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## MEMORANDUM

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Date: July 24, 2023

To: Southborough Select Board & Capital Planning Committee

From: John Parent, Director of Facilities

Re: Change Order - Slate Roofing on Town House

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Dear Chairmen Dennington and Malinowski:

As requested, I am writing to provide my recommendation regarding the replacement of the current asphalt roof shingles on the Southborough Town House with a historically accurate slate roofing product. Based upon the following information, I wholeheartedly agree with the CPC's July 11, 2023, unanimous vote in support of this change.

At the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, the CPC sponsored Article 20 passed and resulted in the appropriation of \$2,238,284.00 for historic restoration work on the Southborough Town House. To date, \$1,651,452.56 of these funds have been either expended or earmarked. Proceeding with the installation of a slate roof would cost an additional \$229,642.70, thus leaving \$357,188.74 available in the budget. As we do not anticipate any additional major change order items, I believe that we should still be able turn back more than \$251,340.00 at the completion of this project, which was the estimated contingency fee.

It is difficult to compare an asphalt roofing product to a slate roofing product on this project, as there is simply no comparison in terms of durability or historic accuracy. A slate roofing system is simply vastly superior to that of an asphalt shingle system. An asphalt shingle roof can be expected to realistically last about 30 years before it starts breaking down. When this begins to occur, granules from the product begin coming off and end up in the gutter systems. This can lead to reduced water flow in the gutter system and begins to open the door to roof leaks. In comparison, a slate roof can be expected to last a minimum of 90 years but can go well beyond that. For example, the slate roof on St. Mark's church located next to the Town House is now over 150 years old and is in good shape. Beyond durability, there is literally no comparison regarding the historically accurate aesthetics slate provides, as asphalt shingles were not yet being used at the time the Town House was constructed. When the Town House was built in 1870 it was roofed in slate. By returning to a slate roofing system the Town would be taking a huge step in bringing the Town House back to its former glory and completing the historic renovation of the building's roofing system in a truly accurate fashion. As the Town House Renovations Project is a CPC funded project, historical accuracy whenever possible is a general goal. This is of particularly relevant importance as we are quickly approaching the Town's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, where the Town House will most likely be playing a prominent role.

From a financial perspective, over the life of the building it will cost less to install a slate roof rather than several asphalt roofs. Based upon a 30-year replacement cycle, the Town will most likely have to install at least 3 additional asphalt roofs before having to replace the one proposed slate roof. The installation of an asphalt roof on the Town House today would cost \$90,000.00. A simple straight-line equation, with no material cost inflation factored in, would result in a total cost of \$270,000.00 for these 3 additional asphalt shingle roofs. If you take into consideration that the current cost of installing an asphalt roof would at least double every thirty years, three additional asphalt roofs would be estimated to cost \$1,260,000.00 (\$180,000 @ year 30 + 360,000 @ year 60 + 720,000 @ year 90) over the anticipate lifetime of a single slate roof. As the installation of an asphalt roof outside of a historic restoration project would not be eligible for CPC funding, these additional asphalt roof replacements would need to be funded through traditional budgetary means.

The initial intention to use asphalt shingles instead of slate on the Town House roof during this renovation project was based solely upon the premise that the Town would not be able to afford the slate option due to the negative pricing pressures that were being felt throughout the construction industry because of the COVID pandemic. By having a comprehensive bid packet with well-designed specs, coupled with strategically timing the bid release in a fashion to be advantageous to the Town, the Town was able to secure a surprisingly low construction bid in comparison to what was expected. This alone is what is making it even possible to complete the Town House Renovations Project in the fashion of a full historic renovation including a slate roof.

Slate roofing does have a longer lead time than asphalt shingles. Since the quarry where this slate would be coming from is local to New England, this longer lead time by itself is not anticipated to negatively affect the anticipated project completion date if a decision to move forward were to be made soon. Unfortunately, an extended delay in the ordering of the slate product could cause delays through a cascade effect as to when individual contractors can work on their portions of the project. To that point, I would like to get the slate product ordered as soon as possible to reduce the possibility of any notable delay.

This is an amazing opportunity for the Town to return its seat of government back to its former glory in a way that respects the building's history and provides the residents of today and the future with an impressive, finished product while still working well within the Town Meeting allocated budget for this restoration project. I believe installing a slate roof in this case makes sense and I am hopeful that you will agree with this assessment.

Thank you,

John A. Parent, MBA  
TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH  
Director of Facilities