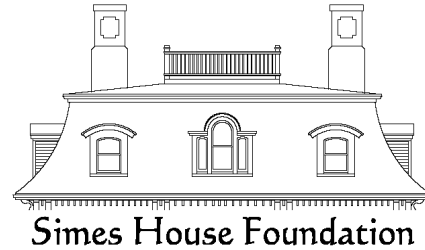


GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING SUMMARY
Plymouth Town Hall, Mayflower I, Plymouth
7:00 PM • THURSDAY • 06-13-2013



FINAL

Meeting called to order 7:05pm by R. Parker.

Present: R. Parker, M. Parker, W. Shain, B. Shain, J. Pierson, S. King (departed meeting at 8:20pm), G. Green, T. Manter, J. Hoagland J. Metcalfe

Absent: T. Gwilliam

Public Present: D. Severy, J. Aducci, K. Joyce, A. Davies, C. Mazelewski

- Meeting was conducted in the Mayflower I room as another group meeting was already in progress in Mayflower II.
- **Meeting Minutes from past meetings**
 - All motions were for acceptance of the minutes with waiver of reading.
 - **Motion** to accept the minutes from 3/13/13, 1st by J. Hoagland, 2nd by J. Pierson passed unanimously 10-0.
 - **Motion** to accept the minutes from 6/6/13, 1st by G. Green, 2nd by S. King passed unanimously 10-0.
 - **Motion** to accept the minutes of 5/16/13, 1st by J. Metcalfe, 2nd by J. Pierson. passed unanimously 10-0.
- **President's Report (R. Parker)**
 - Simes Times is in development and expected to be finished with Board comments included soon.
 - Zoning Issue: R. Parker continues to recommend that he submit a zoning change via Fall Town Meeting warrant article that will "tweak the definition of accessory use" to accommodate what SHFI is attempting to do with commercial office space to lease on the 2nd floor. R. Parker committed to meet with the Planning Board soon with draft plan.
 - Property Tax update: Board of Assessors ruled on 5/21/13 in a written letter that the Foundation would receive tax abatement for FY2014 in the amount equal to the full tax obligation. However, there was no action taken on the current obligation for FY2013 tax of \$4,300 which remains with the Town Manager, Melissa Arrighi, for consideration. She is researching a similar case in another municipality.

R. Parker was assured by Ed Macchiaferri that the Town had no interest in placing a lien on the property because of FY2013 taxes. Word is that if tax cannot be forgiven, Town Manager is willing to grant "easy" terms of up to two years to pay the obligation off.

The abatement letter revealed that once tax abatement is granted, the Foundation will have two years to acquire a certificate-of-occupancy "for charitable purposes". If we miss the deadline, no further abatements will be granted. Our current interpretation of the BOA letter is that we have until June 30, 2015 to get our C-of-O. However, R. Parker committed to speak with Anne Dunn, Director of Assessing, tomorrow to clarify when the start of the two year time limit begins as this could have a substantive impact on building plans in Phases 2 and 3. If

“within 2 years of acquisition” literally means conveyance, technically, we may already be out of compliance. R. Parker will also inquire if we must re-apply annually for each subsequent yearly tax abatement.

R. Parker indicated we had missed the FY2013 deadline last summer in July-August because filing for a property tax exemption is technically an abatement process that must be addressed within 30 days of receipt of a tax bill. R. Parker reiterated responsibility for this issue, and personal commitment to make restitution, if necessary, without burdening the Foundation any further.

- Lot 15 Conveyance: the case is still in Land Court, and despite weekly inquiries by the Town’s attorney, no progress has been made.
- “Charlie Brown” Tree status: previous report from John Scagliarini, arborist, maintains that the CB Tree is viable in the top third where he sees new green shoots of growth. There is a mix of opinions about the long term viability of the tree. R. Parker has begun discussion with John Gallant regarding a new 3-inch diameter Colorado Spruce in the event the CB Tree doesn’t make it.

Motion: To extend the observation period to decide on the CB Tree’s chances of survival to a “drop-dead” date of July 31, 2013. At that time, the Board of Directors will make a decision to recommend to the Town that the CB Tree be maintained or removed from the property. Because Lot 15 has not conveyed, the lot and the tree are legally owned by the Town. If the recommendation is to remove the tree, we believe we will need the Board of Selectmen to approve of the action. The motion was made by J. Pierson, 2nd by B. Shain. The motion passed unanimously, 10-0.

- The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19th at 7:00pm. Location to be announced at a future date.

• **Vice President’s Report (J. Pierson)**

- J. Pierson reported that he believes that public opinion is largely positive at this time thanks to many including, but not limited to, Senate President Therese Murray, Rep. Vinny deMacedo, Rep. Tom Calter, Dr. Donna Curtin, William Galvin, the CPC, the Planning Board and Town Meeting Members.
- He also acknowledged that the initial ardor and passion of helping the Simes House has waned, and that he has begun making contact with other organizations.
- This brought up the discussion of the Plymouth Digital Photography Club which now has more than 1,000 members. Amy Davies requested that the Club be permitted into Simes House to take more photos, and offered to collect \$10 per participant on behalf of the Foundation.

