

***MEET ME IN SUNCOOK!***  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**September 6, 2016**

Present: Noreen Bean, Joan Bailey, Gerald Belanger, Joyce Belanger, Melaine Boisvert (co-chair), Mariette Brissette, Joan Bussiere, Jackie Clark, James Garvin, Jeanne Letendre, Roger Menard, Larry Perron.

1. Co-chair Melaine Boisvert called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. On a motion by Joyce Belanger, seconded by Larry Perron, the minutes of the meeting of August 2, 2016 were approved with the correction by Larry that the minutes of August 2 omitted his observation that the clocktower used as an illustration on meeting agendas is not an image of the Suncook clocktower and should be replaced.

3. Noreen Bean gave the Treasurer's Report, as follows:

Checkbook balance on August 2, 2016:	\$5,926.50
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Income:

Member dues	<u>\$15.00</u>
Total Income:	\$15.00

Expenses:

Bank services charges	\$2.00
Donation to Old Home Day (\$50 to sponsor miniature golf 9 <sup>th</sup> hole)	<u>250.00</u>
Total Expenses:	\$252.00

Checkbook balance on September 6, 2016:	\$5,689.50
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On a motion by Jim Garvin, seconded by Jackie Clark, the treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

4. Noreen Bean reported no update on the vault contents. Noreen noted, however, that there is no operating lock on the vault. The need to access the vault through the offices in the basement during their business hours provides some security. Larry Perron noted that the vault was used for town records when the building served as a fire and police station. The consensus of the meeting was that if the vault can be padlocked, we should purchase a new padlock and distribute keys to Noreen and Larry Perron.
5. Larry Perron displayed a card from Plourde Sand and Gravel (Tel. 236), possibly dating from the 1930s, asking if committee members could identify its purpose. It was an ice card to be displayed in a home window, showing at the top the weight of the cake of ice that was needed for the icebox.
6. The committee discussed methods of increasing membership. Joan Bailey suggested that we canvass businesses along Main Street, or at least keep them informed of our activities and

invite their owners to attend meetings. Jim Garvin suggested that we could send meeting minutes to each business if we could obtain e-mail addresses for each. Melaine will try to locate a current business directory or pamphlet.

Joan also suggested that the “Business District” traffic signs on Route 3 could be made more enticing to passing motorists. Jim Garvin suggested that since we have a business district that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Suncook Village might qualify for a sign directing traffic to the “Historic District” or the “Historic Business District.” Gerry Belanger observed that since *Meet Me in Suncook* was established in part to encourage businesses, we might try to find out who has authority over the “Business District” signs and request that they be re-worded.

Joan also wondered if a newspaper ad might be published, mentioning the array of downtown businesses.

#### Old Business:

7. Melaine talked with Allenstown town administrator Shaun Mulholland about the possibility of renting the Suncook Community Center for interviews on memories of Suncook Village (see Item 6 of the minutes of August 2, 2016). Mr. Mulholland indicated that as an affiliated business *Meet Me in Suncook* could rent the center. The committee discussed setting a date and inviting people to meet at the center to talk about their memories of the village for inclusion in the *Meet Me in Suncook* archives. Those who wish to have their remarks recorded could do so. Melaine asked Joyce Belanger to ask Jo-Ann Bélanger for possible meeting dates if any of Jo-Ann’s current students wish to conduct interviews.
8. Melaine reminded the committee about the Allenstown charrette on Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1. Friday will be spent in gathering data on all parts of town west of Route 3, focusing on Main Street and China Mill, and on an initial visioning for betterment programs. Saturday will include a public presentation by the charrette participants (PlanNH members, AIANH members, others) of their collective vision for the village, with drawings and renderings posted in the room.

Jim Garvin reported on the history of the intensive 2004 effort that was made by the late Carol Martel and by Joyce McKay of NHDOT to conduct their own study of China Mill, which resulted in a mini-charrette held at the Suncook Business Park in the Lavoie Building. Jim contacted Roland Martel to learn whether he has Carol’s notes and data on the study. Roland replied that he has not yet gone through Carol’s papers. Jim has been unable to reach Joyce McKay, who moved to Wisconsin and has since apparently moved again; her e-mail no longer functions.

