

Cruising the Commonwealth
Worcester
July 18, 2017
Preservation Worcester

Welcome: Introductions

JWI - Describe CTC meeting

Share info with Chris after the meetings

CR introductions and what the CR role is

JG and SC describing what the CR does
-Preservation 911 is really preservation 411

JG- third party expert - much larger issues are often at play

CS- working with cities and towns through governments, working with HP planning and thinking community wide and all the tools that are available and long term. work in all cities and town, work all over. A whole range. Join the list serve

Clinton, Whatley - Whatley town hall just got fundraising to do it

Littleton - historical society and work with commission

Fitchburg Public Library

Fitchburg Historical Commission

Brookfield - uncovered artifacts at a native American dig (3,000 years)
Brookfield historical commission

Susan Arena - preservation planner for city of Worcester

Clock Tower Tax Credits - equity for HTC's in New England

North Brookfield – Friends of the North Brookfield Town House

What is the biggest preservation challenge facing your community right now?

Brookfield- challenge is a 15-acre site, where the Aden Indians lived - biggest challenge is that people do not understand what the major trade rout was 300 years ago and it goes through the community. How do we connect with one another cooperatively?

PW- a lot of buildings coming down, lots of economic development happening in the area, more than ever before. City also has an urban renewal plan they have established, some historic buildings target for eminent domain - in downtown area.

Influential organization - economic org- that recently stated that their mantra is demolition is progress, said at historic commission meeting. Education is an extremely important part of the process. As historic commissioner, hear people coming in say win they want to have vinyl siding on to make the house "look nice" - upsetting concepts - education of the public.

How to get public interest and understand of how important and benefits of historic preservation.

PW does a lot with school children, where to start.

JG- convene people preservation is part of progress, not stopping progress. A positive thing in general progress but how do you work preservation into planning.

SA- fine balance, people see preservation as a hurdle or roadblock, positive attention on those projects that incorporated reuse, lots of great development using historic buildings.... focus on that. Education and marketing - promotion. Re-direct energy toward seeing preservation as a good thing.

coming from another part of the country with other perspectives that are outside and beneficial

Fitchburg - agrees - begins with education. demonstrate reuse of buildings in other communities, have them come and talk about benefits and why they did it. Networking and mentoring

Interest in reusing a significant building but there would be a teardown as part of the project. Save one and tear down the other. HC has had discussion - no progress with demo delay. Denied by city council. Critical that we bring it back to the attention of the city. Shame to have one buildings reused and the next door torn down. Examples of how you can restore and make the numbers work - can you convince the city and the developer. City is so anxious to stabilize and expand the tax base (serious problem for the city), would like to demonstrate that you can have both preservation and an expanded - stable tax base.

Show examples to the city of reuses in other places that have worked - a struggle. Bring examples to Fitchburg - new interest in downtown Fitchburg that makes it concerning about teardown and demo.

Fitchburg City Hall - EG on building committee, more and more reuse. BOA moved out of their location next to city hall, meeting with city and they are willing to give the city BOA buildings and more space - make a campus there. - Easy access

No main banking center on main street in Fitchburg - used to be a banking center.

JWI- educational aspect, CS spends a lot of time with local HC's etc., share some of your thoughts and experiences with educating local commissions...

CS- 2 parts - training directly to HC's - regional workshops around the state. gets into different parts of the state, get commissions together.

Most popular topic - basic training -

Other workshops on establishing local districts, demo delay and on historic preservation with or without a historic district.

You really need to think about constituency building, lack of support,

CS- can you get 10 people to support, you need a constituency to support a preservation option. Lots of ways to do education.

Challenges and Improvements - lots could be made at the state level in terms of getting a real interest and excitement about HP -

Work - CS meeting, lots of discussion and give and take. - networking and getting people together... people talking amongst themselves, they need the networking and opportunity to connect with others and people who are facing the same challenges but they may not know it.

Education piece comes up a lot - people want to be equipped to do their jobs well!

SC- on the cape, shamelessly steal from everyone else - if you see something that will work well for your community, take a cue from them and ask they how they did it.

