

Heritage commission meeting 8/3/2023 minutes

Hooksett Library – 5pm

Tony Lacasse, Vicki Deschenes, L Madison, Sullivan, Duhaime

Town administrator Garron

Minutes of 7/28/23 Tabled- motion Jim S, second Vicki D – motion carried.

Invoices- discussion on approving purchase of Bench for Kathy Northrup- Invoice to be paid pending vote which will authorize Town to pay vendor- unclear when approve – next meeting will resolve issue.

Arpa funds - discussion on applying for funds to be used for old town hall include future plans, timetable, possible expansion of Prescott library museum – L Madison - see attached provided report- possible use for architecture cost- Andre Garron provided update on status of Old Town hall- old town hall committee to schedule meeting and will invite Heritage commission.

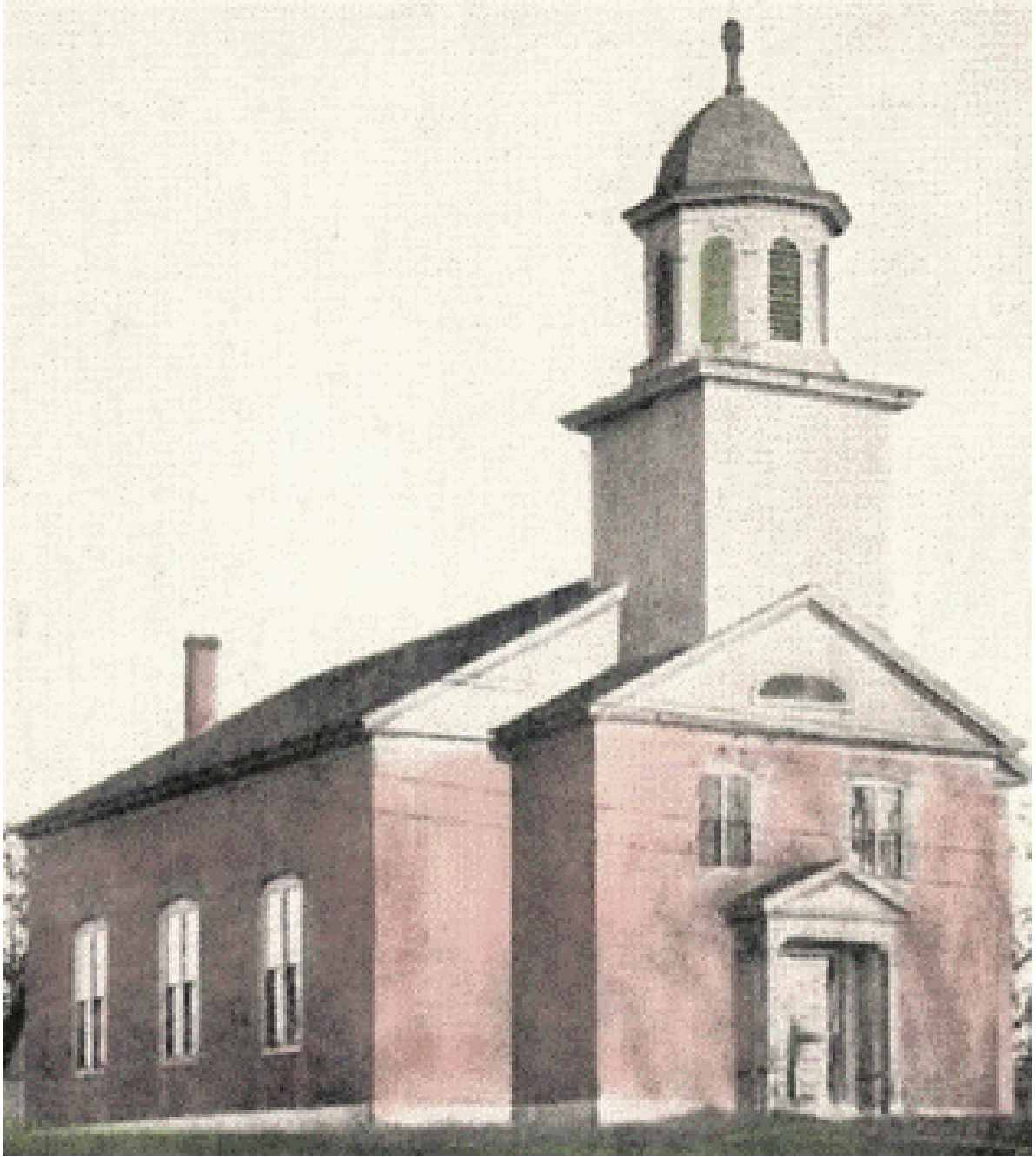
HC reviewed budget with TA - see attached - funds for general work, markers and use for light up village- extensive discussion on event, costs- lease vs purchase, source of funds- arpa funds, town budget or HC funds- A Garron provided current HC funds – Markers 6,844.86, head school 4,127.15 and general-39,445.42. Jeff from lighting company discuss options, cost, process and will submit details asap.