Motion: To allow the Plymouth Digital Photography Club access to the Simes House for photographic purposes, that entry will be by the side door of the house (and not the front door), all participants must sign an individual indemnification form, that a minimum of 2 Directors must be present during the entire time the Club is inside the building, at a future date yet to be determined. 1st by M. Parker, 2nd by T. Manter, amended by R. Parker and others. The motion passed unanimously, 10-0.

• **Treasurer/Business Agent’s Report (M. Parker)**

- Treasurer reported that our cash balance in the checking account is \$409.35. There are \$377.50 in funds to be deposited, giving a grand total of \$786.85 as of 6/13/2013.
- 2012 tax return has not been filed, with an extension granted. The new filing date is no later than 8/15/2013, and is expected to cost \$1,000 in tax preparation for the certified public accountant, Heather Cozby.

- Question from the audience regarding current state of membership. W. Shain answered that most recent analysis suggested less than 30 paid up members current with their dues including 2 life-time members, another 40+ were expired by no more than 6-9 months, and that nearly 60 prior members had not renewed in more than 9 months. Efforts to reinstate a membership drive were briefly discussed. Board indicated that W. Shain was authorized to continue membership review and make a recommendation to proceed with a membership drive at next meeting.
- **Secretary's Report (W. Shain)**
 - Membership analysis will come from the P&L statement provided by M. Parker in May. Recommendations will include renewal policy, 1st of year for all or other timing.
 - Ideas for benefits to Membership, proposed from audience and other Directors, included discount cards to local restaurants, local farm discounts, Luke's Liquor. All exclusive to members.
 - W. Shain proposed that the Secretary's responsibilities might be broadened to increase productivity and encourage more membership participation. Current responsibilities seem to be limited to taking minutes, publishing same and occasional thank-you note. In other organizations, the role of the Secretary can take on other responsibilities like handling all external communications including email distribution list, responsibility for membership maintenance and dues mailings. R. Parker suggested that the Secretary can also keep the Foundation's records. R. Parker proposed that we consider a possible bylaw change in time for the Annual Meeting.
- **Building Committee Report (W. Shain and J. Metcalfe)**
 - W. Shain reported that the new sign announcing the MPPF grant is now installed on the front lawn next to the existing CPC grant sign. We can expect the first 90% or \$45,000 to be received in the next few weeks.
 - W. Shain provided review of progress to contracting with Red Hawk Studio Architects for Phase 2 architectural planning. Current bid falls within 6-7% of total building budget which is within acceptable, normal limits.
 - W. Shain briefly discussed use of "alternates" to try to assure we can achieve our objective of putting an RFP out to bid within the financial limitations of our building fund. Whatever is decided for the work scope of Phase 2 will be heavily influenced by how much money we have to spend. If we cannot see ourselves clear to complete the RFP requirements within the financial funding available to us at the start of the bid, we will not be able to legally proceed with bidding. Therefore, we plan to run our first estimates of costing when plans are 95% complete with Red Hawk Studio Architects. There will be more to report by the time of the Annual Meeting.
 - J. Metcalfe presented the plans that were approved by the Board "in substance", meaning that subsequent plan changes will be considered if recommended by Red Hawk Studio Architects and approved by the Board. The basis of the overall building strategy from a historic perspective is based on a historical vs. contemporary balance:
 - 1st priority: exterior stabilization and closure in a historically appropriate design. I.e., restore, replace and repair everything that was original to the house including all detailed moldings, finials, walls, doors/hardware, finish and the like. Most of the substantive change will occur in the back of the building due to requirements for a building addition to accommodate internal changes.
 - 2nd priority was the 1st floor which will be seen by the general public on a regular basis, and should reflect period appropriateness including woodwork, flooring, wall finishes, paint and the like. This includes a 2nd form of egress (another staircase),

lift/elevator, handicap accessibility, handicap bathrooms. Current staircases will be left in place, in part due to discussion with Dr. Donna Curtin, Antiquarian Society, based on historical notion of “symbolic annihilation”. That each architectural element of an historic building should be maintained, not just from the owner’s perspective. In this case, the back staircases should be retained because symbolically, they represented the main access routes to the upper floors for the servants of the house. Removal or re-direction of these staircases would “symbolically annihilate” the historical importance of their contributions.

- Next priority is the 2nd floor which is represented by a commercial focus, and where historical and contemporary designs will be balanced. 4 offices are planned, current main staircase and servants’ back staircase will remain in place, no changes in windows, and a small conference room for lessees to use, including a mini-kitchen area for coffee, etc.
- Lowest priority is the 3rd floor where two affordable apartments are planned. This will require a new staircase from the 2nd to 3rd floor in the front of the house. Current design will include going up to the 3rd floor, mirroring the current grand staircase below. Two apartments will be back-to-back with two forms of egress provided by two new staircases, and LULA-style lift from the 1st to 3rd floor. Challenges to be considered in final design include apartment storage, basic utilities including plumbing, heating/cooling and electrical. Mansard roofs will impact ability to provide adequate storage, and will be focus of future design.
- New stair-tower in back of building discussed. New windows, design to keep labor down as much as possible.
- J. Metcalfe continued to support his further pro bono involvement in architectural design by working with K. Packard of Red Hawk Studio Architects in Phase 2.

