

Town of Durham

Union Church Committee Minutes

Town Hall, 6:00 PM

July 18, 2023

In Attendance:

Jerry Douglass, Town Manager
Bill Schneider
Paula Erdmann-Purdy
Lois Kilby-Chesley
Emily Alexander
Tyler Hutchison
Neil Berry
John Talbot
Tia Wilson
Candy DeCsipkes

1. Selection of officers

Chair

Bill Schneider, 4 votes
Lois Kilby-Chesley, 3 votes

Bill Schneider elected as chair

Vice Chair

Lois Kilby-Chesley, 7 votes

Lois Kilby-Chesley elected as vice chair

Secretary

Tyler Hutchison, 7 votes

Tyler Hutchison elected as secretary

2. Review Committee Charge

- Identify long term uses for the property
- Restoration required for bringing the building to code
 - What requirements are needed by the department of the interior to keep historical registry designation?
 - Applicable code depends on desired use

- Provide proposal to the select board

3. Informational Exchange

- Discussion regarding the bylaw examples provided by Neil Berry
 - Decided to adopt bylaws with changes to allow Robert's Rules of Order as a guide rather than rule
 - Defined that alternates are voting members when a quorum is not achieved and that alternates will be varied from meeting to meeting when possible
- Use by Durham Historical Society (DHS)
 - Town meeting notes from 1984 and 1988 show that DHS has use of the union church and that right would have to be specifically revoked at a town meeting
 - Discussion as to moving this church which is not the ideal solution to the DHS. Additionally, it is unclear if this would affect the national registry status. The biggest concern is safety with the road and the parking lot though the road commissioner offered some suggestions. MDOT would have to become involved to feel confident in any public use safety decision
 - **National registry paperwork is to be provided to Tyler Hutchison for group distribution.**
- Estimates for Sill Repair
 - \$21k remains from original \$66k provided in 2017 and an additional \$10k that must be used by December 31, 2023
 - Estimate to replace sills is approximately \$50k, but additional work will be needed to replace footers that were removed in 2019 when \$18k was spent to repair the foundation.
 - One suggestion to the selectboard may be to review the procurement policy and what/how the proposal was accepted in 2019. Additionally, the committee itself could review the original RFP and bidding process for the original foundation repairs done in 2019 as the work was more of a band-aid than a permanent replacement. We may be able to call upon the company's work guaranty to alleviate some cost since the cinder blocks are sinking into the ground without footers.
- Maine preservation assessment
 - In 2015 and 2017, DHS paid for an assessment of the building.
 - **Tyler will send the 2015 and 2017 assessments to the group**

4. Determine future meeting dates

- Based on timeline, meetings should occur every two weeks on Thursday

5. Other Items

Additional information shared during discussions that don't fit with general agenda items

- Lois Kilby-Chesley and John Talbot to pursue additional estimates for items like foundation repair and building moving
- The committee does not feel like a group designed to act on estimates and quotes, but rather to just offer suggestions which seems to be in line with the request board and the bylaws. This causes some difficulty with the \$10k that is currently allotted for use on the Church since this committee nor the DHS seem to have power to spend that money. However, the committee could use the money for evaluations and assessments which could aid in suggestions.
- Lois recalls from the meeting with North East Housewrights that the church is likely to have serious structural issues or have a side collapse in 4-5 years
- Discussed looking for details on the original

Next Meeting: August 3, 2023

Agenda Items:

- Tia will present on the origins and grand history of the church as well as the modern repair history
- Discussion of possible uses of the Union Church should be on the agenda for next time
 - Some initial discussion items are as follows: sell it to a private entity, donate to the DHS and let them deal with it