

Draft Minutes 11/16/2021
Cornish Library Exploratory Committee

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

Members present: Laura Cousineau, Dilly Gallagher, Susan Chandler, Caroline Storrs, Kathi Patterson, Heidi Jaarsma

Absent: Larry Dingee

Community Members present: Bill Caterino, Keith Mullane, Sandy Guest, Richard Scheuer, Joanna Scharf, Stephanie McAndrew

1. Minutes of November 2, 2021 were approved with the addition of the names of the Cornish citizens attending. Heidi moved, Caroline seconded, all in favor.

2. Kathi Patterson reported on the November Library Trustees meeting. Richard Scheuer spoke with the chair of the Cornish Historical Society who does not want another building. The Trustees had discussed spending the \$70,000 in capital reserves funds which requires a warrant article, but did not come to a conclusion.

The Trustees voted to accept the contract with Banwell architects. The contract cost is \$14,000, with another \$500 in associated expenses expected.

Should the Trustees decide not to use the current building, the cy pres may require an inventory of non cash items. The Trustees asked if items purchased by the town and through donation that were not part of the original donation should be listed in the cy pres petition. Heidi will ask; she is collecting questions for counsel that fall into two categories: potential donation questions and Stowell Library questions.

3. .Update on Donation:

Colleen O'Neill introduced a new idea fostered after a conversation with her accountant. The Cornish Community Initiative (CCI) would be created as a nonprofit. Colleen would give the building to CCI contingent on the success of fundraising. With this legally binding pledge, the CCI can begin to accept donations and apply for grants on behalf of the nonprofit. The NH Preservation Alliance is willing to act as fiscal agent until the status of the 501c3 status is granted.

The architect will continue with phase-one plans under the direction of the Cornish Library Trustees, the Cornish Librarian, and interested citizens. When the required funds are raised by the CCI Capital Campaign, Colleen will donate the building to the CCI. The renovation work can begin and funding will come from the CCI. When the renovations are complete, the CCI will donate the completed building to the town of Cornish for their new library and community center. Interior furnishings and moving costs will not be part of the gift.

CCI will fundraise, but should there be a need for bridge funding, a loan would be sought by CCI from USDA using the building as collateral.

Colleen's wish is to be able to present the town with a building for a new library while saving the town from the administrative, supervisory, and legal issues involved in the renovations. Before proceeding, she would like the town to affirm that they want a new library, and therefore would like a warrant article to assess the sense of the town as to this question.

Colleen stressed that sustainability in this renovation is very important.

Pros to this concept:

The Town will have no cost to acquire, no cost to renovate, no cost to create a new facility and it will be a public/private partnership.

Final acceptance of the library and community center building will be subject to compliance with applicable life, safety, and accessibility codes and any other applicable local, state and Federal regulations.

****(FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION, please refer to the "Memo about Cornish Community Initiative Creating a Library Building and then giving it to the town of Cornish, NH 11/10/2021)

Apartment rentals would continue while fundraising is going on, but not once renovations commence as rental apartments will be eliminated in the new library configuration.

Laura Cousineau commented that it is incredible to go from the library renting space from the store to Colleen giving the building to the town to Colleen creating a plan to give the finished library to the town.

This thought was echoed throughout the meeting.

Heidi stated that the selectmen could accept the building tomorrow, but would probably want town input. Therefore, a warrant article was needed to direct the select board to accept the building upon completion with final acceptance dependent on compliance. The building would remain within the spirit of the plans shown to the voters prior to the meeting, but barring that, the town would accept it if there is an affirmative vote at town meeting.

Colleen feels that much legwork has been done to have plans for the March meeting. She does need to get more feedback from a real estate and nonprofit lawyer.

Heidi anticipates that this 2022 warrant article will be very similar to the warrant article that accepted the Stowell Library gift. Heidi stated that this is a very generous proposal and very workable. It solves the problem of the town accepting the building before the funds are raised.

The Friends of the Library will continue to work with Librarian Stephanie McAndrew and the Trustees to fundraise for library programs.

Laura stated that the town counsel confirmed that the Trustees have the authority to pay for planning for a new building, including the building inspection and the contract with the architects for the Phase One plans.

Community member Bill Caterino stated that we need to be prepared for the operating cost expenses of the new library. Laura stated that the Trustees are working on preparing budget projections for both the current building and the new building. Bill wondered what will happen if the electorate say “no?” Colleen would keep the building; she stated that no money will be collected until after the March vote, although \$100,000. has already been pledged. Bill asked if we could have a private library. Heidi stated that it would have to have an endowment. Colleen stated that she has no interest donating her building as a private library.

Heidi stressed the need for knowing the ongoing costs, the programs, the hours, the operating costs. We need to state the public benefit for having this new library. The more information, the better informed the citizens will be.

Joanna Scharf was asked about heating costs, but it was determined that the architect would be the best person to ask about estimated operating costs, knowing that they would only be an estimate. Colleen is very interested in having the building be as energy efficient as possible.

Richard Scheuer stated that operating costs in the library in whatever building will go up as the Trustees have to be in compliance with labor laws re: the use of volunteers. They have been ignorant in the past of some labor laws that state the functions of the library that must be provided by paid staff. Bringing the library into the 21st century means additional costs in putting the collections online and computer availability. He further stated that “if we just keep this a lending library, it is just a place to store books.” The Trustees envision that a new building gives the town the opportunity to have after school space, formal and informal meeting spaces, and an expansion of programs that serve the community. It opens up a world of opportunities that Cornish can’t have with the current building.

February 1 will be the deadline for getting plans.

There will be a meeting with Banwell Architects at 8:30 am Friday, 19 November, at the store.

4. No Committee Reports

5. Outline Next Steps:

Heidi stated that it is best if the Select Board puts this plan on the warrant. There was a generalized discussion of the Select Board’s thoughts and how best to convey their thoughts to this committee. Caroline suggested that in person meetings with Laura, Colleen and possibly

Heidi on a scheduled basis on Monday nights might be the best avenue of discourse. The Monday after Thanksgiving was decided upon.

7. Old Business –None
New Business – None

8. Community Comments: Bill Caterino asked about the Library Capital reserve. Its funds can be used to fund any library; the funds are not limited to the Stowell Library. In the past, funds have been used for painting, electricity, the roof and chimneys and maintenance. The expenditure of capital reserve funds requires warrant article approval. Heidi suggested that furnishings and moving cost expenses could come from the capital reserve.

Next meeting: NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Meeting adjourned at 7:17