

Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island



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PRESS RELEASE

Efforts to Revitalize and Repurpose Old Town House Progress

North Kingstown, RI — At last week's Town Council meeting, representatives from Historic Wickford, also known as HistWick, a local IRS-recognized 501(c)(3), provided an update that it's initial fundraising effort to help save one of the oldest extant public assembly spaces in Rhode Island, North Kingstown's Old Town House, is on a path to success.



Photo Credit: M. Donohue/HistWick

HistWick had previously announced a \$40,000 challenge pledge, and a total of over \$90,000 has been reportedly pledged thus far by local residents and organizations, including \$72,750 of private cash pledges from 129 households, \$10,000 from Dave's Fresh Marketplace; \$5,000 from Plum Beach Garden Club; and \$2,500 from VFW Post 152 supported by individual donations from many of its members. In-kind donations and support valued at more than \$17,700 and central to the historic

building's rehabilitation, include pledges from Gail Hallock, Architect, Inc; Paul Boghossian of Academy Cove Schoolhouse, JV; and Kevin Alverson of Kevin M. Alverson Landscape Architecture.

The Town of North Kingstown had previously authorized \$130,000 for revitalization of the Old Town House. Matched by the over \$130,000 in private pledges outlined above, over \$260,000 in pledges has been received for this endeavor to date. With the fundraising effort now 51% towards its estimated goal of \$510,000 needed for revitalization of the Old Town House, HistWick and the Town of North Kingstown are working closely to secure federal, state, and foundation funds to close the gap.

In December 2023, the Town submitted an application to the National Park Service's "Save America's Treasures" program which requires at least a 1:1 match from non-federal funds; it will not know of the outcome of that application until summer 2024 at the earliest. Funding pledges will be committed only upon a successful effort to secure the full amount needed to bring the building up to current code.

HistWick recommends the building serve as the future home of the North Kingstown Historical Society Museum, a proposed 501(c)(3) and envisioned repository for North Kingstown artifacts of cultural and historical value, as well as a "hub and spoke" center for the Town's many historic sites. The building would also serve as a meeting space for community and veteran's groups, including the local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "We've been overwhelmed by the response, and we will continue working tirelessly to reach our end goal of a fully revitalized building that again occupies a crucial center of North Kingstown's civic life," said Mary Ann Hackett, President of HistWick.

The only extant buildings in Rhode Island older than the Old Town House in North Kingstown which is the oldest one financed and built by a town government in 1807, were financed and/or sponsored by the state assembly, and include: the Old Colony House (Newport) completed in 1739; the Old State House (Providence) completed in 1762; the former Kings County Courthouse (now Kingston Library) in 1775; and the former Kent County Courthouse in 1805 (now East Greenwich Town Hall).

More information on HistWick, including how to become a member and help advance efforts to revitalize and preserve the Old Town House in North Kingstown, can be found on their website: www.histwick.org.

Please contact Kate Glass, Executive Assistant, at kglass@northkingstownri.gov with any questions.

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