

MEETING WITH JOHN JOHNSON at the CHS 5 FEBRUARY 2018

1. **Attendance:** Carolyn Small, Linda Fulda, Margie Gruber, John Johnson

2. **John Bio:** Margie “discovered” John through the OLLI program (Senior College) at USM. John is an independent museum professional with 45 year career in Cultural Resource Management; working in historical museums, industrial archeology, and historic preservation. He agreed to review the CHS collection and provide comment gratis.

3. **Building History.** Carolyn and Linda provided background history of the building.

4. **Discussion:** Why is the Museum moving?

*CHS will be able to be open more hours at the library and there is a need for more parking. Library already has a strong force of volunteers that could help keep the museum open longer for more exposure.

*Discussed the pros/cons of moving the building to the library...just adding an addition to the library for storage and admin and keeping the Museum where it is...the desire of the Sevee & Maher Engineers (next door) to have the space for additional parking... the possibility SME moving and the town/Society acquiring their building for the Society. John suggested that there are local and national organizations that keep historical buildings in their current location their mission and could provide support. The **result** of the discussion was to focus on making immediate short-term physical changes at the building, so that the CHS could improve their standing both Cumberland citizens and the Town. This would provide leverage when/if there is discussion on the long-term solution.

5. **Discussed storage:** Need Climate controlled storage. John felt approximately 60% of what the CHS currently displays should be in storage. Discussed deaccession and the need to take some of the big items out of the building first to provide room and walking space.

6. **Defining themes:**

* John said to tell the story in a small space, the CHS should identify major themes; pick the top 3, then store everything else in climate controlled storage. For example, if CHS chooses the school story as the first story to tell in a

“loosened up space”, it will demonstrate the CHS has their act together, is moving forward, and shows good intent to the Town for their further support. It is NOT possible to tell the full story of everything in a small space.

- * Possible themes: Agriculture; Maritime; Household; Schools; Bicentennial.
- * There was consensus that the school story would be a good one to make #1 because the school’s 150 Anniversary is coming (or is here... not sure?) and that the CHS could tell the story of the first 100 years of the school story in Cumberland. Story could be told referencing the district schools (the Girl Scout Project), the Storyboards (from the N.Y. historical society), the current superintendent’s building, notable alumni, text, graphics, and photos, along with what is in the current collection in the museum.

7. **Deaccession:** CHS should review if the item is loaned or is a gift. When assessing nothing should be taken in as a loan and nothing should be taken with restrictions. When deaccessioning, there are options: give to another society; publicly auction; trade with another Society; sell on Ebay/Craig list. Need to communicate with other societies and be aggressive. Scrapbooks may be interesting, but aren’t worth keeping if there are no dates on the material or no reference to where the material came from (ie.newspaper, magazine, etc)

Action: Review the current form CHS is using when “gifts” are given, so that it’s clear to the giver what the Society has a right to do with their gift.

8. **Action to Improve credibility:**

- * Identify and list the Society’s Top 10 accomplishments over the past year and get on the agenda of the Town Council and report progress (including reducing the physical inventory of the Museum and doing a reset).
- * Go forward with strategic planning... the sooner the better. Invite the Town Manager to participate.
- * Procure temporary storage and start moving inventory to free up space. Make sure a deadline is set. “Googled” at meeting and found climate controlled space in West Falmouth (see attached). Use skirting to cover lower part of display cases. Use display cases to exhibit items you don’t want to walk away.

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