For more information on the charrette, see:

<http://www.allenstownnh.gov/home/news/downtown-planning-public-input-sessions>

Joan Bailey reported that low water and upstream dam repairs have temporarily stopped hydroelectric generation at China Mill.

9. Gerry Belanger discussed the peeling paint on the Robert Frost historical marker in Robert Frost Park on Buck Street. Gerry reported that he had talked with Brad Smith, owner of Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio, the manufacturers of the marker. Mr. Smith reported that federal requirements for reducing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in paints had resulted in Sewah's use of a new paint formulation that experienced widespread failure. This formula has been replaced with a new dry powder coating process that should equal the lifespan of the baked enamel that was formerly used on Sewah markers. Sewah warrants its markers for five years. The Frost Park marker was within days of its five-year anniversary of delivery, but Mr. Smith will honor its warrantee. Gerry received an e-mail message that outlined the terms under which the marker may be returned for re-coating. The cost of shipping will be \$300; Sewah arranges with a trucking company to return markers during proper business hours for a fee that is less than normal shipping charges from New England to Marietta, Ohio. The marker weighs about 100 pounds. It must be detached from its pole, wrapped in heavy cardboard, and strapped to a pallet with strapping that does not need to be returned. After preparation is complete, Sewah will e-mail a bill of lading that must accompany the marker on its return to the factory. Melaine took this information for the Pembroke Public Works Department's information.

Jim Garvin made a motion to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$300 for shipping costs and a sum not to exceed \$100 for preparation for shipping. Joan Bussiere seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

10. The committee discussed the bittersweet and other foliage that is obscuring the view of the Suncook River from Robert Frost Park. Jim Garvin will contact Ammy Heiser, chair of the Pembroke Conservation Commission, to discuss the possibility and method of removing excess vegetation from the park, which is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and subject to the New Hampshire Shoreline Protection Act.

New business:

11. The committee discussed future goals and objectives. Gerry Belanger returned to the need to get more downtown businesses involved (see Item 6, above). The committee discussed renewing our long-term project to get Amoskeag-type fixtures mounted on utility poles along Glass Street and up the hill on Main Street in Allenstown. Several members spoke about the fact that the type of Amoskeag light that was used along Main Street on the Pembroke side of the village is apparently no longer manufactured, at least under that name. Larry Perron mentioned that the Granite Street exit off I-293 in Manchester now has the type of fixture we want, so we might inquire about the model of light that was recently installed there. Everyone agreed that we should try again to locate the type of fixture we want and determine the price.
12. Larry Perron displayed a box of archival records that had been entrusted to him from the storage attic at the Pembroke Town Hall. These included 1) town checks from the 1930s; 2) a scrapbook of the work of the Old Suncook Vitalization Committee, 1982; 3) a downtown building survey in two albums, 1982; and 4) what appear to be building inspector's Polaroid photographs. The committee noted that the work of the Old Suncook Vitalization Committee in the 1980s was the direct predecessor and inspiration for the formation and work of the *Meet Me in Suncook* Committee, beginning in 1998. Excerpts from the final report of the Old Suncook Vitalization Committee, including a description of the architectural survey now in Larry's

custody, are appended to these minutes. Note that one recommendation of the final report was to inquire at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to see if Suncook Village would qualify for special signs on Routes 3 and 28, as we again discussed tonight under Item 6, above. The committee agreed that the contents of the box are important parts of the preservation history of Suncook Village and represent the foundations of the current work of *Meet Me in Suncook*. We will discuss the best repository for the permanent storage of these materials at future meetings.

13. The next meeting of *Meet Me in Suncook* will be at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at the old Pembroke Fire and Police Station.
14. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
James L. Garvin, Secretary

## EXCERPTS FROM THE OLD SUNCOOK VILLAGE VITALIZATION REPORT, 1983

## INTRODUCTION

*In 1981 the Old Suncook Village Vitalization Project began, and the Conway School of Landscape Architecture was hired to prepare a Vitalization Study for the Village. The study targeted the downtown commercial area (Main and Glass streets), and the industrial area (Front street), as well as the residential neighborhoods on Church street, part of Front street and Main street. In 1982, the Vitalization Committee published the Conway School's "Old Suncook Village Vitalization Report," which included recommendations for site utilization, traffic planning, and landscaping. In 1982, the Vitalization Committee also received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to hire a preservation architect, Paul Gosselin, to prepare plans and sketches illustrating how the Village's shopfronts and commercial buildings could be returned to their former glory. In 1983, the Vitalization Committee, through the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, applied for a Yankee Internship to do an architectural survey of the Vitalization area. I was selected as the Yankee Intern for Suncook and began my project in June 1983.*

