

## Minutes of the Friends of Mechanics Hall

June 13, 2013

Town Hall Annex, 7 PM

In attendance:

Herb Bingham, Larry Deblois, Annmarie Hurley, Alex Fiandaca, Mark Fiandaca, Faith Pistrang, Larry Pistrang, Karen Rossow and Geoff Yaglou.

The meeting began shortly after 7 pm. An agenda was distributed.

Updates:

1. **Bake Sale** (Faith): Faith thanked the group for their participation in the Bake Sale with special thanks to the bakers and to those who tended the tables in the hot sun. The Bake Sale was held Friday, May 31 through Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> in conjunction with the Friends of the Library Book Sale and was advertised in the Landmark, Town News and with sign boards posted on the Town Common and at Route 140/31.
2. **Building and Grounds** (Mark): Mark met recently with John Wilson, Building Inspector, to introduce the Friends. John is in favor of the Friends' efforts to save Mechanics Hall and offered many suggestions. One of the suggestions was to have the building professionally evaluated to rule out any issues that would require remediation, such as mold. John also suggested involving professionals to determine what the building needs on a historic level and to create a plan of what needs to be done and in what order.

Mark presented the following recommendations for near-term stability measures:

- Focus on the basement (Geoff reported that the dormant furnace and ductwork are contributing to the moisture problem. Also the lack of vapor barrier on the floor needs to be addressed.)
- Address remaining squirrel activity
- Continue pursuing temporary electrical improvements (Need written description of work to present to John Lebeaux.)
- De-clutter second floor

Mark also reported that bunting has been hung on the façade of Mechanics Hall (many thanks to PMLD for their help) and two stone planters have been donated.

3. **Business Outreach** (Larry D. and Faith): The Pillars of Support Committee has held two meetings so far and Anne Littlefield has been helping with this effort. The Committee would like to be able to approach funders with a set of work priorities that have been pre-approved by the Select Board. There was much discussion about the extent of professional estimates needed to refine our stability plan and it was suggested that more extensive professional input will enhance our credibility with funders.

Anne also suggested that the Friends strive to educate the public about the history of East Princeton (starting with the larger group of Friends) as a way of promoting the significance of Mechanics Hall.

4. **Future Use Outreach** (Larry P and Annmarie): Larry and Annmarie have been meeting with various groups in Town to gauge their interest in a restored Mechanics Hall. Responses from the Girl Scouts, Arts Society and Parks and Rec have been very enthusiastic. There is a lot of interest in using Mechanics Hall for additional meeting space as well as a place for ceremonies and functions. There is also interest in using the building at this stage for occasional art sales. Karen suggested the possibility of a joint fundraiser with the Arts Society in which artists create images of Mechanics Hall and East Princeton.

Alex reported that she and Elizabeth met recently with the Agricultural Commission. Farmers' Markets are one of many ideas that have been proposed for Mechanics Hall and Elizabeth has extensive experience in this area. The Agricultural Commission has operated Farmers' Markets in the past at Princeton Center and on the Common. They indicated that they support the idea but do not wish to run the markets themselves. This did not deter the group and there was much discussion in support of the markets and learning more about what would be involved.

#### New Business:

1. **Possible Fall Fundraising Events** (Faith): Faith presented two fundraising ideas to the group: 1) participating in the Town-Wide Yard Sale again this September and 2) sponsoring a Chicken Pie Supper, based on a similar event held by the East Princeton Grange at Mechanics Hall on September 20, 1911. (Copies of the Grange flyer from 1911 were distributed.) The Friends would make chicken pies, sell tickets and host the event in period-appropriate dress. Faith has approached a costume designer who is willing to help and the Congregational Church (which has a well-equipped kitchen) might be a possible venue. There was discussion about the amount of work and behind the scenes effort that went into last year's Yard Sale, and it was suggested that the Friends not attempt both events within the same month. No formal decisions were made but the group is leaning in favor of having the Yard Sale this year and the Chicken Pie Supper in the future.

Alex suggested that the next general meeting be held in August rather than July and all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM. The next monthly meeting will be held Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm in the Town Hall Annex.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Fiandaca