

FAQ Sheet  
Adaptive Reuse of Old Town Hall

Open Meeting  
November 9, 2010  
Meeting Room, Town Offices

***Q. What is the status of Stockbridge's Old Town Hall now that Town Offices are located at 50 Main Street?***

A. Old Town Hall has not been used on a regular basis since 2007, though it has been made available to the Stockbridge Library to store and sort books for the annual book sale.

***Q. What does it cost to maintain Old Town Hall on an annual basis?***

A. The 2010 town budget includes \$24,400 in operating costs, including heating, electrical and maintenance costs. This summer the west façade of the building was painted, as authorized by a vote at Town Meeting.

***Q. What is the Stockbridge Old Town Hall Reuse Committee and who are the members?***

A. The Stockbridge Old Town Hall Reuse Committee was created by the Board of Selectmen in July, 2009 to research and recommend to them "the best and highest use of Old Town Hall". Members include: Doug Goudey, Phil Heller, Deb McMenemy, Scott Muir, Martin Salvadore, Leslie Shatz (Chair), Tom Stokes, and Harvey Waller. The Committee met for the first time on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

***Q. What has the Committee been doing for the past 16 months?***

A. During the first year, the Committee met on a regular basis and reviewed:

- The current status of Old Town Hall and its operating costs;
- The geographical parameters and zoning of the property using site, zoning, and assessors maps;
- The terms of the original 1902 lease between the Town of Stockbridge and the Congregational Church;
- The deliberations of the original Old Town Hall Committee with representatives of the Congregational Church;
- The terms of an existing parking lease between the Stockbridge Golf Club and the Congregational Church;
- A 2005 marketing study prepared by Bay Area Economics Consultants for the reuse of the Stockbridge Plain School;
- The architectural renderings prepared by Tuthill & Wells for Old Town Hall, and the associated cost estimates for renovating it back to its pre-1963 configuration (removing the second floor);
- The fundraising effort to date for the renovation of Old Town Hall as envisioned by the first reuse committee.

***Q. How much money has been raised to date for the renovation of Old Town Hall?***

A. Approximately \$1,000,000.

***Q. Did the Committee consult with anyone during the course of their deliberations?***

A. The Committee met with Joe Kellogg, the Project Manager for the Plain School Re-Use/Town Office Project; Dr. David Anderegg, Bronly Boyd, and Mark Fischetti, Members of the Congregational Church Committee charged with overseeing the Old Town Hall lease; and David Rooney, President of the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation (BEDC).

***Q. What alternatives for the adaptive reuse of Town Hall has the Committee been looking at?***

The Committee has looked at approximately 18 concepts/options (see Attachment #1 on page 4). Some of the options we looked at were redundant; others incompatible with Town Hall's neighbors: the Congregational Church and the Stockbridge Golf Club. A number of options were eliminated based on their lack of economic feasibility. We reviewed the report by Bay Area Economics (September 2005), *Stockbridge Plain School Reuse Study: Market and Financial Analysis* and asked David Rooney to read and review the report and its Summary of Conclusions.

We invited Mr. Rooney to meet with our committee and speak to us about the economic opportunities and realities in Berkshire County. He affirmed that the 2005 Bay Area Economics report's findings were still quite accurate: There is no current or foreseeable demand for either commercial or retail space, or for housing, in Berkshire County. He advised us to vet our ideas for the reuse of the building with a marketing study and business plan.

The Committee narrowed the options for the reuse of Old Town Hall to the following two:

1. Renovate Old Town Hall to its configuration prior to 1963 (when the second floor was installed and the Town Offices were moved to the building), and reuse the building as a function hall;
2. Demolish the building and install a gazebo for town use.

The Committee decided to pursue option 1 and resolved to send out Requests for Proposals for two studies:

1. A pre-development report for the historic building; and
2. A business plan and marketing study to determine if option 1 – a function hall – would be viable.