HC hopes to use Arpa funds and will submit to Arpa committee.

Vicki D provided update on history book project and book club with possible additional ideas.

Indicated Head school funds (marms) can be moved into HC accounts.

Jim S - Update on HHS plans with assistance from library- creating a research center with paper items at library and thus creating more space at Prescott.



Operation Revive the Village – ARPA Funds Request

Prepared by the Hooksett Heritage Commission

"If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree. " – Michael Crichton, Filmmaker

Who:

Town Hall Preservation Committee
Heritage Commission
ARPA Subcommittee
Town Council
Town Administration

What:

Kick off Operation Revive the Village with \$250,000 in ARPA funds

When:

Now. This project is on the CIP for 2026-2027. It has been labeled as needing research. In 3+ years the likelihood of urgent town projects being pushed above this project are high. We should be rededicating the buildings in 2026 - 2027, not starting the project then.

Where:

Old Town Hall/Prescott Library

Why:

The town has been asking for 20+ years (through professionally researched town charrettes and village studies) for more community space, easier access to history, and a revived village area. The long-term health of Hooksett depends on a strong downtown. Although small, we need this area to thrive. It's time to wake it up from its 15-year hibernation. The effects of a strong downtown will impact the town's economy by encouraging the filling of empty storefronts, retaining businesses in town, and protecting abutting lands from mismatched development.

How:

Hire consultants (structural engineer, architectural designer, etc.) to determine a good, better, best plan to calculate a budget. Use remaining \$250,000 from ARPA funds to start project according to the chosen plan. Locate other funds through state grants (the NH Div. of Historical Resources has mentioned three that are well-suited for this project), federal grants, and other town resources to complete the project.

In 2020, it was stated that it would take \$250,000 to get the building open for public use with a certificate of occupancy. What did this include? Contractor estimates put the completed project at \$600,000 to \$800,000. Also, what did this include? Can anything be trimmed or saved for another time? How has the increase of labor/materials changed the budget? We need to know a real number so we know where to start.

The Heritage Commission strives to develop a unique-to-Hooksett experience that brings today's community and yesterday's roots together in the heart of the village. Attempts over the years have been slow and eventually halted due to a lack of a framework and funding. We have developed a plan that we refer to as Operation Revive the Village.

This outline presents a clear path to get us from point A to point Z. The purpose of the plan is to provide the town with more access to history, additional meeting spaces, and bring life back to the village. A strong downtown in Hooksett is vital to the long-term strength of the community.

An essential part of Operation Revive the Village is completing the restoration project at Old Town Hall and Arah W. Prescott Library. **Initially, the Heritage Commission is seeking \$250,000 (or more if funds are available) in ARPA funds as part of the much-needed renovation projects as presented in the Operation Revive the Village plans.** These funds will deliver the energy needed to restart this stalled project.

We would like to coordinate restoration efforts with André Garron – Town Administrator, Leann McLaughlin - Project Coordinator, Dana Pendergast - Code Enforcement Officer, and James Sullivan – Council Rep. for the Town Hall Preservation Committee. This group has the most working knowledge of Old Town Hall and we feel a refreshed plan with more hands on deck can complete this renovation.

