

Record Storage Advisory Committee Minutes for April 25, 2018

Present: Leslie Bracebridge (LB), Susan Millinger (SPM), Susie Mosher (SM), Savanna Ouelette (SO), Linda Avis Scott (LAS)

Guests: Rachel Onuf, Roving Archivist, and Kristin Van Patten from the Historical Commission

Absent: Becky Torres and Buildings Committee representative

The meeting opened at 11:02 am. Minutes of March 28, 2018 were approved unanimously.

Business:

Membership questions:

Is Wednesday afternoon a bad day for Becky? Should we change to a different day? She needs to be asked whether the minutes and reporting from SM and LAS provide her with enough information about RSAC's discussions and activities.

Current members have all indicated they wish to be reappointed for another year.

SM reported a conversation with Bob Groves of the Buildings Committee. Bob is too busy out of town to attend and no other member is free to attend. She recommends we meet with that Committee if needed; our minutes, which Buildings Committee receives, will clue its members if an item is under consideration on which they wish input.

Discussion of Old Town Hall (OTH) situation:

Bob Groves' report from the Buildings Committee of August 25, 2015, was referenced. This brief report considered a variety of possible uses for the building, of which record storage was but one. Thus, it identified possible solutions relevant to a variety of uses. The members of RSAC expressed interest in seeing the report, *which is therefore attached with the minutes of this meeting*.

LB reported that the decision to install storm windows has led to the windows being sealed and as a consequence, air circulation is poorer than when LB could open windows to let dry air blow through. Moreover, the impact of the damp rising from the dirt of the crawl space below the hall (a cement foundation is only under the kitchen) has been intensified.

Given the presence of Town records in the main hall of Old Town Hall, and the problems SM has identified with humidity there, what to do **now** to solve these problems and make the space safe for record storage was the focus of the meeting. Rachel Onuf, Roving Archivist (RO) was visiting to give us information and advice about dealing with mold-prevention in OTH.

The presence of mold in the dehumidifier is the main indicator of a problem in the main room. There has also been mold in the dehumidifier in the vault. The furnace does not heat the vault in the winter. As a result, the vault's brick walls absorb the cold from the outside air. Low temperatures in the vault in the winter can cause mold to develop. How can we ensure the vault is heated in the winter? The problem is that any electrical appliance, heater, or lights might cause a fire.

SM believes we need one or more better quality self-draining dehumidifiers, needing less frequent attention than the current ones, and ideally capable of operating in low temperatures.

There was general discussion of mold and how to deal with it. RO pointed out that mold spores are always present. There is no way to get rid of mold: what one seeks to do is prevent the mold from developing. Taking books and other records out of OTH might help improve their health. This would need to be done carefully, so any spores aren't spread further.

RO emphasized that mold is dangerous to human health, even if no odor or visible evidence of mold is present. Sensitivity to mold, moreover, can develop after an extended period of working around mold with no perceptible impact. Humans should wear protective masks when working around mold.

RO discussed the relationship of dew point, temperature, and humidity, and recommended free software which makes possible the input of two of the three data points to find their impact on the third. This is Image Permanence Institute's Dew Point Calculator at www.dpcalc.org.

RO suggested an immediate focus on the OTH main room.

Needed:

a good dehumidifier which drains itself, even if modifications in the building to permit draining are needed.

storm windows which can be taken on and off to permit better air circulation

perhaps a screen door, and opening both outside doors to let air circulate

finding a way to keep the vault temperature from dropping too low

plastic over the dirt floor of the crawl space to keep moisture from rising

Probably should do one thing at a time:

Start with plastic sheeting over the floor and down the walls of the crawl space. The person doing it should be an expert, who knows what they are doing and why (to reduce mold). But RO suggests we begin with an environmental engineer. (S)he will cost more but the report produced will be compelling evidence needed to get financial support for the project. It is possible to go to the environmental engineer being consulted with a list of priorities, asking in which order we should proceed. Such an order would enable us to make incremental and pragmatic choices, while the task could be worked through step by step.

The first question to ask is the cost of a report. The next step, after the report, will be the project itself.

Actions to be taken by committee members:

Kristin volunteered to consult environmental engineers.

Once an engineer has been identified, the Record Storage Advisory Committee can request money for a report from the Finance Committee. Once we have a report, the Record Storage Advisory Committee can go to the Community Preservation Commission to request money for the project.

SM will determine the square footage of the OTH main room so that we know how big a dehumidifier we need.

SPM volunteered to contact the Allergy Buyers Club to ask about possible dehumidifiers that would meet our needs: large capacity, self-draining, and capable of working at low temperatures.

SPM also volunteered to contact Bruce Whittier of Whittier Plumbing and Heating to ask about his experience with the kind(s) of work needed.

Status of SHRAB Grant

RO was asked when SHRAB will meet to make decisions about applications for end of the fiscal year grants. She said that it will meet in May; she will ask if it plans to approve applications then.

RO's replacement as Roving Archivist will probably be picked in late May. Her replacement will have all RO's records on the Shutesbury situation.

Final business:

SM will look into scheduling a field trip to Barre after Town Meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 30 at 11 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm