

1859 Town Hall Community Discussion and Pizza Party Debrief

On Thursday, August 18, 2022, 20 people met at the 1859 Town Hall and ate great pizza while discussing the future of our Monkton icon. The Selectboard Chair, Stephen Pilcher, provided a delicious dinner and it seems to have inspired thoughtful conversation.

Stephen and Kristen Farrell, MM&HS President & ARPA 1859 Town Hall Advocate, led a group discussion. They reviewed the steps taken thus far to delay the private sale of the 1859 Town Hall.

They identified the current focus of getting a REDI - (Rural Economic Development Initiative) Grant to gain the assistance of a professional grant research/writer who can guide us through the process of preservation, restoration and reconception. An Energy Planner from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission is assisting in this application.

We had been awarded the Robert Sincerbeaux Fund Grant from the Preservation Trust of Vermont. This grant provided access to an historical architect and a matching grant of \$250.00. The Monkton Museum and Historical Society (MM&HS), who have a vested interest in the preservation of this nationally historically registered building, funded the other \$250.00 for this assessment.

Tom Bursey of Tom Bursey Designs Pllc completed an assessment of the 1859 Town Hall on August 8 with Stephen Pilcher, Kristen Farrell and MM&HS Board member Robin Hopps present. This report was available on 8/18/2022 for people in attendance to review. We will post this assessment on the MM&HS website and the Selectboard also has a copy.
www.monktonhistory.org

After pizza, the group went to a pop up type museum exhibit in the large front room. We brainstormed a series of questions and Kristen Farrell took notes and facilitated conversation.

Thank you for your wonderful ideas and suggestions.

Below is a list of those questions and your responses.

The question now is... what can we do to move forward on these ideas?

I look forward to hearing from those who want to help continue this work more actively.
I look forward to all of your continued support for preserving a town legacy.

Please let me know if I have left any ideas out or you have new ones to share.

Questions Discussed

How can we make the 1859 Town Hall a sustainable asset to our community?

- Offer items that can not be found in Hinesburg or Bristol- All Monkton Products

- The Monkton Museum
- Ready made meals
- Retail- artisan, agricultural products, bread and butter items
- Musical venue
- Art Center
- Community Center
- Square and Contra Dancing
- Telecommuting opportunity
- Daycare/childcare
- Educational/Student programs
- Presentations/movies/talks
 - Wildlife, classes, Ted Talk Style
- Yoga/exercise class
- Social Space- hub/pub
- A place to give tribute to town elders
- Pop Ups

Who should own the building?

- Town- Caveats: 1859 Town Hall is self sustaining or voter approved
- Community Non- Profit Group that expresses interest

Who can manage/ be an operator?

- Cooperative
- Event Planner incorporated into grant writing
- College Intern- Middlebury College/UVM

Concerns/ *Solutions:

- Cost to sustain
- Cost to renovate
- Assessment from Architect- 85,000+
- parking/safety
- Septic Tank: * An attendee had an idea about a type of compostable toilet, but it was something that does not require electricity
- Concerns if it were a place to offer food: refrigeration/staffing
- Not to be seen as a competing with the Town Hall and Library: * collaboration
- Internet

Thanks again for all of your ideas and most importantly your time.
Please stay in touch!

Kristen B. Farrell

MM&HS President
ARPA 1859 Town Hall Advocate