***Q. What firm was hired to do the pre-development inventory of Old Town Hall?***

A. In response to our Committee's request, the Stockbridge Community Preservation Committee sent out an RFP and underwrote a pre-development inventory of the building characteristics of Old Town Hall. The CPA hired Jan Hird Pokorny of New York, NY to conduct the inventory, which we received in June (2010).

***Q. What were the findings of the pre-development report?***

A. All exterior building elements are in fair to good condition and serviceable, with the exception of the roof which is expected to require replacement and possible repair.

***Q. What firm was hired to conduct the marketing study and business plan?***

A. The committee received approval by the Town Selectmen in March, 2010 to hire a consulting firm to prepare a business plan for Old Town Hall, supported by market research, to determine if reusing Old Town Hall as a function hall would be economically feasible and viable. The Cecil Group, led by Kenneth Buckland and Steve Cecil, was chosen; and the firm has been working with the committee since August.

***Q. What was the scope of work for The Cecil Group?***

A. The firm prepared a market study and business plan for renovation and use of the building as a community and social event space. A summary of the draft report is being presented at the Open Meeting, and will be available on the Town web site.

***Q. What would this renovation of the Town Hall cost if it the hall were restored to its original configuration?***

A. Tuthill and Wells, the architect hired to prepare plans for Town Hall renovations in 2004 estimated the cost to be \$1.6 million. A subsequent cost analysis prepared in July, 2007 by A. M. Fogarty & Associates had an estimated cost of \$2.64 million. The costs for the renovation of Old Town Hall as a function hall need to be recalculated with greater accuracy.

***Q. Who will pay for the renovation of Old Town Hall?***

A. If the renovations are managed by the Town, the project may be paid from donations to the town, bonding and other town funds. The repayment of the public funds could be reimbursed by either directly through venue rental fees or from a facility manager. Another option is for a non-profit entity to take over management of the property and costs of the renovations.

***Q. What impact will this project have on my tax bill?***

A. The public costs are proposed to be written down by income from use of the facility. However, if there were no other funds to write down the cost, the maximum impact on the taxes, based on currently available figures and estimates, and the projected scenario would be \$0.15-\$0.17 per \$1,000 of valuation.

***Q. What happens after the Open Meeting?***

A. Following tonight's meeting and your input, the Old Town Hall Reuse Committee will meet to deliberate, consider your recommendations and answer your concerns. We also plan to develop more accurate, up-to-date cost estimates for the renovation of Town Hall. We will then make a recommendation for "the best and highest use" of Old Town Hall to the Selectmen.

***Q. When will the Town Meeting be held to take a vote?***

A. A Special Town Meeting will be convened in 2011 to ask voters to make a final decision on the adaptive reuse of Town Hall.

***Q. If I have any questions about the reuse of Old Town Hall, can I contact the Committee?***

A. Yes, you can contact the Committee at: [oldtownhall@townofstockbridge.com](mailto:oldtownhall@townofstockbridge.com)

## **Attachment #1**

### Options the Committee considered for the Re-Use of Old Town Hall

(Note: There is some redundancy in the options. A number of options were not actionable by the Town, based on its lease with the Church).

1. Renovate the building back to its original configuration as an open hall by removing the second floor.
2. Keep the second floor and renovate the building in its present configuration. Offices on the first floor could be rented. The second floor could be rented and used for town functions.
3. Turn the building back to the Congregational Church.
4. Sell the building to a commercial developer.
5. Level the building and create a park or public green, selling the debris for scrap or salvage.
6. Renovate the building as a tourist destination with possibilities for use, including a museum, art exhibitions, meeting spaces, information center.
7. Performance space for music, theater, school use.
8. Use the building for fairs and shows (craft, art, antiques, etc.)
9. Divide the building up into artists' studios.
10. Create a retail/marketplace for vendors, antique dealers, etc.
11. Social service center, including daycare services, CATA, etc.
12. Give the building to a person or group who wants to take it over.
13. Housing – condominiums, single family, multi-family units, market rate and/or moderate income.
14. Office space
15. Bed & Breakfast
16. Cinema /Theatre
17. Puritan/Jonathan Edwards Museum
18. Renovate the building and use it for social functions