

Minutes of The Heritage Committee
Town Hall – Feb. 15, 2011 – 7 p.m.

Members present: William Hansen, Janet Banks, Jack Quinn, William Moncrief, Roger Ives Absent:
M. Winne, R. Wilcox, C. Kuras, A. Magid
Guests: Dr. Mel Chafetz, Jim McShane, KML Director

Chairman William Hansen called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Presentation of the proposed new library – Dr. Chafetz reviewed the history of the failed efforts two years ago to get a new Library approved by voters. He noted the process this year, noting the First Selectman had worked with groups, and had three Public Forums where the sentiment changed from paying \$3-5 million to repair the current Kent Memorial Library (KML) to a new direction, a new Library. It is noted that the bonding costs are now lower, construction costs are lower, and now a new library is being proposed as one of the bonding items that have been approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Finance decided Feb, 14, 2011, that before a vote was taken on the bonding package, to seek a memo of understanding from three boards, Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and Board of Finance, agreeing to a restraint of operating costs increase (a specific % to be determined) in their operating budgets. The conceptual drawings both exterior and interior were shown to the Committee in detail. It is noted that the proposed Library has been reduced to approximately 25,000 sq. ft. Due to lower costs and reduced size, the price has come down to approximately \$6,908,000 and this would include a private donation of \$1.5 million from the Suffield Public Library Foundation. It was noted that at the last Board of Selectmen at their meeting Feb. 9, 2011, had voted to include funds \$100,000 to demolish Bridge Street School and build the new library on site. It was noted by the Committee, that the Town can sell the roof slate and bricks when the school is taken down. After discussion, Mr. Moncrief moved that The Heritage Committee strongly endorse the Bonding Package as presented, and approved by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Ives seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The Committee thanked Dr. Chafetz and Mr. McShane for their presentation.

Minutes: Mr. Moncrief moved to approve the minutes of the Nov. 16, 2010 minutes; Ms. Banks seconded. The minutes were approved. For the record, it was noted that the Committee did not meet in December and the January meeting was cancelled because of snowy, icy horrible weather.

Commercial Subcommittee – The Committee discussed this at some length. Janet Banks stated that the subcommittee should meet with the First Selectman and review what the Town Center Project has accomplished. We need go back and revisit the original Town Center Plan. Not all was accomplished because of lack of funds. The subcommittee needs a new focus, and a new vision. At this point, we seem to be somewhat stagnant; we need a new long term goal. We need to consult with the First Selectman and work together to achieve what is needed for Suffield. The subcommittee members are Janet Banks, William Hansen, Jack Quinn and Arnie Magid.

Signs and Related Issues : It was reported that the Design and Review Board had approved of the new sign for the new Suffield Inn. Mr. Hansen reviewed the signs in Suffield Town Center and noted great improvement. The Economic Development Commission has a matching fund sign grant. The Committee will check to see if this program is still active.

Unfinished Business – Jack Quinn, at the Nov. 16 meeting agreed to read and review Section 9, Signage Regulations and report back to the Committee. The existing sign regulations cover issues for the most part, but some lack clarification. Mr. Magid, at that same meeting, noted four important issues:

1. Are these the best regulations? 2. Education – are the residents aware of the regulations? 3. Permit Process and 4. Enforcement Issues.

Mr. Quinn distributed a written report, Town of Suffield, Zoning Regulations/Signage, Heritage Committee Review to the Committee. He noted that it was his observation that the concerns discussed at Heritage Committee meetings are covered in the regulations, but the shortfall appears to be the lack of communication to those businesses in the Village District as to the specifics of the regulations and the process required to assure compliance with the regulations.

Mr. Quinn suggested that the Heritage Committee author an informational summary of the Suffield Signage Regulations for distribution to the Village District commercial and business property owners and occupants and those considering locating here to enable them to understand the process and requirements necessary for Signage, Size, Height, Shape, and Placement along with the General Requirements and Prohibited Signs.

Mr. Quinn further suggested that the should the Heritage Committee opt to go forward either with a summary page or a copy of the Signage Regulations with the areas of attention to the Town Center Village District highlighted, he suggests that a draft be prepared and provided to the Zoning and Planning Commission for their review and support of our efforts to expedite and facilitate the process for current and future Village District signage installations in compliance with existing and/or amended Zoning & Planning Regulations.

Mr. Moncrief stated that the Historic District Commission had prepared such a brochure which is available in the Town Clerk's Office. He suggested that the HC members look at the said brochure, and be prepared to perhaps draft such a document as suggested by Mr. Quinn in his written report. This will be an Agenda item for the March 15 meeting.

The Committee still has concerns regarding neon signs, and that it should be that no new businesses be allowed to have inside neon lights. The Committee believes that a workshop with the Zoning and Planning Commission would be a positive thing.

New Business: Mr. Hansen reported that the owner of the Bissell Inn, now under construction, was served with a notice of violation by the Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding the windows. He will keep the Committee up to date regarding this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary HC.MINUTES.FEB.15.2011