- **Funding Sources (R. Parker)**

- R. Parker has marked up a set of drawings with all rooms labeled as “A through O” for the purpose of naming rights as a source of future funding. \$500 bid on widow’s walk was mentioned, but not identified or accepted at this time. Suggested we need someone with auction and marketing-sales expertise to manage the bid process on naming rights to rooms and features. R. Parker’s suggestion was that we consider Jordan Hospital’s approach to naming similar to “this wing made possible by...”.
- W. Shain: With regard to MPPF grant, we can expect the first 90% or \$45,000 in the next few weeks; the final 10% or \$5,000 won’t be released until all work is complete and full documentation report is submitted to MHC.
- J. Metcalfe determined that the two apartment sizes are 686 sqft and 785 sqft, and minimum square footage for an apartment in Plymouth is 600 sqft.
- Increasing membership is another funding source.
- J. Hoagland volunteered to work on new sources of income. One grant under consideration is for operational budget funding, and the application is in development. Also working on a membership challenge to encourage participation in fund-raising by rewarding best fund-raising performance by a current Member.

- **Marketing Committee (R. Parker)**

- R. Parker has volunteered to chair the Marketing Committee as committee of one.
- Will work with our web design firm, KC Graphics, to keep website up to date. Also will encourage new fund-raising efforts for expansion of clothing to include hats, mugs, and implementation of sales tax.

- **Events Committee (M. Parker)**
 - Tag Sales scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 9am to 3pm. Use of Hapgood tent planned.
- **Grounds and Operations (G. Green)**
 - Acquisition of riding mower by J. Hoagland as well as clearing of back part of property of many trees and underbrush.
 - Mowing is being done by G. Green and J. Pierson, with trim work by J. Aducci. B. Shain is responsible for much of the cleaning inside, and other interior details.
 - House has been re-keyed.
 - GO team also handling watering of CB Tree and fertilizer to try to restore CB Tree to health.
- **History Committee (B. Shain)**
 - Donation by M. Parker of a Tasha Tudor book gratefully acknowledged. Tasha Tudor is an author and illustrator of over 100 books, and grand-daughter of Joseph Simes.
 - Quick review of Treat House (Frankfurt, Maine) with pictures photographed by the McSharry's and looking very similar to Simes House in design, although slightly smaller at 4500 sqft. Built in 1864, designed by Calvin Ryder, a Maine architect who later moved his business to Cambridge, MA and whose office was very close to the home of Joseph Simes on Washington St. in Boston.
 - Antiquarian Society Tour of Homes is upcoming, and will feature a new discovery in the Simes House. Pictures of a solid marble sink with working stopper was highlighted, thanks to J. Metcalfe who carried the 75-lb sink from the 3rd floor to Barbara's car.
 - Barbara and Will met with Victoria Simes Poole, the great-granddaughter of Joseph Simes, residing in Cape Elizabeth, Maine in May. Also met with her sons, Malcolm and Parker Poole, the great-great-grandsons of Joseph Simes. The day that we met Ms. Poole, she was dressed in a medium sandstone-colored, "monochromatic" pant suit with a brown belt, looking like the color scheme of the restored Simes House. Other information will be provided in a future report.
 - Proper pronunciation of Simes turns out to be a short-vowel for "i" rhyming with the words limbs, rims and whims. The Poole family was adamant that their Irish ancestry was always consistent about the pronunciation.
 - Review of the tiles in the front foyer of Simes House have been confirmed as Minton encaustic tiles from the 19th century (the clay used was tinted in the base clay; therefore, the color is not painted on the surface and glazed, but in fact, permeates the entire tile). This has been confirmed by David Berman, a local historian, who first pointed out the historical importance of these colored clay tiles which were produced by the Minton Company from the 1790s until the 1960s. Most Minton tiles have "mint-marks" on the back tiles that aid in dating them. Those that are loose appear to have been produced around 1845 to 1860, with one that may be a replacement from 1901. Barbara has also found an online 19th century catalog with the same tile design as seen in Simes House. This catalog is currently available for \$1,300 or the highest bidder.
 - Boston Evening Transcript from November 1884 was found that lists the Simes House property for sale as an estate "comprising modern mansion house, numerous farm buildings all in the most perfect order, and 175 acres of land". This is only 6 weeks after the death of Joseph Simes. Therefore, one can conclude that George Simes, adopted son, put the house up for sale immediately upon the death of his father, but was not successful in getting it under contract until it sold in 1890. G. Green believes that the reference to "75 acres are heavily wooded" may

reflect that a portion of the property that was probably used exclusively for firewood for home heating, and may have been part of today's Pine Hills area.

- Motion to adjourn was made and passed at 9:25pm.

Submitted 07/05/2013 by W. Shain, Secretary.