

Agenda – Lower Village Committee - Monday October 3, 2016 – 8:00 AM

Upstairs at Washington Hose – Port Road

- 1) Call meeting to order.
- 2) Approve minutes of September 12, 2016 – to be emailed prior to the meeting
- 3) Discussion and vote on Tree Stump Carving Funding Proposal
- 4) Updates
 - a) Sgt. Belisle
 - b) L Dolce on Chamber events & tourist traffic
- 5) Smith and Foley on meeting with Town Hall Staff on infrastructure planning, totem poles, benches, design standards, etc.
- 6) Other comments, projects, etc. All present invited to contribute.
- 7) Adjourn

September 22, 2016

Ms. Betsy Smith
Chairperson Lower Village Committee

RE: Request for appropriation from Lower Village Committee
Fund Balance for Matching Funds
Tree Stump Carving at 13 Western Avenue

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am the owner of "River Quay", the property at 13 Western Avenue, in Kennebunk, ME; I have owned this property for more than fifteen years. After several years of consulting with a local arborist, it was his advice that we finally take down a large tree in front of our building. The top half of the tree was rotting, and it presented a clear and present danger to pedestrians.

As we considered the removal of this tree, it occurred to me that we may have an excellent opportunity to preserve the base, and if it proved to be in good condition, we might be able to find a sculptor who could turn it into a piece of art that would be an attraction to tourists. We were pleased to find that, indeed, the base of the tree is strong and solid, and that the rot was confined to the upper half of the tree. We immediately took precautions to preserve this piece of wood, until we could secure the right artist to bring it to life. On the advice of a number of sculptors with whom I consulted, we treated the exposed wood with bleach, and used Borax at the base, both of which help to prevent insect manifestation.

For the past six months, I have had numerous conversations with many artists and sculptors who work with this medium. I have discussed design, costs, scheduling, liability, and other aspects of this project. Without success, I presented to them the idea that they might consider doing this without charge, using it as a showcase for their work. Ultimately, I was to learn that the overriding issue would be cost. While I felt that this would be a fabulous addition to Lower Village, I am a businessman with a family to support, and, naturally, the numbers have to make sense. After receiving estimates from several artists, I realized that I could simply not rationalize the expense of creating this sculpture, and resolved, instead, to remove the base of the tree. That's when Mr. Greg Burke contacted me and suggested that there may be an opportunity for me to make a formal request to the Lower Village Committee to request your assistance with funding for this project.

The price quotes I received from the several artists I considered ranged from approximately \$2000 (for a rough-hewn bear) to \$15,000 (for a finely detailed Kennebec Indian with an eagle). Finally, I found the perfect artist in Michael Blaine, at Dreamwood Sculptors in White Haven, PA. Mr. Blaine is originally from Portsmouth, NH, where most of his family still resides. Mr. Blaine "gets" what we're trying to do, and has offered us a very low price that takes into account the fact that he realizes that this is an excellent opportunity for him to showcase his work. He

also loves the overall character and shape of this tree base, and is eager to have his way with it. But more importantly, his work is in a different league than the others we've seen. It is interesting, more refined, and illustrates a depth of vision and artistry that the others cannot match.

It is important, I think, that we avoid the cliché designs--i.e. bears, dolphins, lobsters--and focus, instead, on a design that would, perhaps, become a feature of Lower Village, and bring in tourists whose visit would not be complete unless they had a photograph of themselves with our sculpture. After some conversations with Mr. Greg Burke, I made some suggestions to Mr. Blaine about a variety of subjects that might lend themselves to this particular piece of wood. Mr. Blaine expressed great enthusiasm for a large seat built into a Maine lighthouse. There will be a relief above the seat, perhaps a striped bass, eagle, or a seagull, though Mr. Blaine hesitates to commit to what might be the best choice, as it may be dependent upon the nature, grain and character of the wood, itself

With all of this in mind, I respectfully request that the Lower Village Committee contribute to the funding of this landmark. I propose that a contribution by the Lower Village Committee, of 50% of the costs of creating this sculpture, plus three nights' lodging for Mr. Blaine, will allow us to move ahead with this project.

Carver: Mr. Michael Blaine
Dreamwood Chain Saw
www.dreamwoodchainsaw.com.
Cell: (603) 438-4307
E: DreamWood@live.com
Address: P.O. Box 361 White Haven, PA 18661

Costs: Mr. Blaine has made it clear that the normal cost for the piece we are proposing would be anywhere from \$5000 to \$10,000. However, Mr. Blaine has agreed to complete this work for the price of \$3000, as long as we can provide him with local lodging for the four days and three nights he plans to be on site.

Timeline: Mr. Blaine believes he will need three days to complete this work. The only availability he has for the foreseeable future is Oct 20 - 23, 2016. Mr. Burke and I discussed the potential impact of weather upon this project. Mr. Blaine has assured me that unless we are in the midst of a severe storm, the work can continue. He utilizes a system of tarps and blocks to afford him shelter while he sculpts.

Insurance: Mr. Blaine is fully insured.

Maintenance: Leonard Prime Properties is pleased to be able to follow Mr. Blaine's instructions on caring for this landmark sculpture. It involves sealing the wood when required, and occasionally spreading borax onto the immediate ground area surrounding the base. Additionally, it is our intent to provide lighting so that the tree will be visible into the evening shopping hours.

Lifespan: Mr. Blaine has assured us that with the maintenance outlined above, there is no reason why this sculpture should not last for twenty five years, or more.

Design: I am not an artist. Mr. Blaine does not work from drawings. However, to frame our discussions, I provided Mr. Blaine with the attached sketch that he will use as a guideline. Mr. Blaine suggested that the seat itself might be framed by something that appears to be the door of the lighthouse. The relief design of a fish, bird, eagle or seagull (or whatever the artist "sees" in the wood) will "fly" across the lighthouse, above the seat, and most likely continue around the back of the sculpture. There will be a cap, of some sort, protecting the "end grain", to help preserve the wood.

I hope that this letter addresses all of the questions and concerns that might arise as you consider my request. If there is anything else you need, please do not hesitate to contact me on my cell phone, at 212.289.0087.

Respectfully,

David Leonard
Director

cc: Mr. Greg Burke, via email