

Danville Train Station Committee Minutes - DRAFT

Meeting of August 17, 2021, 5:30-6:40 pm

Location: Danville Town Hall Meeting Room and via Zoom

Attendees: Michael Hogue, Rob Balivet, Kate Whitehead, Ted Houle, Patty Conly, Kitty Toll and Peter Crosby

Meeting opened at 5:33 pm by Michael Hogue, chair. The Danville Train Station Committee (DTSC) is a subcommittee of the PC. Michael took roll, no guests present, and submitted the agenda for approval. Agenda approved. A quorum was not present and the attendees used the time to discuss issues.

Minutes from the July 13th meeting were not available but it was agreed that they would be sent by email for review with approval automatic subject to corrections submitted to the chair on line.

Chair-Michael Hogue

Michael discussed the importance of capturing the hours and tasks that the volunteer committee members expend/expended on the DTSC. In some grants, hours maybe counted as in kind contribution thus reducing the financial burden on the Town, or at least indicate the level of community commitment to the effort. He asked each member to do their best retroactively (minutes, memos, emails, messages etc. should be helpful) and try to track time on a monthly basis going forward. He would like to complete the base level through August by September 15th.

He also asked each team to reexamine costs estimates and identify any costs that have not been evaluated. We should assume that the ADA bathroom in the freight room, the kiosks outside and inside, a lot line survey, and the costs of architect and structural engineer will be in Phase 1. Note, Ross has identified an additional 'bump out' on the north side similar to the one on the south side for the engineer. It was in the section that was demolished but it would be helpful to review the his drawings for entry to the freight room area.

Finally Michael asked each team leader to develop a calendar of critical dates by task (such as signing a contract) as well as when funds needed to be in hand to meet the time lines, including the amount. The first iteration will be a very rough but we will firm up as progress is made on many of the outstanding issues.

Building/Land Team – Sally Fishburn co-chair

Rob raised the question of getting a grant for the architect and engineer work. Alison thought it was possible and would look into a couple of possible grant sources and timing of each.

Sally, by message, pointed out that we need the markers for the land plot. Michael said he thought Greg Prior had found them and he would follow up with Greg. Subsequent to the meeting he did ask Greg about the markers and Greg had only found one and he wasn't sure if it was a plot marker. Rob will follow up with Toby Balivet to see if he can create the plot from the deed information.

Use Team – Kate Whitehead co-chair

Patty Conly reported that the 150th celebration of the first train planned for August 7th was cancelled due to a Covid outbreak emanating from the celebration of life of Jerry Prevost. She is working on rescheduling the station celebration for October 3rd coincident with Autumn on the Green.

Kate reported that the VCHB grant has been submitted and the PTV grant (Freeman) was next in line. She also reported on a new grant possibility VOREC (Vermont Outdoor Recreation Communities) that is funded to \$5.1 million and only grants of \$50,000+ will be considered. They are expecting to fund 24-25 programs. Jenni Lavoie-chair of the planning committee, Kate, Alison and Ken Linsley met to discuss applying for a grant that would encompass all of the recreational assets of Danville organized around the train station as a hub that would include some trail work, signage, trail maps and marketing materials. It may be possible to include a feasibility study for the freight side of the station as well.

Michael, Kate and Alison discussed the capacity of the DTSC to take on the application and coordination, if approved, and concluded that our committee is at its capacity with the train station. Jenni agreed to make VOREC a project of the planning committee. Kate, Jenni and Alison will generate a letter of interest to be submitted on August 27 to the VOREC committee.

Funding Team-Kitty Toll co-chair

Kitty raised a concern about her role and applying for a grant from ACCD (Agency of Commerce and Community Development) for historic preservation for the train station as she also heads the fund raising for the Congregational church which needs a grant to finish the rebuilding of the steeple. The grant size is up to \$20,000 and is one of the few that accepts applications from religious organizations. She believes that ACCD would not make to grants to the same Town.

Michael pointed out that if Kitty were not on the train station committee she would be applying for the church. Thus there would be two applications to ACCD anyway. It was agreed that Kitty should proceed on both grants and if ACCD asks Danville to choose, that we will address that concern then.

Peter discussed the process for the “quiet fundraising” from specific individuals. He needs a two page marketing piece focusing on the importance of restoring the station as an economic and community asset with a picture or two and the fundraising objective. It was agreed that we needed to go through the numbers one more time including the ADA bathroom in the Freight Room and a major kiosk outside of the building. Peter would like to start the fundraising in parallel with the grant application process.

Kate will update the document readied for the 150th Celebration and include one of Ross’s new drawing of the station.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Hogue
Chair

Funding Team – Kitty Toll co-chair

Michael reported that Kitty Toll, who couldn't make it tonight, has had a number of conversations so far, including with Gus Seelig to help us with getting these grants done. She is also arranging a meeting with Ben Doyle (who replaced Paul Broom as head of the Preservation Trust of Vermont.)

Select Board Presentation, June 17th – Michael Hogue

Michael suggested for the Select Board meeting we present three views of the station: as it was, as it is now, and as it could be. He showed an example of his thoughts. Ross will work to formalize this as presentation images mounted on a board that can be displayed at the meeting, so that the meeting can focus on the use and fundraising needs. Alison volunteered to help him print the images large scale. Rob has some additional drawings that are scalable he will make available on the cloud for Ross.

Michael also believes it is important to explain the reasoning for the Phase One and Phase Two split in the fundraising and restoration plans and get the Select Board's buy-in for the change. Restoration would not be to original configuration, but more about adding back the station platform, the canopy all the way across, and added/restored apertures to increase light into the station. Ross noted that some options will require additional research so that it will pass state historical register and VTRANS approval. Michael will start some preliminary discussions with VTRANS to see what issues might become stumbling blocks.

Michael asked whether \$250,000 was still the working budget estimate for the restoration, with the fundraising goal at \$300,000. Rob and Sally agreed that it is. Michael asked Kate if she can put together a brief narrative of what the use would look like. Michael further noted that VTRANS approval goes right up to the clipboard, so we would need to know where a kiosk would be placed to get approval.

Michael asked for review and approval of the Select Board presentation draft document and requested team members carefully review it and send him changes as soon as possible. He would like to be able to submit it for the Board to review prior to the presentation. Kate suggested adding upcoming grant submissions. Michael agreed we ought to include basics of every reasonably possible grant in the next 12-24 months, but not to get into nitty gritty details.

Michael then outlined the priorities for this Select Board discussion and the goal:

1. That the SB give guidance as to how important future income is from the station's operations versus serve as a community asset funded by the Tow.
2. Approval of the Phase One and Phase Two approach
3. Commitment of Town monies.

Alison Low suggested that we need to ensure we have preliminary discussions with potential sources before they are brought to the Select Board, including grant provisions providing an easement for any future work. Alison suggested we have a meeting with Gus Seelig from Vermont Housing and Development Board prior to the Select Board presentation. She also thinks we need to have a conversation with Ben Doyle (PTV) as well. Michael agreed and will invite both to a zoom or in person meeting since they often work together.

Michael thinks it would be important to try to get the Select Board to meet in person and to have as many station project members as possible attend.

New Business - None

Michael thanked everyone for their efforts and adjourned the meeting at 6:42pm.

Next scheduled meeting is Tuesday July 13, 2021. It will be hybrid – in person for those fully vaccinated and wearing masks, as well as available via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Russo, Secretary