

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 11, 2019
TO: Neighbors of the Old South Meeting Church, Historical Commission Members
FROM: Jeffrey D. Nutting, Town Administrator
Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator
RE: Discussion about the future of the Old Meeting House on Washington Street

As you are well aware the Meeting House at 762 Washington Street has been vacant for a long time. The Town Council will have a discussion on the potential future use of the property at their meeting on April 24, 2019. We would very much like to hear from you on this matter. The intent of the meeting is to listen to ideas, suggestions and concerns prior to the Town Council considering any future action on the matter.

Prior to the meeting the church will be open for viewing 5:00-6:15 PM on April 24, 2019. The meeting to discuss the matter will be held immediately after at 7:10 pm in the Town Council Chambers.

The town did have an architect review the building in 2015 and estimated at the time the cost for the Town (subject to all public bid laws) to bring the building into compliance with all building, wiring, plumbing, handicap accessibility etc. codes would be about \$500,000. Since then building construction prices have risen so the cost will be higher. The full report can be found at https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/franklinma/files/uploads/old_south_meeting_house_on_washington_street_1.pdf

Past discussions with the Historical Commission and others did not lead to any practical suggested reuse given the cost to renovate the building, limited parking, site lines looking west on Washington Street and the limited use the building has had over the years relative to peace and quiet of the neighbors.

The building does not meet current zoning requirements for residential or commercial use. The current zoning is RRI that requires 200 feet of frontage and 40,000 square feet of land. The only allowed use without a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals would be for religious or educational use.

The Town did construct a water booster station in the rear of the property (funds provided from the developer of Oak Hill Condo's) and will maintain the station no matter what decision is made about the future of the Church.

We would appreciate your attendance and comments. Please pass this information along to others that may be interested in the matter. I am happy to answer any questions you may have prior to the meeting.

Cc Town Council
Historical Commission