At the ARPA Subcommittee meeting on May 6, 2022, the Old Town Hall project was given a low priority and ranked 17th amongst other potential projects. We strongly believe the project at Old Town Hall should not be a low priority considering the lasting and expanded impacts of a renewed community space in the heart of Hooksett.

Originally, the ARPA Subcommittee placed a \$20,000 placeholder for the Old Town Hall project. If you take a look at the CIP for 2025 – 2030, you will see that the project cost is set at \$3,000,000. It is unclear as to where this number is coming from as previous estimates have it at \$300,000 to make it occupant-ready. Yes, there has been some shift in cost, but not tenfold. Inflating the project cost is sandbagging any momentum, regardless of the intention.

It is important to note, the Capital Improvement Plan Committee marked this item down as important, but needing research. Without research, it will never be approved for funding. And without funding, research for the true cost and needs will never be attained. It is time for this cycle to stop.

As you may be aware, the Old Town Hall building has sat empty since 2008. There have been some efforts to repair this building so that it could be used by the town. Additionally, the town artifacts held at Arah W. Prescott Library are infrequently seen by visitors and townspeople.

In 2019 a Warrant Article was put on the ballot to move \$200,000 from the unassigned funds for a partial renovation of Old Town Hall. Town Council voted unanimously to recommend the project. The Budget Committee did not recommend this and voted 4 yes, 5 no.

Town voters turned the project down as well. This does not mean they didn't want a revived community space. The Budget Committee was not given a clear view on the value that the town would receive for the funds. Townspeople weren't given clarity as well – simply saying, this will be a community center or meeting space was not enough to close the deal. A flexible space for multiple uses would add a great deal of value to Hooksett. Asking tax payers to fund a partial renovation without clear metrics for success is a highly unattractive proposal.

(1 Yes, 7 No), Not recommended by Budget Committee (2 Yes, 7 No).		NO <input type="radio"/>
		791
Article 6		634
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$250,000.00 to be added to the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Estimated tax rate impact is \$0.13. Recommended by Town Council (6 Yes, 0 No), Recommended by Budget Committee (5 Yes, 4 No).		YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>
		NO <input type="radio"/>
		341
Article 7		363
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000.00 for the purpose of a partial renovation of the Old Town Hall with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the renovations are completed or by June 30, 2025, whichever is sooner. No additional amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by Town Council (6 Yes, 0 No), Not recommended by Budget Committee (4 Yes, 5 No).		YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>
		NO <input type="radio"/>
		637
Article 8		635
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$180,000.00 to purchase a six wheel plow truck for the Department of Public Works. Estimated tax rate impact is \$0.09. Recommended by Town Council (8 Yes, 0 No), Recommended by Budget Committee (5 Yes, 4 No).		YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>
		NO <input type="radio"/>
		354
Article 9		650
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to be added to the Town Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Estimated tax rate impact is \$0.05. Recommended by Town Council (8 Yes, 0 No), Recommended by Budget Committee (7 Yes, 2 No).		YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>
		NO <input type="radio"/>

We would like to tie up loose ends on all fronts by providing you a plan for the building and a plan to fully fund the project.

Since 2004, at least three design studies have been completed by various professional agencies. We've had several wins along the way – Lilac Bridge, reusing the village school for the present Town Hall, and improvements to sports facilities. However, many of the town's desires from two decades ago still remain today – easy access to town history, additional community space, and a strong village center. Operation Revive the Village solely aims to address these three points.

Easy Access to Town History –

The Historical Society has a vast collection of town artifacts and are bursting at the seams in their current location. We believe the addition on the right side of Old Town Hall is the most suitable location to organize the artifacts and offer an additional space to inventory items not currently on display.

Once artifacts are moved from Prescott Library into Old Town Hall, we would like to return the Prescott Library to its intended use. This is the most sensible place to house historical books and maps for those wishing to read through the town's historical documents. Once the Prescott Library is freed of excess artifacts, we can foresee this as reception area/gift shop for local artisans and Heritage Commission souvenirs.

Additional Community Space –

The library, the ball fields, and the Lambert Park pavilion are our main town-owned spaces for the community to gather. For much of the year, the latter two aren't frequently used due to the weather.

