

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAY 7 1985

date entered JUN 6 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Baptist Church

and/or common UNITY TOWN HALL (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number nominated property fronts a nameless road, approx. 40' S of Unity Rd. & .1 N of Old N.H. Turnpike n/a not for publication

city, town Unity, \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Sullivan code 013

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Unity

street & number Star Route #2 - Box 95A

city, town Unity, n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03773

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sullivan County Courthouse

Sullivan County Registry of Deeds

street & number P.O. Box 448

28 Main Street

city, town Newport, state New Hampshire 03773

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title none has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date n/a  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records n/a

city, town n/a state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Set close to the road and surrounded by a grassy lawn sloping gently down to the south, the Unity Town Hall, formerly the Baptist Church, is a single story clapboarded structure approximately 40' in width and 50' in length. Dominating the facade is a double portal pavilion, echoing the pedimented main mass which is broken by a two stage square tower. The foundation consists of granite blocks, partially covered by cement while a granite base fronts the pavilion, supporting a flight of granite steps before each door. Each of the entrances contains a six panel door flanked by pilasters with recessed panels, echoed in the doorframe and the horizontal moldings which support a louvered fan over the doorway. Rising from the pilasters a half round molding adorned by diamonds with recessed quatrefoils encircles the blind fan. Between the doors is a glass display case with a single light bulb above. A single 12/8 doublehung window with simple surround is located above each entrance. Between the windows wooden letters spell out "Town Hall, Unity, N.H.". Flanking each side of the pavilion is a single 20/20 doublehung window. The projecting surround with quarter circles in the upper corners supports an entablature adorned by nine miniature brackets which are spanned by a quarter round molding.

Plain cornerboards and a baseboard outline the structure. The cornerboards support an architrave consisting of a cavetto molding topped by a fillet above which is an indented plain frieze. The building's continuous cornice is comprised of two fillets above which are ovolo and cyma recta moldings. Small scroll brackets adorn the double pediments while in the pediment of the pavilion two quarter fans flank a painted fixed 3/3 window with segmentally arched opening.

A two stage square tower rises from the front of the gabled roof. The clapboarded base contains a single arched opening on each side with two rectangular louvered panels capped by a louvered semi circle. Beneath a cyma recta molding small scroll brackets support projecting eaves while a Greek fret design encircles beneath the brackets. Urns on pedestals mark the corners of the roof, connected by a stick balustrade with a central star motif. The second stage, housing an open belfry, is also square in plan with four identical arched openings, the spring line of each supported by pilasters. Each opening is flanked by larger pilasters with denticulated capitals. A Doric frieze of triglyphs with guttae wraps around the tower, above which are mutules with pierced holes, eight to a side. Smaller urns on pedestals mark the corners of this stage, spanned by a stick balustrade of "X's". The cushion roof, sheathed in tarpaper is crowned by a ball and spindle which act as a base for a "Flying Breeches" weathervane, typical of the area and period. The bell bearing the mark "Revere Boston" was apparently cast by the Boston bell foundry who carried on the Revere name after Paul Revere died in 1818. Lack of maintenance has marred the bell's surface and helped produce cracks. The roof of the main structure is sheathed in asphalt shingles. Two corbel capped brick chimneys pierce the interior of both slopes of the rear of the building.

The north and south (side) elevations are each three bays wide with 20/20 doublehung windows identical to those on the facade. Ornamentation is limited to the continuous cornice previously described, plain cornerboards and a wider clapboard at the base.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

The west (rear) elevation is adorned by simple cornice returns and measures two bays wide. Here too, windows are 20/20 doublehung but are capped by arched wooden panels surrounded by a handcarved wood rope. Visible on each panel is the faint outline of a louvered wooden fan which has been removed. Centered on the elevation is a basement entry.

