look sideways as you're looking at it to make sure that.

00:42:34 Valanzola: Sure. We just need to really understand clearly what preservation means, right? Because if preservation is continuing to make investment in and improvements and there's no financial price tag affiliated with it, that's one thing. But if preservation means you're going to spend X number of dollars every single year on this building from now into perpetuity, that's a very different thing. So you know, understanding what those definitions mean and what the hooks are important. Look at, you're never going to have a greater ally to preserve this building on the Board of Selectman than you have in me. I'm a huge fan of the building and love the building. But I'm also well...

00:43:13 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Glad to hear.

00:43:15 Valanzola: ...I'm also intimately aware of the fiscal reality of the community, and you know the balance that we have to continuously have, which is why your study has shown you know, we have attempted to do some things for the building, but certainly probably not to the level of or in the proper way, right. So, you know, I'm all on board. It's just we we've got to get the facts on paper. We've got to understand the costs. We've got to understand what the hooks are for, any grants or any preservation requirements. We just got to be really, really clear on that because you know if accomplishing all of that requires, you know, either a proposition 2 1/2 override or you know some type of bonding, getting that through the voter base will be very difficult.

00:44:07 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, I hear you.

00:44:10 Kincaid: Well, Lynn, I have a question for you. In your history with this emergency preservation grant, do they usually put in conditions for other funds like Michael's talking about being put aside for the building or they just stand alone on their own?

00:44:26 SPG (Lynne Spencer): No, it's a preservation restriction. So, think of it like a conservation restriction. You know, it says on land you're protecting, preserving the building in perpetuity. It's not saying spend this amount every year. It's saying do whatever you have to do to preserve the build. In the scheme of preservation restrictions that I've been involved with, it's a pretty...loose preservation restriction. Have buildings accepted preservation restrictions and then gone through changes, absolutely; have buildings accepted preservation restrictions and then been demolished? Yep. So, but it's always something that people look at very carefully, as Michael was suggesting, because you're looking at your commitments not only to this building but to other institutions and other buildings and other projects in town.

00:45:29 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): And Lynn, just to clarify, when you have preservation restrictions in place, can they be written so that they apply to just the exterior, just the facade, just like interior and exterior or can they highlight different spaces, things like that?

00:45:48 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Well, this this one is a very interesting one Meg because it doesn't detail any of that. It says you need to preserve the things that make this building eligible for National Register or state register...

00:46:35 Kincaid: So, Lynn, would your kind of like recommendation for us is we would really look at this emergency grant right now would you recommend that to the town?

00:46:45 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yes, I would. That's why I'm bringing it up. Because, you know, if you are, you know, if this looks good to you, it's a pretty straightforward grant application. Unlike what perhaps Robyn and others have seen in other towns where when you go through the standard MP's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant. It's a complicated and overly administrative thing. The Emergency Fund grants are pretty straightforward. They're really meant to get in and help in emergency situation. Which I think you've got. You could then be using your \$50,000 that Michael secured is that?

00:47:21 Kincaid: OK.

00:47:26 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Is that ARPA money, Michael.

00:47:28 Valanzola: Now it's an earmark that we've secured through the through the, through the budget, through the House and Senate budget.

00:47:32 SPG (Lynne Spencer): OK. That's interesting.

00:47:40 Valanzola: We have a lot of latitude on how we use it. Specifically, it's outlined for use to preserve or to protect the Old Town hall. So, we have a lot of latitude on how to use that.

00:47:52 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, now that's beautiful. The hesitation I had for a moment, it was I was about to say, oh, that can be used for match for your MHC grant, but you can't match state funds with state funds. But you can say, hey, we've got \$50,000 here and \$50,000 there. That makes \$100,000. We have a nice project. And you could really go after... I won't say you know you're going to solve all of your roof problems, but I think we could get the most critical ones.

00:48:40 Valanzola: We can make a dent. Folks I need to do get to another work call. If this grant makes sense and it's something we want to pursue, I'd suggest we get this on the December 22nd Selectman's agenda so that we can proceed with that and not waste time. Becky, I'll circle up with you afterwards, but this was very helpful. You guys keep going. It's just I have to get to another call, so I apologize.

00:48:53 Smith: Thank you, Michael, and thank you for attending.

00:48:56 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah. Appreciate it. It's good to meet you.

00:48:56 Valanzola: Thank you. Have a good weekend likewise.

00:49:01 SPG (Lynne Spencer): What we would do is send you the description of what's required with the Emergency fund grant application. I think it's like a page, you know, and we can send you an example of one that we've done. And we can send you an example of the required preservation restriction.

00:49:15 Smith: Yes, that would be great. That would be excellent because you know, at some point in time, you know the sticking point for me was if we ever decided to do a future addition off of this building, which at some point in time we have to address where our current town offices are located because this building isn't in particularly great shape either.

00:49:46 SPG (Lynne Spencer): We'd love to put your town offices in that building.