The library is undeniably exceeding at its public offerings. But, take a look at what librarian Heather Rainer said in regard to renovating Old Town Hall for additional community space. This was at a meeting regarding the failed Warrant Article for \$200,000 in 2019 for the partial renovation of the building.

“As the library director, you can call it a want but there is a need in the community and the demand is great from the town.”

– Heather Rainer, Librarian

A Strong Village Center –

Townpeople have stated that they want their own senior space instead of relying on neighboring towns, access to history, local arts and culture, an enlivened downtown, and protection of the character of the village. All of these things can be accomplished by simply finishing Old Town Hall/Prescott Library and giving each inch a purpose.

When visitors have a reason to come to town and when citizens have a reason to spend more time in their hometown, more money will be spent here in Hooksett. This will in turn encourage more unique small businesses to fill up unused retail spaces, and before you know it, the strength of downtown trickles all the way down Hooksett Rd. and the adjacent roads. **All roads and all businesses lead to Old Town Hall.**

On this same note, a strong village center gives the Economic Development Committee more backing to help their mission of retaining existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract new businesses to Hooksett*. Providing a gathering space in Old Town Hall would be a great asset to the committee and their efforts. Imagine the deals that can be closed at a meeting in the beautiful Prescott Library!

Proposed Uses for Old Town Hall –

Senior Activities (have one or two “senior days” per week with rotating activities):

Yoga*

Chair Exercises*

Dental and Medical Clinics*

Card Games

Arts and Crafts

Gardening Outside*

Family Activities:

Cultural Exhibitions*

Family Yoga

Movie Nights

Super Bowl Party

Craft Shows*

Market Days*

Baking Competitions

Business Activities:

Local Business Expos*

SNHU Business Incubator Days

Small Business Saturdays*

Chamber of Commerce Events*

Small Business Classes*

Business-to-Business Peer Coaching*

Artisan Demonstrations*

Civic Groups:

Affordable Rental Space for Fundraisers and Volunteer Activities

Tourism:

Museum Space* (followed by a trip to historical Robie's, across Lilac Bridge, and over to Veteran's Park)

Public Education:

Field Trips to Learn History and Civics

Open Space for Guest Speakers

***Meets the requirements of ARPA funding.**

The Budget –

The truth is, we don't know an actual number. In 2019 and 2020, totals ranged from \$250,000 to \$800,000. What did these projections include? In today's prices, we're estimating between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. The true estimate will be determined based on the level of finishing. Can a conservative approach be considered a success or do we need top-of-the line finishes? Once we know a budget, it's imperative to see the project completed.

In 2022, MAKE Architects presented the town with an initial review to restart the project. Before any work can continue, we will spend ±\$16,109 to gather a complete plan as to what needs to be done in regards to the structural integrity, mechanical and plumbing, and electrical needs. We will also work to gather a cost estimate for the finishing elements (floors, bathroom finishes, kitchen finishes, lighting, etc.). If MAKE cannot provide this estimate, we will seek a general contractor who can coordinate these services.



June 17, 2022

PART I - Consultants			Fee/Task	Cost
Civil Engineering			NIC *	
Landscape Architecture			NIC *	
Structural Engineering			\$3,450	
Mechanical/Plumbing Engineering			\$4,945	
Electrical Engineering			\$2,070	
Lighting Design			NIC *	
Energy Modeling			\$2,645 *	
Cost Estimating			\$2,530 *	
				\$15,640
SUBTOTAL FEES				\$15,640
Reimbursables Estimate				\$469
TOTAL				\$16,109

At the completion of the Part I Services, the Architect will re-evaluate the Project Scope and reflect any changes in the fees estimated for Part II or III Services. These changes will then be presented to the Owner for review and approval.

The remaining ARPA funds would be used to complete structural work, update electrical/heating/cooling, plumbing, and on down the to-do list.

In 2022, Dana Prendergast, Code Enforcement Officer, gave a simple list* at the Town Hall Preservation Committee meeting of what he thinks should be done. Let's use this as a starting point.