*I started my summer's work by acquainting myself with the Village, walking and driving up and down streets, and reading the town history. Initially it was intended that I would survey only the Vitalization area. However, after consulting with architectural historians, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Vitalization Committee, I determined that a full survey of the Vitalization area alone would not be sufficient, since it would lack the full architectural context of the Village. Therefore, I began a "first-stage" (reconnaissance) survey of 300 buildings in Suncook, radiating*

*from the Vitalization area. This survey took a great deal of time because a sketch map of each site had to be drawn and correlated with the town's tax map and base map. From there I continued with a more intensive survey of the Vitalization area; this included sketch maps, other "first-stage" information, a black/white photograph of each site, architectural descriptions, and the date of construction if possible to locate from research sources. The last step was very time-consuming and I spent most of my time doing that part of the research in the microfilm section of the New Hampshire State Library. I read through many newspapers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, having to glean through the entire text of each, including advertisements. I was able to find definite dates for some buildings and possible dates for others, while still others remain elusive.*

*To make the results of my survey more easily accessible and usable, I drew the outlines of the surveyed structures onto copies of the town's tax maps, and then numbered each according to the survey. Thus a building can be located quickly by a glance at the map. I have also prepared an index which lists the tax plot, street address, and survey number for each structure, so that information can be cross-referenced easily.*

*One step which, because of limited time, I was unable to do and which should be done soon, is to talk with the people who have lived in the Village for most of their lives. They should be asked if they remember when buildings were built, who owned them, if they look now as they remember them from before, and if they know of any old photographs that show them as they used to be. People are undoubtedly the greatest resources a town can have, and Suncook is especially fortunate. I only wish*

*I had been able to tap this resource, but instead I will leave that adventure to someone else.*

*The forms include in this report are not—each and every one—fully completed. I hand them over as “working information.” Much work has been done to compile them, but much more must be done for them to be “finished.” Some are without dates because I could not locate any sources; some are without a description of the roofing materials because I could not manage a view of the rooftops; some are without owner’s name and address because the tax cards were in use when I was preparing that information. However, all of the forms for the Vitalization Area should be here, and each one with as much information as I could locate.*

*Rather than giving you a final report, I am giving you a usable report, one that can be added to, and subtracted from, and used, as it should be. It is perhaps the difference between a necklace and a bicycle: the one is much prettier, but the other much more functional. So here is your bicycle, and I wish you good luck in riding it toward new challenges and new achievements.*

*Artelia Lyn Wilson  
September 2, 1983*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The remaining portions of the Vitalization Survey should be completed. (Resources and survey guides are listed in the bibliography; a sample form with instructions is included with this report.) Some information, such as types of roofing materials, building dimensions, etc., is available from the tax assessor's cards. Volunteers could compile the basic historical research (which should be based both on written sources and on personal interviews with long-time Suncook residents, but a professional architectural historian should be retained to prepare the summary architectural descriptions, the statements of significance, and the verbal boundary descriptions and justifications.
2. The town should consider undertaking (or hiring a consultant or intern for) an architectural/historical survey of the entire town of Pembroke, including the area of Suncook Village that was not surveyed this summer. A specific target area of the town-wide survey should be Pembroke Street, which is a veritable museum of architectural styles—so much so that some people will go out of their way to drive between Concord and Manchester via Pembroke Street, because they like to see the lovely old homes and farms.
3. It would be helpful both to the Vitalization Committee and the State Historic Preservation Office if the Committee could arrange to have photographs made of all the buildings that were included in the First-Stage Survey, but not in the Vitalization Survey. Having a photograph of each building for its respective survey form would qualify the survey under the National Park Service criteria. There may be matching funds available from the State Historic Preservation Office for photographs, as well as for additional survey activities.
4. Consideration should be given to nominating the Vitalization Area, or at least the Main, Glass, and Front streets portion of it, to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official federal listing of significant heritage resources worthy of preservation, but it does not impose any restriction or limitation on the use of private or non-federal property, unless federal funds or programs or incentives are directly involved. Registered properties owned by public agencies or by non-profit organizations are eligible to be considered for federal matching grants for protection, preservation, rehabilitation or reuse. National Register designation also provides for review by the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (a federal agency) of potential effects which any federally funded, assisted, or licensed projects might have on registered properties. Income-producing properties listed in the National Register may also qualify under certain circumstances



