

VIRTUAL MEETING

**Call to Order:**

The virtual meeting of the Town Seal Review Committee was called to order by Karen Van Welden-Herman at 5:02 p.m. on February 1, 2024.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – Present, Elaine Clements – Present, Andrew Flanagan – Present, John Hess – Present, Melissa Litton – Present, Austin Simko – Present, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Present.

Also present were Director of Communications Phil Geoffroy and Legal Administrator Kathryn Forina.

**Review of Community Forum and Public Feedback Received:**

Ms. Van Welden-Herman reviewed the Community Forum that was held on January 10<sup>th</sup>. The Community Forum presented the two design options of Old Town Hall and a Pine Tree to the community. She noted that she found the feedback on the design options to be thoughtful, and that attendees were articulate on their reasons for liking or not liking each design.

Mr. Hess added that the Committee has received a lot of emails with feedback. People seem split on which design they prefer. He added that people have noted Ms. Clements’s comments have been helpful in their understanding of the history of the seal. Ms. Clements offered that it is important for the Committee be thoughtful in explaining the different elements of the design.

Mr. Simko stated that he appreciated all the comments received and agreed that the seal design preference is split. The sentiment in favor of both is thoughtful with people understand why the Town seal should be changed.

**Discussion and Vote on the Two Design Alternatives**

Ms. Van Welden-Herman asked Ms. Forina to review the feedback received by email. Ms. Forina noted that the feedback received by email is also almost evenly split. Combining feedback received at both the forum and by email, twenty-one people are in favor of moving forward with the Old Town Hall Design and eighteen people would like the pine tree design to be brought to Town Meeting.

Mr. Flanagan informed the Committee that that based on the feedback the Committee began to receive, he asked Mr. Geoffroy to work with the designer to produce an “Option C” that blends both designs. Mr. Geoffroy showed this option which takes the Old Town Hall design and places a number of pine trees in the background.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman stated that the trees make this design feel more grounded than the Old Town Hall design.

Mr. Flanagan noted that when he first saw this design, he was concerned that it looked like Old Town Hall was in the woods. However, he began to think about the seal telling a story, and this design is representative of periods of time in Andover’s history. He feels it is a good option.

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Mr. Adams stated that the design appeared very busy to him. He felt that the lines around the date of 1646 looked like steps and questioned if the lines were meant to be water. He felt that it did not have the emotional appeal that the pine tree evoked.

Ms. Clements stated that the trees in this design do not say anything to her. She still gravitates to the pine tree design.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman noted that the audience gave the Committee the idea for a blended option at the forum. They noted that there seemed to be something missing from the Old Town Hall design that could bring in the natural element that so many people spoke so passionately about. The pine tree option represents nature which is a big part of the community with its Conservation and AVIS land. This blended option tells the town's full history.

Mr. Simko stated that all the designs are all appealing to him. In reading the comments he felt that having Old Town Hall on the seal would be most appropriate. It is at the center of the community, it is an identifiable building, and it is tied to the town's history. The pine tree ties to the town's natural and Native America history. However, in his opinion, the pine tree could be anywhere, and he noted that people could question how the white pine is specific to Andover. He added that the elm tree is more commonly associated with Andover. The blended option takes Old Town Hall and ties in the trees in a way that pine tree option does not. This blended option satisfies the constituencies.

Ms. Litton stated that it made sense to her to blend both options and be responsive to the public input.

Mr. Hess stated that a lot of people wanted to recognize the natural environment, but it may take too much to explain the significance of the single pine tree to our history and to the Native here before us. He added that he worries that the blended version may be a little too busy. His dilemma all along has been if the seal should represent the natural environment or if it should be something that is very indicative of Andover. Maybe blending it is what the Committee needs to do with the realization that you do not see the depiction to be a photograph.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman voiced regret that that the Old Town Hall design loses connection to the water which was an important discussion at the forum. Andover means "water place" and Cochichawick means "place of the rapids. She felt integrating the water is important and it is not reflected in the Old Town Hall design. However, incorporating it would be too many elements.

Ms. Clements stated that she agreed with Ms. Van Welden-Herman. She noted that at first, she was leaning towards Old Town Hall. At the forum, a speaker noted that the tree and water represent growth and change and that is what we want the town to be, growing and changing.

Mr. Flanagan stated that comment about the water stuck with him as well. He added that people will have individual interpretations of the seal. The question is which design is most representative of the town of Andover. He noted that the graphic designer took a pass at colors, which may help the Committee with their decision.

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Mr. Geoffroy showed each design and their corresponding color schemes.

Mr. Hess stated that people at the forum did not know that there was a river in the design with the pine tree. He felt that if the Committee chooses that option, they will have to make that more apparent. He added that the brick on Old Town Hall seems dark in the color version.