1. Repair cracks and bricks outside of building.
2. Check the structure's foundation for stability. Replace support walls in the addition.
3. Complete framing and rough work. Add wiring for audio/visual system to be added after the project's completion.
4. Forced hot air is recommended so that air conditioning can be considered.
5. Install insulation and finishes.

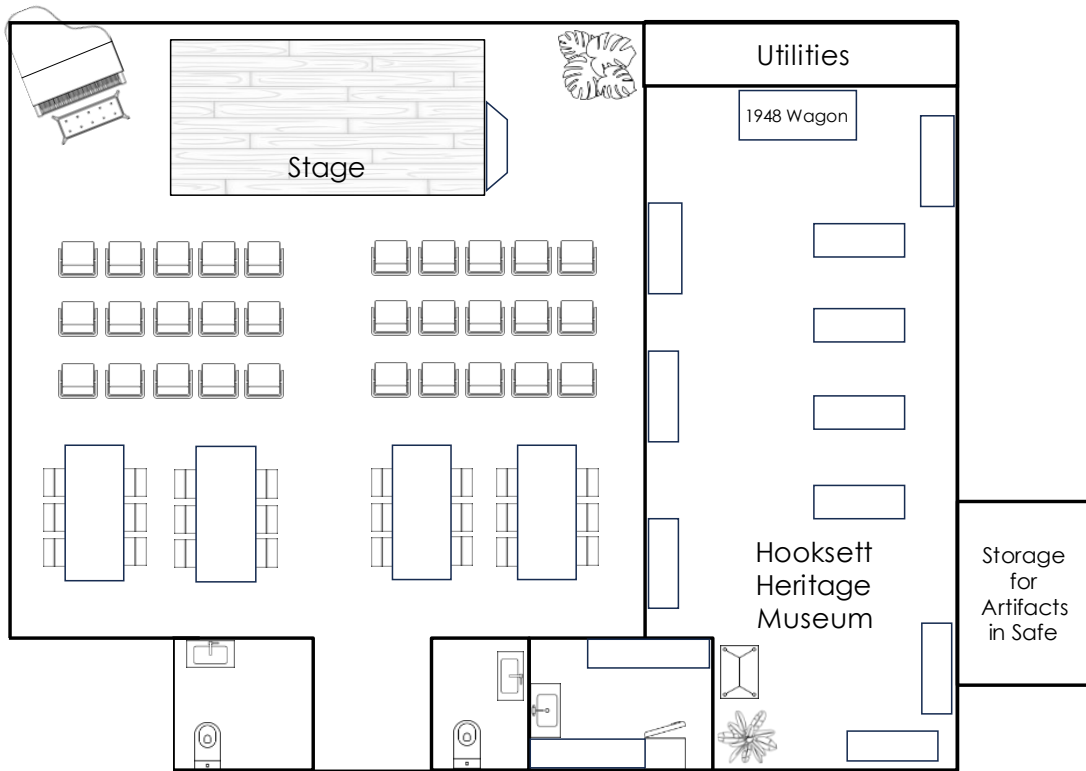
(*summarized)

Why does this qualify for ARPA funds?

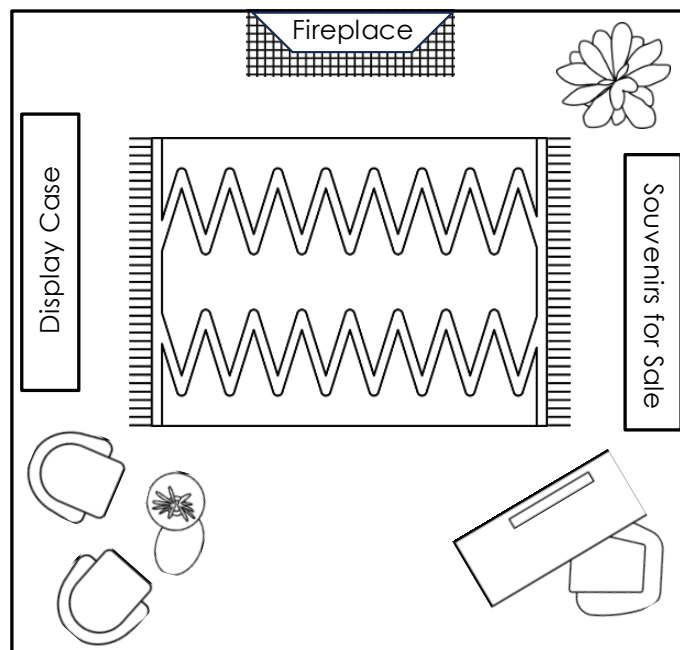
This project meets many of the desired outcomes – support small businesses, speeding the recovery of tourism and hospitality sectors, rebuild public sector capacity, serve the hardest-hit communities by addressing health disparities, and promote healthy childhood environments (as mentioned in the treasury.gov guidelines).