00:49:49 Smith: I'd love to bring our government back to where our government started. If I had my druthers that would be it. I want to make sure that we're not going to get tied up in restrictions in in doing an addition down the line by taking advantage of this emergency fund.

00:50:07 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Right. And I can tell you and Doug can give you a list, but I can tell you many buildings that have had preservation restrictions on them that then have had appropriate additions made to them according to the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The kind of gobbling gook that we live by.

00:50:26 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): That we thrive on.

00:50:29 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Thank you, Meg. That's exactly what I want to hear from you. We eat that for breakfast. You've got a big challenge, there's no question about it and you know, finding dollars, because I know that, you know, it's going to be hard for town officials to say, oh, here's a couple \$100,000, go for it, folks. So, it's going to be bits and pieces. It. Yeah. Don't have it. I can see that. I can see that.

00:50:54 Smith: Right. We don't have it. The you know, I think your idea of getting us that report sooner rather than later and really marking out, you know, what the critical points are, I'd like to think that at least the \$50,000 earmark that we have could make a big dent. You know, I agree with Doug, you know, you start from the bottom and work your way up. And then if we could get the emergency funding also, you know, maybe we could really start to tackle, you know, the most critical issues and then we can really put together a nice plan moving forward. You know, maybe a 5 or a 10-year plan you know for capital improvements to be able to work with. But I guess right now what we've got to work with is \$50,000 and we really need that report before we can even begin to get estimates and see what we can get done for that amount of money.

00:51:52 SPG (Lynne Spencer): So that's why if we focus really on the building as it is today.

00:51:57 Smith: Yes, yes.

00:51:59 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Then we've got the other part of what you challenged us to do is to help think about what it could be and its next life. And so, you know, Doug and Meg, if we can sort of divide our usually we like to do the whole thing and then go to.

00:52:04 Smith: Right.

00:52:13 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): What I was just about to say. Yeah. So what I was just about to say is Rebecca and Robyn and Rod, ...what I can say is that the narrative, so the existing conditions narrative, So what am I was going to be going through with you guys all today the architectural side of this mainly focusing on the exterior and parts of the interior finish the what is historic and remaining in the building that narrative can be delivered to you guys by the end of the week next week so you guys can have that, you can have a draft of that to read through that at the end of next week. Cost estimating is going to take more time because we're going to send that out to a professional cost estimator. For them to take a look at the drawings and things like that to get you as close of an estimate as possible that you guys can take to the town.

00:53:14 Smith: And this is including the most critical structural stuff, or this is really just architectural at this point?

00:53:20 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): It'll include the structural.

00:53:24 Smith: OK.

00:53:26 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): I believe correct, correct line or OK. All right, big. Yeah. The other thing too that we'll be able to outline a little bit for at least in this draft narrative, it'll be an outline. Everything will be a little bit in flux, but we can do kind of a preliminary. This is likely going to be priority number one priority, #2 priority #3 and kind of have that clarified in the narrative.

00:53:27 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, yeah, absolutely, structural is.

00:53:31 Smith: Yeah, that's huge.

00:53:46 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser):

00:53:55 SPG (Lynne Spencer): That'd be great.

00:53:56 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): So, by the end of next week, that will be by Friday, that'll that can be in your in your inboxes by end of day on Friday.

00:54:03 Kincaid: Still, the selectman's meeting Michael talked about is next Friday at 10:00 in the morning. So, we would need at least the information on the grant before then so we can take it to them next.

00:54:18 Smith: And if we could have that report, you know, for their perusal, for that Friday meeting, that'd be awesome. That would be ideal.

00:54:26 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): I can. Yeah, I can try and get you, I will do my best to do it. I won't promise it because I don't want to promise you something.

00:54:33 Smith: Well, no. And I understand it's really short notice. You know, I mean.

00:54:36 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): No, no, no, that's fine. I will. I will try my best, but at the very least, we'll be able to get you guys, the MHC grant, the, the, the example of what we were talking.

00:54:43 Smith: Excellent. OK. Perfect.

00:54:47 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Thank you.

00:54:47 Chrabascz: And we still have the draft sub reports. So, if we wanted to just share the structures north or the other reports we have so far, we could do that through.

00:54:56 Smith: And I have I shared those. I shared those with all select when we got them.

00:55:00 SPG (Lynne Spencer): OK. All right, so the example that I'm thinking of make is the one we did for the Oaks Ames Hall with that big fat truss, a big fat structural truss problem. So, we'll get that along to you. Meg and I will coordinate, and she'll get that along to you. Along with these sort of grant guidelines, in the example of the preservation restriction.

00:55:32 Smith: Excellent. Perfect.

00:55:32 SPG (Lynne Spencer): You can chew on that, but I think you know this could be a way to think about this this.

00:55:42 Smith: Well, I think it potentially is a golden opportunity. So that that would be wonderful, you know, and it you know I'm going to rely on your expertise, Lynn. You know you have the most knowledge in in how to get the funding and what funding is the most appropriate...

