

Town House Committee

Annual Report 2022

During 2022 the Town House Committee met, voted on officers and developed a mission statement. The committee make up and mission statement were presented to the Board of Selectman in November and so approved.

Members of the Town House Committee include: James Buzzell - Chair, Marilynn Borst - Vice Chair, Maureen Wesolaski - Clerk, Patricia Miller, Eva Brown, Maureen Caramiello, John McClintock, and Sue Lewandowski.

The Mission of the Committee is: To communicate with the Board of Selectman, Downtown Development Committee and other pertinent town committees and departments, and to work with them to restore the Town House as the focal point of downtown redevelopment

The Town House Committee will work in tandem with the nonprofit Friends of the North Brookfield Town House in the restoration and rehabilitation of the Town House.

Progress to date on the Town House restoration project is reported in the following document mailed to the Board of Selectman January 17th, 2023.

UPDATE FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE NORTH BROOKFIELD TOWN HOUSE

To the BOS and the people of North Brookfield,

Activity within the Friends organization was substantial in 2022, following an equally busy 2021. Over the past 3 years, we have raised over \$50,000 from fundraising efforts and have secured over \$355,600 in grant funding.

One of these grants, a \$35,000 award from the Massachusetts Cultural Counsel, came with a matching requirement. To date, with donations from members and supporters, the Friends are less than \$10,000 short of meeting the match to activate this entire award, resulting in a total of \$70,000 in available funding.

The funds from the Commonwealth Community One Stop grant (\$225,000) received this past fall will be used for final construction documents from the Worcester-based architectural firm who have done valuable work for our project in the past. These construction documents represent an important hurdle to overcome before we can begin our capital campaign. The plans are expected to be completed in the summer of 2023.

As our group meets weekly to plan for multiple fundraising programs and further grant application targets in 2023, we'd like to express appreciation for our members and other helpful townspeople, especially those who continue to support the noble effort of renovating the North Brookfield Town House, either with their wallets or by giving their time and talents.

The active members of the Friends are but a small group of hard-working volunteers. The Town House belongs to the Town of North Brookfield, and when renovated will serve to benefit the

people of North Brookfield and surrounding communities. As cost estimates from our final construction documents will show, renovating the Town House is an expensive proposition. While we are confident that our goal is attainable, it is our belief that ultimately successful renovation can only be achieved by widespread involvement of our community members and municipal committees led by the BOS. Perhaps the linchpin in this regard is the Downtown Development Committee, formed in 2018 upon the recommendation of nationally respected preservation professionals. The importance of the DDC was reinforced later by opinion of State funding organizations Mass Development and Urban Land Institute. The DDC has been instrumental in generating opportunities for growth of the entire downtown district. In addition to providing safety for pedestrians, plans called for in the Complete Streets grant won by the DDC eventually will assure handicap access for the Town House. The Friends and the DDC act as codependent ‘partners’ in the quest to create a healthy, thriving downtown North Brookfield.

In summary, our objectives for 2023 include: obtaining final construction documents, continue ongoing fundraising and project promotion, target suitable grants and complete grant applications, expand the size of Friends membership – especially the number of active members, regularly inform both BOS and townspeople of our activity, and collaborate with town committees in the best interests of the project.

Sincerely,

Jim Buzzell – President of the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House

Town House Committee Report Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Wesolaski, Clerk