The following images are two crude illustrations of how we envision the layout of Old Town Hall/Prescott Library. They are simple, but demonstrate how the buildings can successfully be used for multiple functions. We will seek out a firm that can provide professional renderings with proper formatting/measurements. This was partially done in 2015 (of the meeting space only), and we will reach back out to the same company first, if possible.

Old Town Hall @ Hooksett Heritage Center



Prescott Library @ Hooksett Heritage Center



9 Steps to a Successful Village Revival

1. Determine the future use of Old Town Hall/Prescott Library. All interested parties must get on the same page in order to move forward. Joint meeting on August 28, 2023 to iron out the plan.
- 2. Secure ARPA funds to pay for consultants and project estimates.**
3. Clean up Prescott Library.
 - a. Move books and ephemera to the Hooksett Public Library from Prescott Library.
 - b. Dry clean curtains.
 - c. Ask DPW to paint the ceiling.
 - d. Move excess artifacts to the safe in Old Town Hall.
 - e. Make ready for a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus for Light Up the Village.
4. Secure a plan for all parties to follow through the project's completion.
 - a. Hire MAKE Architects to provide required structural, electric, and plumbing plans. Or choose to hire individual contractors for specific quotes as needed.
 - b. Use Dana Prendergast's outline to guide the project.
 - c. Determine a good, better, best itemized budget for completion. Is good, good enough for the town's needs?
 - d. Consult a general contractor to oversee the project and provide quotes for finishing elements – lighting, bathroom fixtures, flooring, exterior doors for both buildings, etc.
 - e. Approve project goals/timeline with Town Administrator/Planner/Town Hall Preservation Committee/Heritage Commission.
 - f. Meet with Town Council/Budget Committee/Capital Improvement Plan Committee to locate additional funding to complete the project.
 - g. Apply for grants as needed.
5. Interim Activities –
 - a. Invite Santa for pictures at Prescott Library for Light Up the Village.
 - b. "Tour the Town" events to show the taxpayers the active efforts being made at Hooksett Heritage Center.
 - c. Create an official Heritage Park Walking Tour with signage and printed maps.
 - d. Encourage the Historical Society to open the Prescott Library more frequently for guests. Purchase an open sign/sandwich board.
 - e. Use Facebook/Instagram/The Hooksett Bridge for public awareness.

6. Restoration phase of Old Town Hall and Arah W. Prescott Library.
 - a. Show proof of life emerging in the village. The historic buildings are no longer static symbols of the past, but rather opportunities for community growth for the present.
 - b. The planning and zoning boards will begin to see the importance of protecting the character of surrounding lands/buildings.
 - c. The economic development committee will be able to point to a strong town center as a reason for unique businesses to come to town and fill empty storefronts.
7. Bring life to the Village!
 - a. Old Town Hall grand re-opening and renaming celebration.
 - b. Hooksett Historical Society Museum grand opening.
 - c. Arah W. Prescott Library grand re-opening.
8. Vitality in the Village is once again restored.
 - a. Town employee functions, market days, galas, art shows, recitals, and business events/presentations can be held in Old Town Hall.
 - b. Reception area and gift shop (heritage items/local artisans) in Prescott Library.
 - c. Hooksett's senior citizens have dedicated days for structured activities that fit their unique needs.
 - d. Civic organizations have an additional place to have meetings and functions.
 - e. Rental fees can help fund future maintenance costs and upgrades on historic buildings and preservation efforts in the village.
 - f. Light Up the Village becomes a cornerstone of the community in the village year after year.
 - g. Robie's and the American Legion are an integral part of the community. More visitors to the village will strengthen longevity for these organizations.
 - h. Annual open house events showcase all functioning historic buildings in town.
 - i. Open the museum for visitors at least weekly.
 - j. The community's roots are growing deeper and a sense of shared history emerges.
 - k. Protective zoning for commercial/residential growth now makes sense as the village has its character and heartbeat back!
9. Map out the needs for digital public education.
 - a. Hire a web designer to develop one merged website to present a professionally produced website for the Hooksett Heritage Center. Use information that has already been created, but reformat it so it is well organized and simple to sort through for web visitors.
 - b. Create a separate and easy-to-navigate page to keep the public informed about events in the village, much like the public library.