00:56:29 SPG (Lynne Spencer): But you know we are all about hope. So, whenever we can see that there's a need, we'll try to sort of point you in a direction that makes sense. It's a wonderful building and it really says a lot about the town of Wales.

00:56:53 Chrabascz: So, does it make sense for us to try to set something up in the beginning of the year knowing that we'll talk through this? We'll talk with the selectman and I know that you guys mentioned you're working on the reuse and you're probably in the new year ready to talk to us about what that is, because that plays into the total long term capital right, like you don't want to put in money next year to do X if in year three you're going to do Y right, so.

00:57:25 SPG (Lynne Spencer): Yeah, well.

00:57:26 Smith: Like, yeah, see, I disagree. I yeah, I don't agree.

00:57:27 Kincaid: Yeah, I don't. I don't agree either with that I disagree with that totally Robyn, because what Lynn said is she's seen buildings, you've got this grant, then add additions put on and some

buildings be completely demolished. I think the long term needs to be really not addressed until we can stabilize the building and we get these emergency situations under control.

00:57:48 Smith: Well, and I think if we're very careful in what we do in stabilizing the original structure. Then it's only going to make an addition more viable. So, I think at this point, you know, I think we've, I personally think we need to move on stabilizing the structure that's as it stands right now. I mean I agree, I understand where you're going with that, Robyn. If you know we're going to try and put together a capital plan including an addition, but I think right now I think we've got to work on stabilizing the structure that we have before we think about adding another structure to.

00:58:30 Chrabascz: Yeah, I'm also just focused on the grant deadline, right. So, we said there are certain things for the grant. I could go back and talk to the State if we want to do that, to see, you know, we said that the report was going to include XY and Z by June 30th and I don't want to, you know, we can't hold Spencer or the grant over just because we didn't want to do or we want to prolong to a couple pieces of the report, so I can if it, if that's what you guys want to, I can inquire with the State just as a very general inquiry, whether you know how on the we said XY and Z for the grant. And are they going to hold us to all of the XY and Z being in the report?

00:59:15 SPG (Meghan Rodenhiser): It could also be that circumstances had changed, given what they found. Yeah, given what they found.

00:59:18 Chrabascz: Changed, very clearly correct. We found an emergency that has detoured us very clearly.

00:59:27 SPG (Lynne Spencer): On the other hand, what we could show is you if you were to have offices, here's what it means. If you were to so we could do the ifs. I really appreciate Robyn that, you know, we could maybe get some more time, but I think the ifs could actually help give a vision of how the Old Town Hall might be used. For you've said it, I've I think I heard this from when we were first interviewed - the possibility of town offices moving back to where they started. So, if we just sort of say, hey, here's what it means to have offices and here's what it means to have access to the upper floor, we're not telling you what they would be we're simply showing you the code implications. That might be helpful, and I'd like to have that conversation with you in the meeting that Robyn was just suggesting in January where we going to go through "here's the possibilities". I also understand that, you know, the Historical Commission has been a leading advocate for this building. But you know what? I really want the Board of Selectmen to be advocates as well. I thought it was great to have Michael in this conversation.

01:00:49 Smith: Michael's got a long history with the building as to many of us, you know, I mean, you know, he's got a love for the building, as do you know, as does everybody in attendance in this meeting. So, and I you know I think it's great. I mean if we can get as if we can dot as many of our eyes as possible to get Robyn what she needs, you know to fulfill our current grant. And to also because I do think it's important to have an idea for the future of the building because I personally think it's necessary, you know, like I said, that the building that you know, the offices are housed in currently is less than ideal and it has a shelf life. You know, we had we had explored purchasing another property I don't know 12 or 13 years ago and at that time we had some structural assessments done on both buildings and you know they told us at that time we'd be better off to move into that one. That this one had a shelf life of about 10 years, and we are now at like 12 or 13 years beyond that 10-year shelf life. So, there we have come to a place, in my opinion, a crossroads with the town. That the town needs to address housing our public offices so if we could kill the proverbial two birds with one stone, that would be ideal, and also probably the most fiscal fiscally responsible way to do it in my opinion. I would love, I really look forward to our January meeting and I appreciate all the work that you've done and all of the good information that you shared with us today.

01:02:37 Greene: Yes, definitely.

01:02:38 SPG (Lynne Spencer): So, should we set the meeting, Robyn?

01:02:47 Kincaid: Historical and Selectman because Michael did put it, spell it out pretty frankly, that we can't decide as Historical Commission on anything we have to take it back to the Selectman so should my question is should it be a joint Selectman/Historical meeting with Spencer Group?

01:03:07 Chrabascz: Maybe. Maybe we have to ask that next Friday and come back to Lynn with a date.

01:03:11 Smith: OK. I feel like that makes sense, yeah.

01:03:18 SPG (Lynne Spencer): All right. Well, then we'll wait to hear from you...

Next meeting will be determined later.

**MOTION:** To adjourn made at 12:20PM. Motion made by Chrabascz, seconded by Greene. All in favor, Motion Passed.

**DATE APPROVED: January 26, 2024**