

**MINUTES of the FREEDOM TOWN OFFICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING FOR 04/20/2021**

Anne Cunningham called the April 20, 2021 meeting of the Town Office Advisory Committee to order at 5:00 pm at the Freedom Town Hall. Denny Anderson, Karrie Buttrick, Ernie Day (BOS) and Mark McKinley were in attendance. Four members of the public were also in attendance.

Minutes from the last meeting on February 26, 2021 were reviewed. Anne made a motion to accept the minutes. It was seconded by Mark and accepted by all members.

Review the Agenda & Discussion

Anne asked Ernie for an update on the Masonic Building. Ernie stated that Masonic Building will be an agenda item at the Board of Selectmen Meeting on April 26, 2021 and that a public hearing date would be scheduled sometime after that date. Anne asked if a building inspector had looked at the Masonic Building, referencing to the Board of Selectmen's Meeting on March 15, 2021 when the subject of a building inspection was made. Ernie noted that an inspector had looked at the building but he was not at the meeting. Anne asked if the inspection information would be available at the Selectmen's meeting and Ernie said that he would check with Dave Senecal.

Anne went on to say that the purchase of the Masonic Building for \$1, plus any expenses needed to repair/maintain the building, would fall to the Town and if there was an option proposed to use some of the Masonic Building as Town Office space, that the expense to get the area ready for office space would come as a proposal from Bergeron Technical Services.

Mark asked if we are talking about housing the town offices in the Masonic Building on a temporary basis while the Town Office Building is being worked on, what would need to be done to make the Masonic Building useable? Denny stated the electrical would need to be updated and data added. Mark mentioned that daily use of the Masonic Building would also require the septic system to be looked at. This raises the question whose budget will the expenses fall under?

Anne explained that we have a contract with Bergeron Technical Services and because of their work schedule, Bergeron could not commit to start until August. It was the committee decision to amend the project to a 2023 Warrant Article rather than rushing against time to get it on the ballot for 2022. Bergeron will continue to work on the project during the later part of 2021 and early 2022 so that the committee can present the options in the study to the public in the summer of 2022. It was determined by the committee that until Bergeron starts on the project that there will be period of time when the committee will not have anything to discuss. Anne suggested that the committee could build a webpage and post it on the Town's website. Once constructed, we could upload the committee's minutes, as well as any additional information about the progress of the committee's work, as a way to keep the Town informed. The committee agreed to meet again in June, and that this meeting would be publicized in case anyone from the public wanted to attend. The agenda for this meeting will include a review of the work plan that the Town has with Bergeron Technical Services.

With no further concerns from the committee, the meeting was opened to public comments:

- Janice Zecher asked if the sale of the Masonic Building was being considered in order to facilitate the Town Office space problem?
 - Ernie said that the Masonic issue did not come up until after the Town Office Advisory Committee was set up. Denny replied that the Masonic Building was given to Bergeron Technical Services as a possible option, with the Town Office building itself being option number one.
- Janice also asked if the sale of the Masonic Building is contingent upon a completed assessment of the building by Bergeron Technical Services.
 - Anne replied that the sale of the Masonic Building is strictly between the Board of Selectmen and the Masons.
- Janice also asked if the two groups that had toured the Town Office Building and the Masonic Building in November had given any insight on the Masonic Building?
 - Anne replied that there were actually three firms that interviewed for this project who toured the buildings, and all three tours were conducted in January. The committee had discussions with these three firms on their qualifications to complete the project. These firms did not provide any insights on the buildings.
- Janice commented that it would be a great deal for the Town to purchase the Masonic Building, but she just doesn't want it to be a rushed decision at the expense and safety of Carroll Lodge #57 and the Lodge's history in Freedom.

Other Business:

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:00 pm at the Freedom Town Hall.