Crown Hill - dining on crown hill, open houses for tours. Growing community and support

CS- the wonderful educational work that PW does, the idea that local nonprofit and what he capacity is to do amazing outreach is good. And building the excitement and enthusiasm for HP. Not many local non-profits

Take commissioners and form the nonprofits and friend groups, the private organizations who can run things like programs and awards, etc. You can get good constituency builders.

HC's are limited what they can do, nonprofit orgs can do so much. Places in the country where is it more regional based. Now you can collaborate and do the outreach. Voicing the concern in what is typically a quite concern.

JG- multi pronged approach to HP, people don't realize they are getting educated,

SC- meet the people who share your concerns and your interest and dedication in HP.

This is where the enthusiasm builds and you get people excited

N Brookfield - interviewing consultants to start a capital campaign - frustrating because they are not pros, don't know what they are looking for, what can they afford, etc. To get the town enthusiastic is a challenge, town has ignored the building for so long. Hard to show because we are behind the scenes. Got little coverage and need to get more coverage on what they are doing, they are alive and making progress not the building.

NB - it was Julie McCarthy - lots of enthusiasm that grew from that. - when it comes down to the big bucks, they are at a loss of what to do. Grant writing and the George M Cohan angle - pursue that angle more seriously. Need funds to get to that part.

Whatley - town hall on track for restoration - town of less than 1,500. Small town hall 5,300 square feet. historical commission, raised private funds, attitude, preservation is nice, we can't afford it, stayed on the building committee - never gave up. Visited several small towns that have reused their historic town halls - saw what others did and reported back. More than half of the budget is coming from CPA (reserves) and borrowing against future CPA - well that will be nice, we have to follow SOI, worked with a finance committee, worked with them, did a lot of work with neighbors and collaborating. Working together.

Challenges, few resources and lots of volunteer work. challenge now is to set the job out to bid and come in budget.

Minor challenge - we have two NR districts, very loose management of districts, ad HC should be doing something to help people figure out better solutions - rather unfortunate things are happening (Was it on the Cape, the gradual deterioration of character and features...)

Discussion on budget on the TH project -

Green Communities grant, (a very green energy efficient project), and MPPF. Did not get a cultural facilities funds grant. Giving a permanent home to historic society and restoring and auditorium.

Building will be used for performance space - and home to HS, living in borrowed space)

Flat funding for Cultural Facilities Funds

Story is very helpful - to others who are here.

Market research - surveyed the public on the project - and 19 groups said they would schedule meetings and things in the Hall, helped at town meeting.

Littleton - private homes, what is endangered and there are no historic districts. Where you could get one is not the problem area. How to tell private home owners on what to do? Then when the house is sold, they can get torn down, 6-month delay in Littleton, there was no solution

How to get private home owners on board and to preserve their historic homes and do the right thing. It comes down to money.

W- any thought of a homeowner tax credit

Jl- there was an attempt but it was an uphill battle

Arlington - nonprofit that does below interest loans.

Where is the money? Should we attempt to do that? - historic tax credit for homeowners.

Historic homes, where can they get the money to do the restoration.

JG- you have to think of the industry that is pushing the other side. the info being promoted to people is the replacement - people being told this is what they should do?

SA- some good window repair workshops - going against a lot of big names and a lot of money - connecting to the professionals who can do the work...

Windows - questioned a lot. info you can share with people, why do you want to do it and people

Incentives for historic homeowners... HC has to be careful and cannot make recommendations. You can say you should consider repair as opposed to replacement - wouldn't hurt to have some brochures and a fact sheet, that don't make specific recommendations. Numbers and breakdowns.

Information on historic windows and how to repair, making information easily accessible- can you watch rather than read.

Cambridge's website has a lot of information, poking around to see what other information other communities are putting up is a good idea.

CPA communities, how can we funnel some money toward the encouragement of preservation of private homes, - grant and loan program funded with CPA.

WHALE facade programs - how to get funding for historic homeowners

Historic Commissioners - people are frustrated that real estate agent didn't tell them that homes were on MACRIS- program for RE agents - they could be one of the biggest advocates, turn an opponent into an ally.

Make this an annual gathering in Worcester

RE agent on cape and the perspective. How can we make the tools that realtors use easier and give them access to information? If they get good information they will pass onto the owners

A powerful group that is often overlooked.

RE agent had said give them food and

Give them a certificate too

Worcester did a presentation with RE then a tour of crown hill, once you take people into the neighborhood, into the interior, their attitude changes.

