

Minutes of Meeting
Camden Opera House Committee
Monday, March 4, 5 PM, Tucker Room

Present: Maryanne Shanahan (acting chair) Howard Jones, Kate Bates, Judy Godwin, Raymond Brunyanski, committee members, Don White, Select Board liaison, Jean White representing Comprehensive Plan Update Absent: Chair Susan Dorr

Meeting called to order at 5:05 PM by Mshanahan. Meeting minutes of January 14 OHC reviewed and accepted. It was determined no need to vote on special meeting minutes of Feb. 14 2013.

Raymond B recapped the Special Meeting held between M. Cates, Camden SB Chair, Don White, Oscar Verest, (as chair of Downtown Network Board), Brian Hodges, Kerry Hadley and himself. The goal of the meeting was to determine best next steps for Opera House in making capital improvements, and ensure communication between town, plans for bonds (Snow Bowl), etc. Meeting was felt to be extremely beneficial. Martin Cates felt bond for OH would not pass currently – Snow Bowl promised to and did raise 4.8 million before asking town contribution via bond and still unsure if bond will now pass in light of poor economy. Martin suggests make 1994 renovations Phase I, Third Floor Phase II (don't let it get held up by a larger plan) and remaining items Phase III. First suggests have a need assessment done in order for Select Board to approve and get behind it. Town Mgr Pat Finnegan offered to pay for and see that this is done as soon as possible. Opera House Committee in meantime should press forward with finding people to work on fundraising.

KHadley gave piano grant report. Grant is being written by Kate, organization is Seth Sprague Foundation – a friend of Kerry's is a board member and invited us to apply. We are applying for \$40,000 for complete restoration of Steinway. Kerry noted that any funds we receive can be added to a list of "behind scenes donations and grants" received leading up to a public request for funds, as suggested by George Muller and other fundraisers – you need to show that you have support privately first.

Kerry reported on OH events – CConference sold out with extremely interesting program and discussions. Indie Concert Feb 14th excellent performers; will hold again next Feb 14th, which will be a Friday night hope to build audiences thru word of mouth how great this concert was.

Second City selling well – March 24th, CHI and Natalie's as sponsor. R Brunyanski reminded OH to be sure sponsors are recognized – BCC had forgotten them on a poster, and thought seen same on a COH poster (KH researched this – original poster did not have CHI on it – as they had not yet come on as sponsor, but is on all materials since becoming sponsor)

Howard Jones has begun research into 501c3. Seems Town never had one - even back in 1994 when had a Friends of the Opera House. Meeting with Town Finance Director next week. Lot of paperwork involved and organization.

Comprehensive Plan – Jean White – town is undergoing a review, done every 5 years of CP. Committee received materials at meeting and were given a deadline of March 11 to get committee input to Kerry; and Kerry will provide one rewrite from the Opera House to Jean White by March

18th. The two main areas for input as Kerry saw them are to add to/enrich information from COH on history of the Opera House, and to weigh in on whether or not Historic Resources Committee would become a commission and change from an advisory body to a regulatory body.

David Denton, UMaine Graduate student, summarized a Financial Sustainability report he did with a PowerPoint, here, attached. Most helpful points: All theatres are subsidized – usually for between 50 – 60%. If want to reduce town subsidy, only way would be seek private donations – hire a fundraiser/marketing person full time.

Don White is acting as Select Board/Opera House Committee rep overseeing needs assessment, coordinating with all parties and the outside professional who will be hired to conduct it. Pat Finnegan has advised Kerry the ball is in her court to contract with the professional and has a call into someone she hopes will come on board to conduct it.

Budget Update: Opera House goes before Budget Committee March 14th 7 PM. Committee members are encourage and asked to attend in support. Susan Dorr is chair of Budget C, Howard Jones on it, Don White SBd member, so already a good representation will be in attendance.

The budget submitted (prior to the conclusion of UMaine report) does include some additional funds for marketing and some part time assistance. There is not funding in the budget for a F/T fundraising position as recommended by David Denton (and Kerry!)