

Farley Building Committee
Minutes: Feb.22, 2024 Meeting

Members present: David Sullivan, Chair, Jeanne Smith Cripps, Mike Leavitt, Karla Vogel, Liz Barbour, Michael Bates, Susan Benz, Doug Cleveland.

Minutes of Feb. 7th were approved as submitted.

Agenda items:

1: Website Progress:

The farleyforhollis.org web site is active and in stages of development. Liz reported progress she and Peter Jones are making on content and layout. Liz reported on statistics from page visits. It seems Sunday the 18 had a spike in traffic, largely due to participation in various facebook groups that steered users to the site. Users were largely visiting the site from a mobile device. Discussion moved to the best way to use the FAQ page to deliver a consistent message and quell some misconceptions floating around on facebook sites. Liz continues to adapt content and add material as it becomes important to the core message of rehabilitating the building.

It will be important to direct citizens to the website through facebook replies since the majority of timely content will appear there. Also, important to send people to the Town's web site on the Farley Building Committee. Past engineering documents are linked at that site as well as review of the origination of the Committee.

2. Committee Members:

At the start of this project in 2021, members were solicited by the Select Board from variety of standing commissions in town as well as several citizen volunteers. At this juncture, the committee will welcome any person interested in participating. This will hopefully generate more expertise to help guide the rehabilitation, grant writing, fund raising and additional specialties to support the ongoing work. We also would also welcome young people to the group.

3. Educating the community:

Liz is distributing a Positively Hollis mailing the first week in March. This will provide a written explanation of the Farley project and news of the Warrant Article to those who do not watch the online activity.

An open meeting on March 4th at the Hollis Library will also provide citizens a change to view the architectural drawings, hear from committee members, and air their questions about the building. There is a possible second forum on March 13th in evening to reach people who are not available during the day hours.

A copy of a Warrant Article handout will be sent to the Hollis/Brookline Journal and members are encouraged to distribute the information to locations in Hollis as an ad campaign ahead of the March town meeting.

4. Building Community Support:

- Dave met with Fire Chief to understand any concerns they may have. The fire department will be active in the review of the engineering documents to make sure it complies with town concerns.
- He is also meeting with superintendent of the SAU to understand any reservations they have to the plans being discussed. The SAU turned over the building and property to the town in 2006 which indicates they have likely terminated interest in using the space.
- We have also learned that the Hollis Police department supports the use of the building.
- Dave continues to seek sponsors for the project from local business and community groups. To date we have support from Alpine Environmental and Viking Roofing.

5. Facebook contacts:

After a weekend of posting information on various facebook groups we found that there was a measure of support for the Community Center and a large amount of push-back reactions to the idea of the town needing/wanting such a facility. After a discussion of what each had read from the various groups we decided to eliminate the Cucumbers Group from direct posts and to deliver informative details through the Farley Facebook site to groups such as the Hollis-Brookline group and Positively Hollis group. Those who follow our own facebook page are free to share our postings on their own. Karla will continue to post news of the committee on the FarleyForHollis FB page and the website will feed back to that FB location. As we prepare for Town Meeting day, it is important to manage the message so all members of the town are learning about plans for the Community Center in a consistent format.

Some topics to clarify include:

- Financing the project: (Distinction between the bid package and total building costs)
- Parking
- Staffing
- Town involvement (similar to Lawrence Barn since the town owns the building)
- Safety on the site
- Accessibility
- Users and Uses

Next meeting: March 14 – 2:30 in town hall.

Recorded and submitted by:

Karla Vogel