The Hooksett Heritage Commission thanks you for considering our request for ARPA funds and for reviewing the plans for Operation Revive the Village.

Best regards,

Hooksett Heritage Commission

Enclosed: Additional support material from various articles.

Why Rebuild Downtown First?

Downtowns are iconic and powerful symbols for a city and often contain the most iconic landmarks, distinctive features, and unique neighborhoods. Given that most downtowns were one of the oldest neighborhoods citywide, they offer rare insights into their city's past, present and future.

Revitalization of downtowns and central city neighborhoods can be challenging at best. They can be gritty, cranky, often struggling, and contentious — but are always exciting. They are also often the hotbeds of business creativity, neighborhood activism, non-profit entrepreneurs, economic diversity, and an attraction for visitors, seniors, and young talent.



Memphis' Main Street Mall has been reinvented through several major public investments that turned the once failing street into a pedestrian mall, then into a transit and pedestrian mall.

adaptive re-use of the historic Central Train Station were public investments that have been a catalyst for the redevelopment of this South Main Arts District in Memphis.

A city's downtown area has an important and unique role in economic and social development. Downtowns create a critical mass of activities where commercial, cultural, and civic activities are concentrated. This concentration facilitates business, learning, and cultural exchange.

Although much work has yet to be done, today many downtown and main street neighborhoods are some of the most productive neighborhoods.

But what is meant by the term productivity of a neighborhood, and how is it measured?

Until recently there has been a lack of good downtown-specific information in most cities, which is sometimes why it is hard to make the economic case for investment in downtown.

Source: Planners Web, 2013

JUNE 4, 2019

Why a strong downtown is good for a city's business community



1. A strong downtown makes your city somewhere people want to live.

"I've had the opportunity to work in an urban environment for nearly two decades. A strong urban core helps the entire community thrive," says **Tim Curoe, CEO of R.D. Offutt Company**, which is moving its offices into [Block 9](#) in the heart of downtown Fargo in 2020. "I see Fargo in that same way. The downtown has once again become a vibrant center for business, entertainment, and social activities, and people are moving there because of that."

2. A strong downtown provides culture and lifestyle choices that retain people.

"Downtowns are the soul of a community," says **David Brown, President of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce**. In March, Brown visited Fargo-Moorhead as part of a speaker series from The Arts Partnership about actively supporting the arts in our communities and in our businesses. "If your downtown is dying, you can see the rest of your community probably is too. I've never seen a dying downtown that has a vibrant economy and is a vibrant place that people want to live. There's an economic reason to do all this, but a lot of it is about keeping people. They want diversity in their choices in where and how to live, urban, suburban, core neighborhoods... We need to be able to provide all those choices if we want to compete for the kind of talent we need."

3. A strong downtown is your city's gathering place and where we go to support each other.

"A strong contingent of businesses on any city or town's main street is absolutely a key part of a healthy and vibrant community. In most small towns, main street is where connections are made," says **Jim Murphy, Executive Director of the Traill County Economic Development Commission** based in Hillsboro, North Dakota (population 1,600). "The owners and operators of the Main Street businesses will, no doubt, be the ones asked to help sell raffle tickets for the volunteer fire department's fundraiser or asked to put a poster up in the window with the 4-H Achievement Days dates for all to see. In many ways, the local hardware store is the center for information dissemination as people stop to chat with the owners (who are often running the store) or each other as they pass each other in the aisle."

Source: Kilborne Group, 2019