



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 21, 2015 Syd Crook Conference Room

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Jim Perkins, New London Archivist

ALSO PRESENT:

Bob and Emma Crane, Sue Little, Hardy Hasenfuss, Jack Sheehan, Rob and Maureen Prohl, Peter Hogle, Phyllis Piotrow, Don Klingler, Bud Dick, Will Kidder, Bruce Hudson, Celeste Cook, Kate Turcotte

The meeting was called to order by Chair Janet Kidder at 7:30 AM. She announced that that no CAC meeting will be held in March; therefore, the next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 18. The Selectboard hopes to hold that meeting at the Town Shed on Pleasant Street. Chair Kidder reminded the audience that elections regarding school and budget issues will be held at Whipple Hall on Tuesday, March 10.

Chair Kidder introduced Jim Perkins, the New London town archivist, who will be making a presentation about the history of Whipple Hall.

Mr. Perkins greeted the audience and explained that his presentation is a glimpse of what he has been working on over the last year and a half, in conjunction with a Masters program in historic preservation. He showed what is purported to be the earliest image of Whipple Hall after it was completed in the late spring of 1918. He noted the building was dedicated in June, 1918.

Old photographs of the town's surrounding neighborhoods at that time were displayed. Mr. Perkins remarked that Whipple Hall has been nominated for inclusion on the State Registry of Historic Buildings, which does not place restrictions on the owners of the property. Mr. Perkins explained that the New London Archives Committee recently met in January, 2015, planning to have Whipple Memorial Town Hall considered to be placed on the State's Historic Register which would allow it to qualify to apply for grants to fund certain areas of preservation. Renovations to the building are eligible for State L-CHIP funding.

Mr. Perkins briefly outlined the various additions to Whipple Hall over the years. He noted that town halls were a certain type of building. Their design usually featured open arcades on the ground floor and enclosed upper spaces, along with a bell tower. People had been given freedom of assembly, so the building was symbolic of a meeting place. The soldier's monument in front of Whipple Hall was erected in 1914.

Next, Mr. Perkins discussed the many historical uses of the building over the years – the first jail cell was built there – it once held the town's safe, which now resides at the New London Historical Society. A municipal and district court were housed in the building for many years. Whipple Hall also served as a communications center in the 1950's. The building now contains the New London Recreation Department and the Police Department. The building has been adapted to various purposes over a long period of time.

The current condition of the structure was reviewed. Whipple Hall is now framed by overgrown lilacs and maple trees. Many upgrades to the interior and exterior of the building are necessary – some should be performed immediately. Maintenance has clearly been deferred over the years. The building's iron work is starting to rust out. Window wells have not been maintained. There is a crack in the chimney, some interior walls are water stained, some roof slates are missing, and the gutters do not work anymore. Flags should be restored; electrical work needs to be updated. Most door knobs have been stolen; the front door is rotting out.

The estimated costs of rehabilitating the building were summarized, with Mr. Perkins observing that it was especially important for the cupola to be preserved. Mr. Perkins (or the Conservation Committee?) has generated a list of 10 different projects being proposed to bring back a faithful restoration of the building. On the exterior of the building, landscaping needs to be done, the cupola and weathervane repaired, roofing and gutters replaced, iron work and chimney repaired or replaced. On the interior, the ceiling needs work, electrical wiring must be modernized, the front door replaced, the flags and flooring replaced or upgraded.

Phillis Piotrow noted that a report was recently completed by Dennis Mires, an architect, about the existing conditions at Whipple Hall, which spells out the work that needs to be completed to update and preserve Whipple Hall. There are copies of this report at the Town Hall if anyone is interested.

Someone from the audience asked Mr. Perkins if a time capsule of Whipple Hall or any other buildings in town had been made, and Mr. Perkins responded that there is one downstairs at the town hall.

Everyone thanked Mr. Perkins for his presentation. Kim noted that the Board of Selectmen had not yet accepted Mr. Mires' report on his inspection of Whipple Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Work, Recording Secretary
Town of New London