Structural framing is of post and beam construction with eight-sided building timbers. The single floor interior without side galleries features an arched ceiling and plaster walls embellished by a simple band of stenciling along the tops of the window and outlining the arch of the vault. The painting is an exact copy of the original and was repainted by Mildren Ingram of Acworth several years ago. On the interior the windows are set into deep angled casings. At the rear of the hall a wooden entablature embellished by a rope molding and a course of carved dentil-like blocks, separates the first floor from the enclosed attic above, lit by two doublehung 6/6 windows. It is not clear whether this area was once an open gallery. A low wooden stage platform spans the front of the hall. Centered on the stage is an elaborate semicircular pulpit adorned by handcarved moldings including rope moldings, a plain frieze and vertical lines of bead molding. A suspended fluorescent light is an unfortunate addition over the pulpit. Bathrooms, modern plumbing and a kitchen area have also been added at the rear of the hall. Box pews which were numbered and appraised to raise funds for the church, have long since been removed.

Also on the property are two structures which do not contribute to the character of the nominated building and should be considered intrusions. Located west of the Town Hall is a dilapidated shed sheathed in horizontal boards with a metal roof. A random rubble wall marks the western boundary of the Town Hall lot. Two large maple trees are also located at the rear of the building. To the south of the Town Hall is a single-story metal quonset structure moved to the site in 1947 from West Claremont. Donated by the Public Service Co. of N.H., it became the first fire house in Unity.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1831 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Unity Town Hall, formerly the First Baptist Church of Unity, is significant as a fine example of transitional Federal-Greek Revival vernacular church architecture. Characteristic Federal elements such as louvered fans, arched openings and urns coexist with Greek Revival details including a Doric entablature, unusual for churches of this region and period.

Organized about 1794, the Unity Baptist population was associated with the Woodstock Association in Vermont and later the Newport region until gaining autonomy in 1828, at which time it numbered thirty members. Records of the Baptist Church at the New Hampshire Historical Society for the year 1831 make mention of a committee comprised of three members of the congregation: Aaron Sleeper, Joseph Smith and Edward Sleeper, chosen to erect a meeting house and superintend the building. There is no reference to the unknown designer, though there seems little doubt that this church can trace its origin, at least indirectly, to the work of Elias Carter (1781–1864), a Massachusetts master builder greatly influenced by the work of Asher Benjamin. Although admittedly a much simpler structure, the Unity Town Hall shares many features with the nearby majestic Acworth Meeting House of 1821, believed to be the work of Carter. (Listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 6/13/1975). Unlike Carter's prototypical Federated Church in Templeton, Massachusetts (1811), the Acworth church has a dome rather than a spire and three distinct arched entrances rather than three entrances joined by a common lintel. The arched openings and steeple details of Newport's South Congregational Church (1822–23) also influenced by Carter's work are remarkably similar to that in Acworth, though conceived in brick, and it too may have served as inspiration for the Unity structure. Repetition of general forms such as the portico and two stage square tower with open arched belfry and the arched entrances suggest the influence of Carter's earlier designs and the Newport and Acworth churches in particular. The use of classical moldings and detailing are more modest and restrained in the Unity structure, repeating details such as urns, diamond patterns, brackets and mutules.

The Baptist Meeting House was sold to the Town at auction in 1877 for \$25 to be used as a Town Hall with the stipulation that any religion wishing to hold services in the building may do so. Today only a fraction of this structure is currently utilized, housing the Police Department. Other than occasional meetings, the remainder awaits new usefulness. The structure has undergone few alterations, limited to the interior, and remains today an excellent index to the tastes and skills of a rural New Hampshire town and a fine example of its period.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

First Baptist Church, Unity, New Hampshire  
Records. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH  
Unity Council on Parks, Town Hall Restoration Procedures, 1977.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .7 acres

Quadrangle name Claremont, NH-VT

Quadrangle scale 1:625 00

### UTM References

A 

1	8	7	2	2	1	0	0	4	7	9	7	9	2	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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E 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies lot 398 on Map 12 in the local tax records  
continued...

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa B. Mausolf, Preservation Specialist

organization Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee Council date December/1984

street & number 314 National Bank Building telephone (603) 448-1680

city or town Lebanon, state New Hampshire 03766

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date APR 25 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
Keeper of the National Register

date 6-6-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 10

Page 2

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the nominated property is drawn from the original parcel upon which the Town Hall was built and which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Boundaries are sufficient to convey the original context and also sufficient to protect it.

Boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the enclosed sketch map.

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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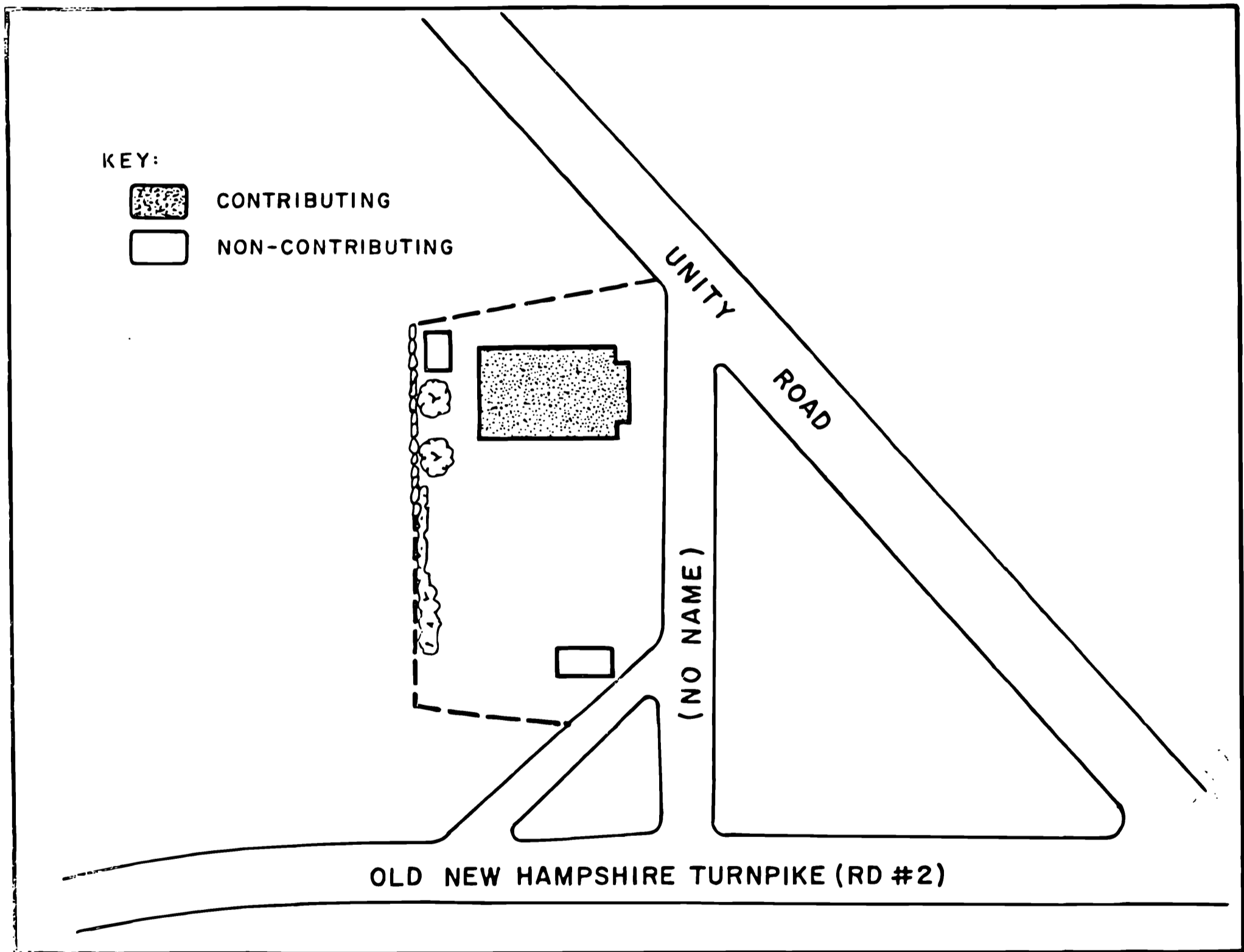
received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 10

Page 3



SCALE: Not to Scale



UNITY TOWN HALL  
UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 4

Item number

Page 1

This certifies that the appearance of the photographs submitted in support of the Unity Town Hall Nomination has not changed.