

TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF SANDWICH
OCT 12 2021
12H 20M P M
RECEIVED & RECORDED
T

Sandwich Visitor's Services Board Meeting

DATE: September 28, 2021
LOCATION: Sandwich Chamber of Commerce

In Attendance:

VSB Attendees: Heidi Trottier, Kathy Aubin, Daryl Crossman, Carol Hanson

Absent: Bev Comeau

Meeting called to order @ 7:33 AM by Heidi Trottier

Minutes of the August 14, 2021, meeting:

Motion to approve by Heidi Trottier; 2nd by Daryl Crossman. Approved unanimously.

Funding Request(s):

1) Town of Sandwich, \$40,000 for gazebo rebuild/installation

Following up on an approved motion to defer the vote for further info/site visit, the Committee met again to review this request. Committee members discussed usage, accessibility, public improvement, maintenance of the structure and whether it meets the VSB Mission Statement.

The committee unanimously denied the request for the funds for the structure of a new gazebo for these reasons.

1. Lack of use. Our research shows that the Town Band uses the structure 7 times a year for concerts. The only other organization has been the Sandwich Arts Alliance in 2019. They used it for a "Woodstock" Concert which at that time was difficult for them to get approval from a town department to use the structure. At this point we cannot confirm that there is still a town band. There is no website, social media or news articles stating the town band is going to continue.
2. Accessibility. The current structure sits in a gully surrounded by ball fields, a snack bar and graveled path. At our visit to the site our feet were wet from the marshy grass area surrounding the bandstand. In 2019 one of the last Facebook posts stated there were concerns of EEE due to the attractions of mosquitos from the standing water around the structure. We also noticed the land is uneven and has a slope to it and observed the difficulties this would cause people to sit without leaning over in their chairs and getting back up on their feet. Little League season starts in early spring through the fall leaving hardly any dates or times for the bandstand to be used by any other organizations. The proximity of the existing structure is in the middle of foot traffic from the ball fields; kids using the structure as a playground; and the lack of handicapped parking near the bandstands. All these issues cause concern to our residents and tourists to enjoy the bandstand in its current location.
3. Maintenance of the structure. As was mentioned during the presentation for funding, the old structure was not maintained, and the town was getting receipts for small repairs that a town band member was doing to the structure. Like all our town structures, repairs are an ongoing necessity, and many repairs fall by the wayside. Without really knowing who is responsible for the repairs of the



structure because it is on school property which the town owns, it leaves it up in the air as to who is responsible for the structure. The committee feels the maintenance was ignored for the old bandstand, and the new structure in a gully of water would have the same rot issues as the old bandstand. Over time without maintenance, the structure will end up in the same condition.

4. Funds. Over the past several years the VSB has received 25% of the state collected room tax. With these funds we allocated approximately \$12,000 to the Sandwich Chamber, \$10,000 to the Canal Chamber, and the rest to organizations that receive no funds at all from the town's budget. Without the VSB funds, many of these organizations would not have survived. The VSB has given funds to resurrect town signs on historic homes and monuments in town, a Girl Scout troop that built (2) handicapped-accessible gardens at the Community Garden, the Island Beautification signs that Kaethe McGuirre single-handedly pours her heart and soul into; the Sandwich Little League Association that fundraises and asks for in-kind donations from every town business so the kids in town can play sports. Because of the cost of new lights, field improvements, water irrigation system and new fencing, we have helped fund these improvements the last 3 years; otherwise, they would have gone without. The list goes on to what the VSB funds have done to help improve the beautification and recreational activities for our community. Both Chambers enhance our community and tourism with clean and beautiful welcome centers. Both Chambers needed our funds more than ever during the pandemic to get the word out that our community and our chamber members were here and that we remained vigilant during the pandemic. The Committee feels that because the Town already receives 50% of the total room tax from the state and then another 25% from the remaining 50% that is divided with the VSB, the town has adequate funds already allotted from the room tax to provide construction of a new bandstand from these general funds. The VSB funds are designated to other town organizations that need our help to improve the quality of our town residents as well as public improvements and tourism-related purposes. Everyone on our committee is very proud that we have this opportunity to take these appropriated funds from the rooms tax revenue and help organizations thrive in Sandwich. Without these organizations many of the projects in the town would go by the wayside. With all this being said, we understand the bandstand has been a longstanding structure and that, back in its heyday, it was a gathering place for folks in town. The VSB committee would like to suggest that the bandstand find a new home that is more accessible and user friendly to other town organizations and to its residents. If the gazebo structure was placed possibly at the old basketball court area on Morse Road, then maybe it would give new life to the use of the bandstand where more concerts and artists could perform and entertain our residents and tourists alike. Access for the handicapped parking is closer to the bandstand in that location. The maintenance would be less knowing you are not sitting in a bowl of water. And with the new tax on our Air B&B's, the town may see a steady increase of funds to pay for the gazebo.

Motion to deny the request: Carol Hanson; 2nd by Daryl Crossman. Unanimously denied.

Motion to adjourn: Kathy Aubin; 2nd by Heidi Trottier

Meeting adjourned 8:22 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Kathy Aubin, Secretary