PW- did training at a Board of Realtors headquarters...

CS- who lead the training, PW did the realtors themselves and did the tour.

Who would be good to lead these trainings around the state?

Online training?

Component of being in a group and onsite, hearing someone present is more effective and who that is, as a city employee. Communities should have someone in the municipal departments that could have the enthusiasm to do this?

Is this a case with someone developing a curriculum that works for a town and a city? That can be modified and localized, different for everyone.

If you have a town that has cable tv station, option?

Educational workshops set up around the state?

PW- talking to local cable access, tape programs and run them.

JWI - who could do this?

CS- did an old house fair in Falmouth, chance for people to come and talk to vendors and have people learn how to take care of their old houses.

People need funds, but training for realtors, local nonprofit organizations, need a few thousand dollars for educational opportunities. This will go a long way.

Realtors - out in Western MA - maybe a regional meeting, the NP's that do exist.

Historic Northampton - coming back, the whole CT river valley.

Educational piece is coming up repeatedly - for public and for the professionals who are working in the field.

Fitchburg - worked with college students, created a film and talked about the historic district, and then had local people talk about the historic buildings.

Superior court building, judge spoke to historic of buildings, research paper on the city's history in terms of the abolitionist movement, the civil war park became the focus of how they would recognize the people who fought and died in the CW - had 85 people come to the event. Hopefully next year they can replicate it and focus on historic aspect and bring the human part to the story as well.

How to get people to look at the buildings again, add the human element as well. Historic Commission had funds to develop a marker program for the city. One way to get people interested in their homes' history.

PW- Docent program -

DP- 20 or so docents, provided 10 weeks of training by education director, arch historical, programs for all ages, elementary and high school, lecture series on the O'Connell Bros Building, spoken about doing more hands-on workshops. Put together self-guided tours you can do off a smartphone or download from website.

Photography show, favorite places, hire someone to take 20 pictures of 20 leaders in the city in front of their favorite building, displayed across the city.

Each docent is asked to put together a project - most put a PPT zeroing in on the historic aspect of the city. Some of those become other projects, docents also have something they can present on and share with others.

PW- series of different programs that are brought out to the community, civic groups, retirement communities.

Very time consuming with small staff. Course for the docents is intense.

NB- some members organized a tour, went to the school and spoke to the grade 3 students, arranged a tour of the library and town house. Lunch on the lawn after, and there will be follow up. Biggest concerned, get the townspeople involved.

NY- Getting people into the buildings - personal connection.

PW- one thing we haven't talked about is Media - keep projects and work in the media.

In a small town that could be helpful and keep your face out there.

Social Media and using that as a powerful tool.

High School community service.

Littleton - connect with people who moved away from their town.

How can PM serve you better?

one answer in CC - Spend as much time lobbying legislation on the hill. - continue to work to make the HTC stronger,

Connecting resources better through our website: -

JG- how much info we have collected and have in digestible form - redesigning some and we have a lot of info, we are constantly emailing people PDF's and things we are pushing to people. Funding sources, PDF work doc for funding - There are always more we can put up and make them available online

Feedback from people who have used.

People who we can use as referrals from who has hired experts before,

Could be helpful, like summaries of recent projects that went well and could be of interest to people.

List of consultants who have been involved with MPPF projects -

Grant staff,

PM - will take peoples stories and their challenges, and promote them on our website...

Preservation Conference - plug

Clock Tower - national broker for HTC's, active in all credit program that they can be across the US - one person devoted to film and energy, real estate, New England. Work with developers doing affordable housing or historic or brownfields, interested in working with developers on their financing.

Jeff Jacobsen - Clock Tower building in Maynard

Involved in a lot of projects - love seeing them one to fruition.

Utilize successful preservation project and words of wisdom, that will be helpful

Historic Homeowners, look to CT.

Eversource pays \$1.00 for the credits (in distressed communities) and census tracts.

Gateway cities, would that help the historic homeowner credit? Would they be a partner.

Transformative Development Initiative - could that be a possible partnership as well.

Fitchburg - distressed properties, and serious low-income residents in the district (not owners). Talk to local banks, smaller projects will invest in the smaller projects. Invest in smaller projects this helps then on a national scale.