Ms. Litton stated that she appreciated that the designer used the blue and gold color scheme. She added that she is starting to lean towards the hybrid version of the design and the story it tells. She asked if the design is scaleable. Mr. Geoffroy stated that it is scaleable. He has done trials on the design and the designer is aware of the different applications that the design will need to transfer to.

Hr. Hess stated that on the color version of pine tree design, the pine trees seem black and white, he does not see any green, and the water does not look blue. Mr. Geoffroy stated that those items can be addressed.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman stated that she is concerned about the fact that the public has not yet seen the blended version. Mr. Flanagan offered that he thinks people will be very happy that the Committee was respectful of the public input it received. The final design option will need to be chosen by the Committee in time to appear in the Finance Committee Book.

Ms. Clements noted that if the Committee puts all three options out for the public to choose from, they may end up with each design getting one-third of the vote. Ms. Van Welden-Herman asked what the timeline is leading up to Town Meeting. Mr. Flanagan stated that the warrant article would need to go before the Select Board for their recommendation on either February 26<sup>th</sup> or March 4<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Van Welden-Herman noted that the Committee will still need to do public outreach on the design. Mr. Flanagan stated that there will be a month between when design is due to be printed in the Finance Committee Book and Town Meeting for there to be further public education.

Mr. Simko asked if they should be requesting feedback now by email, or if the Committee should have another community meeting before the meeting with the Select Board. Mr. Hess questioned if the Committee should be waiting to see if the Select Board has changes to design. Ms. Litton questioned if it was within the purview of the Select Board to request changes to the design chosen by the Committee. Mr. Flanagan stated that he thinks the Select Board will be respectful of the Committee's process. The Committee can be put on the Select Board's February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting and if there is a real reaction, it will give the Committee more time.

Mr. Flanagan recommended that the Committee vote tonight authorizing Ms. Van Welden-Herman to work with Mr. Geoffroy and the designer to fine tune the colors.

The Committee discussed which design option they want to move forward to Town Meeting. Mr. Simko stated that he is comfortable with Option C, the blended option. Ms. Clements stated that she preferred Option B the pine tree. Mr. Flanagan noted that this process has taken a number of years and has always been split 50/50, so his vote would be for the blended option.

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On a motion by Mr. Simko seconded by Mr. Hess the Committee recommended approval of Option C.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – No, Elaine Clements – No, Andrew Flanagan – Yes, John Hess – Yes, Melissa Litton – Yes, Austin Simko – Yes, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Yes.  
Motion Passes (5-2).

On a motion by Mr. Hess seconded by Mr. Simko the Committee approved for Ms. Van Welden-Herman to work with Mr. Geoffroy and the designer to tweak the colors a little bit before making it public.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – Yes, Elaine Clements – Yes, Andrew Flanagan – Yes, John Hess – Yes, Melissa Litton – Yes, Austin Simko – Yes, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Yes.  
Motion Passes Unanimously (7-0).

On a motion by Mr. Flanagan seconded by Ms. Clements the Committee voted to support any of the final designs as an acceptable preferred alternative to the existing seal for the community's consideration.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – Yes, Elaine Clements – Yes, Andrew Flanagan – Yes, John Hess – Yes, Melissa Litton – Yes, Austin Simko – Yes, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Yes.  
Motion Passes Unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Hess noted that people have asked about the cost associated with changing the seal. He asked if this information will be available for Town Meeting. Mr. Flanagan stated that a rough estimate has been done and it is not a large cost. There are decals on the vehicles and as vehicles are phased out the decal will be replaced. The Town does not really stock letterhead anymore, electronic letterhead is used. There is currently a freeze on ordering business cards in anticipation of a change, and business cards are printed in-house. The total cost is under \$5,000.

Ms. Litton asked if there is an answer to questions about things like the mosaic in Old Town Hall and the mural in the Select Board room. Mr. Flanagan stated that there will be slides addressing those questions for Town Meeting. He added that there will be a Town Seal Room in the Town Offices in the renovated 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor. Mr. Simko added that historic fixtures in town will stay.

**Meeting Minutes:**

On a motion by Mr. Hess seconded by Ms. Clements the Committee approved the meeting minutes of November 16, 2023, and December 19, 2023.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – Yes, Elaine Clements – Yes, Andrew Flanagan – Yes, John Hess – Yes, Melissa Litton – Yes, Austin Simko – Yes, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Yes.  
Motion Passes Unanimously (7-0).

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**Adjournment:**

On a motion by Mr. Simko seconded by Mr. Hess the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Roll Call: Tom Adams – Yes, Elaine Clements – Yes, Andrew Flanagan – Yes, John Hess – Yes, Melissa Litton – Yes, Austin Simko – Yes, Karen Van Welden-Herman – Yes.

Motion Passes Unanimously (7-0).

Documents: Town of Andover Seal Concepts Comparison Presentation  
Draft Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2023  
Draft Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2023