

Library Exploratory Meeting
Date: 3 August 2021
Location: Town Office Building

Members Present: Laura Cousineau, Sue Chandler, Dillon Gallagher, Heidi Jaarsma, Kathi Patterson, Caroline Storrs
Absent: Larry Dingee

Community members attending: David Aguilar, Bill Caterino, Barbara Cieslicki, Judith Kaufman, Stephanie McAndrew, Sandy Guest

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: Laura as chairperson asked if there were any additions or deletions to the draft copy of the minutes. A motion was made that the recorder will do the revisions and email to both Mary and Paula at the Town Office Building and that all subsequent minutes will be handled in the same way. The motion was made by Kathi Patterson and seconded by Sue and the motion was carried unanimously.

The first subcommittee report was presented by Heidi Jaarsma for the Implementation as a Town Building. Heidi said that their (Heidi and Dillon) mission was to outline how the relocation of the library at 24 School St. to 226 NH Route 120 in Cornish Flat could happen. She first explained that the Trustees of the Library have custody and management of the library and the Selectboard can accept gifts and donations. A Town Meeting is not necessary for acceptance but the Selectboard can put it on as a warrant and furthermore, any renovations will need to be warranted and so it is logical to do both together. Funds that would be generated from the Friend's group would need to be on the warrant.

Heidi said the deed will need to be transferred to the Town of Cornish.

Renovations recommended by the Building Committee will need to be approved by the Selectboard and Trustees.

The Selectboard will then turn the building over to the trustees and trustees will oversee the renovations.

In respect to the “old” library, state statute does not allow libraries to be discontinued, loaned, or disposed by trustees and would need to submit a cy pres petition to the probate court . The court would have to recognize that the gift has become impossible or impracticable to fulfill. So the trustees will need to agree about the future of the “old” library, using it as an annex or some other use but still under the umbrella of the library or else pursue a petition for cy pres. Heidi stressed that Town Counsel is needed to develop a comprehensive plan.

Heidi next explained that the conversion of the general store building to a public library would constitute a change of use from private to public. Governments are exempt from local land use regulations. The Town of Cornish presently leases (Town Hall and Trinity Church) on a short term basis but there is a question of pursuing a month to month rentals. Heidi cautioned the group to be careful in offsetting operating expenses with anticipated revenues since revenues fluctuate.

The Town’s insurance company is with Primex, the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange. A public entity risk pool is not insurance. First party losses by tenants, where the tenant is liable, would not be covered by Primex. In contrast, Primex would provide coverage in a third-party case, i.e. one where the Town is at fault. See Heidi’s report pg.8. Heidi said guidance by Town Counsel is necessary but maybe a lease agreement can be constructed that would provide protection for the Town. Since the Town of Cornish has made so few claims at this point in our history, the annual contribution for adding the new building would be around \$200.00.

The question of whether the general store is in the flood zone was addressed by Heidi. The map indicates that the back end of the store is in zone A flood zone. A LOMA (Letter of Map Amendment) may be needed in which it might be shown that the elevation of the store is actually above the base elevation. It doesn’t change the map but it takes the structure out of zone. There may need to be restrictions on the uses at the basement level.

Recommendations Tasks made by Implementation as a Town Building subcommittee:

1. Gather available documentation regarding the 1912 Stowell gift. It is important to have the terms of the proposed gift written and formalized.
2. Hire Town Counsel to outline the legal process and potential liabilities.
3. Hire an architect and engineer (codes and ADA etc).
4. Contact Colleen O'Neil to define more accurately the width and breadth of the donation.

Heidi stated that there is, in the budget, a line item for legal expenses but she believes that it could not cover all of the expense predicted for legal and consultation fees and would need to come from other sources. She ended her presentation with a quote including the theme that "Libraries are worth it".

Heidi and Dillon's full report is on the town's website.

The next subcommittee to give its report was subcommittee for Interior Use of Space. Caroline said that the group established 3 goals:

1. Develop a conceptual plan to designate use of interior space.
2. Develop a list of needs for a 21st century library in Cornish
3. Define the usage of interior space as defined by needs

Kathi showed the drawings done by uk architects which were developed 9/9/19 for the "old" library and this type of conceptual plans were considered a model for what was needed to present to the public at Town Meeting. An architect would be needed and Kathi was asked if she could present the need for some monies at a trustee meeting so the group could move forward.

Stephanie, as librarian, and member of the subcommittee gave a list of space needs: space for adult new fiction, adult nonfiction, biography, audio

books, DVD's, large print, children's picture books, children's early readers, children's chapter books, YA, graphic novels, children's story time and activities area, display areas including local writer's display, sitting area with periodicals and cafe, tech area with wifi, reception area, community meeting space, and office space.

The subcommittee toured the building speculating on where each area might best be suited. A charrette was suggested which would mean creating a RFP (Request for Proposal) and distributing the criteria to around 4 different architects (including the uk architects from the previous library initiative) and see what is the interest and what ideas there are.

Recommendations/Tasks for Interior Space:

1. Develop a RFP to distribute to architects
2. Kathi to contact trustees for access to monies

The subcommittee for Exterior Space met and the importance of coordinating the two subcommittees since one defines the other, and vice versa. It was decided to coordinate an RFP as the interior subcommittee develops the space and needs. The general consensus was to lessen the "western look" and develop a more New England appearance that reflects the surrounding style of a small village with Meetinghouse. It would also be important to create a green space with the new library as well as the usage of the common area across the street which has potential for possible outdoor uses. The new library would be the focal point and an important keystone in the Flat for generations to come.

Recommendations/Tasks for the Exterior Space:

1. Create a charrette for the exterior space in concert with the subcommittee interior space and usage needs.
2. Outdoor space needs to be a part of the fund raising package.
3. Find out if the Garden Club would assist in maintenance.

The next subcommittee was the Future of the George Stowell Library Building. Kathi presented a history of the library including the information of George H Stowell's donation to the Town in 1909. Kathi then listed the disadvantages of the current building including limited space, no handicap access, no running water, parking being problematic, no meeting room space, limited space for programming, and limited expansion area for the future.

Kathi presented the average monthly costs, several ideas for the present library, and what the library has accomplished since the forum conducted in 2018 to get public input. She also gave a list of progress already accomplished since the 2018 forum. Of note, Cornish spent the LOWEST per capita amount in 2019 for its library-\$13.66. In her presentation, Kathi included all of the ideas given at the forum and they are available on the library's website.

The final Subcommittee report was Community Input. Laura reported that there would be a staffed table by the Friends Group at the Cornish Fair to gather community ideas. An Idea Box was suggested. Laura would like to hold an open forum sometime after Labor Day at the Town Hall on either a Tuesday or Wednesday at 7:00 PM.

Recommendations/Tasks:

Laura will need to set a date and reserve the Town Hall.

She will also ask the Friends if they might organize some refreshments.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:00 by Heidi and seconded by Sue. It was a unanimous vote.

Caroline Storrs
Recording Secretary
Adopted 8/18/2021