

MINUTES
CORNISH LIBRARY EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE
AUGUST 18, 2021

The Cornish Library Exploratory Committee met on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, at 6:00 PM in the Cornish Town Offices. Members present were Laura Cousineau, Chair, Susan Chandler, Larry Dingee, Dillon Gallagher, Heidi Jaarsma, Kathryn Patterson, and Caroline Storrs.

Ms. Cousineau called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reminded members that facial coverings were required at the meeting. There followed a brief discussion regarding Covid precautions, and Mr. Dingee left the meeting. Ms. Cousineau made a motion to request that the Selectboard replace Larry Dingee with a member who could work with the committee.

Approval of Minutes

Heidi Jaarsma asked that the wording of recommendation #1 on the second page of the be replaced with the following: *Gather available documentation regarding the 1912 Stowell gift. It is important to have the terms of the proposed gift written and formalized.* Ms. Jaarsma made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Dillon Gallagher seconded the motion, and the vote of the Committee was in the affirmative, 6-0.

Subcommittee Reports

Laura Cousineau reported that Colleen O'Neill is working on a letter of intent in coordination with her attorney and accountant. In the meantime, Ms. O'Neill is happy to provide information about the building to the committee.

Laura Cousineau presented the community outreach subcommittee report. The community forum will be held on September 27, 2021, at 6:30 PM in the General Store building. The forum will be hosted by the Trustees and will include a tour of the space and a review of the proposed use. Updates on the committee progress will also be given. The George H. Stowell Free Library will be open to the community a half hour prior to the event. The forum will include a community input component. Kathi Patterson described the format of the prior forum held by the Trustees. Caroline Storrs noted that she felt opinions had been very valued at the last forum. Susan Chandler recommended including the drawing of the new space versus the old space in the forum presentation. Caroline Storrs suggested that refreshments be provided at the forum and offered to donate something to that effect. Laura Cousineau asked Dillon Gallagher what community input the Selectboard felt would be important. Mr. Gallagher said that it was important that everyone's voice be heard regardless of their level of support for the proposal. Laura Cousineau said that she was hoping to have an issue board at the Cornish Fair and expressed hope that concerns would bring new questions.

Heidi Jaarsma suggested that concerns about the budget and tax rate impact were sure to be among community concerns. Ms. Jaarsma split the budget question into two parts: first, the one-time expenditure for renovations; and second, the impact on the library operating budget going forward. The tax impact of renovations would be a one-time expenditure which could be partially or completely offset by fundraising or grants. The impact on the library operating budget would depend largely on the degree to which library services were expanded due to the

relocation of the library. Likewise, any additional regular maintenance or building operation costs would affect the yearly operating budget. The impact on the operating budget would be realized yearly going forward. There was some discussion about whether the warrant articles concerning the proposed acquisition of the library would be presented over two years, with building acceptance taking place in year one and the appropriation for renovations taking place in year two. Heidi Jaarsma said that it was important at least to have a good estimate for renovation costs and an estimated potential impact on the operating budget before putting the acceptance question to the town. Susan Chandler felt that fundraising could not begin in earnest until such time that the Town is in possession of the building and that it would be difficult to predict future fundraising levels at the building acceptance stage. Caroline Storrs discussed the elementary school gym construction, which included a bond. Laura Cousineau suggested that input from the community forum would help inform decisions about potential programming, which would aid in creating a proposed operating budget.

Kathryn Patterson informed the committee that the Library Trustees had authorized the use of funds for the engagement of counsel and for a structural assessment of the general store building.

Ms. Cousineau announced that the next Friends of the Library Group meeting was scheduled for September 15, 2021, at 7:00 PM, at the Cornish General Store.

Heidi Jaarsma presented the Implementation Subcommittee report. It was recommended that counsel review the letter of intent once received from the donor. The subcommittee was in the process of reviewing available Stowell gift documentation. The Town does have in its possession an extract of the will of George Stowell, which bequeathed the Town a trust fund for the support of the library. While other documents found thus far have been secondary sources, all evidence supports the assertion that the Stowell building was gifted for library purposes. Ms. Jaarsma asked for guidance from the committee regarding point of contact for counsel. The committee asked Ms. Jaarsma to contact counsel.

Caroline Storrs presented the Interior and Exterior Building Subcommittee reports, which recommended developing a request for proposal (RFP) for architectural designs. A brochure outlining priorities for the new library, such as more natural light, fire safety codes, and a secure meeting space, had been created. The subcommittees would also like the exterior of the building to be more in line with traditional New England architecture. The deadline for proposals would be October 1, 2021. Ms. Storrs added that a landscaping plan would be separate. Kathi Patterson stated that the architectural firm which produced plans for the proposed addition to the G.H. Stowell building had recommended a structural engineer with experience in large public and private spaces. Ms. Storrs mentioned that LaValley's Building Supply also has an engineer on staff, whose services are provided at no charge. Dillon Gallagher asked if LaValley's needed a blueprint to do the structural engineering. Ms. Storrs said that she did not think blueprints were required. Heidi Jaarsma asked if the structural engineer at LaValley's had experience with municipal building projects. Ms. Storrs said that she would ask. In addition, Ms. Storrs stated that she also planned to ask the structural engineer if the floodplain would be an issue. The sense of the committee was that it would be worth beginning with LaValley's for structural assessment of the building. The subcommittee would like to get the RFPs out next week.

Laura Cousineau asked if the committee saw any reason to look into grants at present time. Susan Chandler noted that our librarian is very current on what grants are available, but that many grants have timeframes and deadlines. She suggested that application for grants at this time might be premature. An exploration of local organizations that support community projects through donations and grants was also suggested. The sense of the committee was that application for grants specific to the general store building cannot be made by the Town of Cornish until such time that the Town has accepted the building donation. The committee will not apply for grants at this time, but will begin to compile a list of possible grants and local organizations. Heidi Jaarsma added that fundraising efforts prior to an acceptance of the building should be for the benefit of the Cornish Library program; funds for the specific purpose of renovating the general store building should not be solicited until such time that the general store is accepted as a Town building. Susan Chandler asked who would apply for grants once the committee is disbanded. Laura Cousineau responded that the Library Trustees would be responsible for grant applications.

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for September 7, 2021, at 6:00 PM in the Cornish Town Offices.

Dillon Gallagher made a motion to adjourn. Heidi Jaarsma seconded the motion, and the vote of the committee was in the affirmative, 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi M. Jaarsma