for federal tax benefits if rehabilitation is done according to specific federal standards and procedures. Perhaps the completion of the survey activities and the preparation of a National Register nomination could be treated as individual steps in an overall process; or, depending on the funding available locally and from sources such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and/or the State Historic Preservation Office, it could be done all at once.

5. The historical and architectural resources identified by the survey activities should rank equally and receive equal consideration in the town's planning process with other elements such as soils, water, slopes, prime lands, wetlands, flood hazard areas, transportation, public services, and economic development. Modifications to the existing town plan, zoning, and subdivision ordinances, etc., should take into consideration the sites and areas included in the survey.
6. The school system should be encouraged to use the survey information as a resource for teaching of local history and architectural history; and, possibly, to involve students and classes in ongoing survey activities.
7. Little is known or recorded about the lives and dwelling-places of the first inhabitants of Suncook, the Native Americans. The town should consider commissioning an archaeological survey to complement the historical/architectural survey.
8. A study should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of moving the town offices into the Tower Clock Building. It seems appropriate that the town offices should be in this impressive structure, which is visible from almost every spot in the Village, and which has become the "trademark" of the Village.
9. Many people feel that there is a parking problem in Suncook. I would suggest that before steps are taken to increase parking space (especially anything involving the razing of older buildings, which are indeed irreplaceable), a study should be undertaken to determine just how much parking is needed—and how much space is already available. At present, the Crescent Street lot is underutilized: redesigning the parking pattern and adding curbs and trees could greatly increase its capacity as well as its attractiveness. There is also a large vacant lot on Glass Street between the Legion Building and the "double" white apartment house. This area, if paved and landscaped, would undoubtedly provide more than enough parking than is needed.

10. The Vitalization Committee should also consider commissioning an economic survey of downtown Suncook. Such a survey would be invaluable in planning commercial/ industrial growth and development, as well as public infrastructure and amenities. The Office of State Planning can recommend firms with experience doing such studies in New Hampshire; it is also possible that the OSP could provide some grant assistance to support an economic survey. For more information, contact: Laurence Goss, Office of State Planning, 2 ½ Beacon Street, Concord NH 03301 (271-2155).
11. Almost every vital small town or village has a chamber of commerce, board of trade, or other form of merchants' association. In many communities the "business group" meets once or twice a month for breakfast and a brief program, with speakers or audio-visual presentations on a variety of topics. Getting something like this started in Suncook would be an important step toward economic revitalization. Often it is difficult to mobilize such a group, but Suncook already has its active Vitalization Committee—which could assist by sponsoring the group as a sub-committee until it was established. In this way, the interested people could meet to share problems and ideas about merchandizing strategy, market studies, etc., on an ad-hoc basis until a more formal organizational structure became necessary.
12. One way to draw attention to Suncook would be for all Suncook merchants to advertise together—for example, in the Chronicle, the Concord Monitor, and the New Hampshire Times. By sharing costs, the group advertising could be done rather inexpensively and, with an effective logo, could be a dramatic boost to Village business. A format featuring the Tower Clock would be an attractive and appropriate way to draw attention to the resources available in the Village.
13. The state highway department may be able to erect special color-coded directional signs ("Suncook Village Historical Sites") on Routes 3 and 28; similar signs for Concord have recently been placed on I-93. To find out if Suncook Village would be eligible for special signs, contact: Frank B. Lindh, Traffic Division, NH Department of Public Works & Highways, Hazen Drive, Concord NH 03301 (271-2291).
14. Suncook Village has an extraordinarily complete and varied collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century worker housing, which could be of great interest for scholars studying the history of the Industrial Revolution and its impact on America. It is also possible that professors would arrange for special research or student projects on Suncook topics, if invited to do so. A first step in the process would be to contact the history department of Merrimack Valley College (part of the University System of New Hampshire), Hackett Hill Road, Manchester, NH (668-0700).