

Library Exploratory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Cornish Town Office Building
January 18, 2022

Present:

Committee Members: Laura Cousineau, Susan Chandler, Heidi Jaarsma, Larry Dingee, Dillon Gallagher, Kathi Patterson. Via ZOOM: Caroline Storrs
Community Members: Stephanie McAndrew, Coleen O'Neil, Bill Gallagher, Via ZOOM: Kathleen Maslan. Keith Mullane, Chris Surunis, Judith Kaufman

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm by Laura Cousineau, chair. She thanked the committee members for their work and Colleen for offering the town of Cornish the opportunity to have a fully renovated and modern building for use as a library.

I. Presentation of Preliminary Plans

Jeremiah Goulet from Banwell Architects presented preliminary concept drawings for the conversion of the former Cornish General Store building for use as a library space. The conversion would also add a large flexible-use space. This space could be used as a meeting space during and after library hours.

He explained that he had surveyed the building, taken measurements, and assessed existing conditions. The building is currently a mixed-use space with apartments, the apartments and commercial space were removed from the plan. [Note: this was in response to issues of liability and having the town become landlords.] There will be no need for sprinklers, as the space will be under 6,000 square feet. He had conducted initial and follow-up meetings with committee members and the librarian for input on what a modern library would need. As a result, he moved his initial placement of the children's area to separate it from the adult section. Because the rentals are out, he removed the back apartment building and added an open mezzanine space to replace the upstairs apartment. The mezzanine would also let light in from the skylights. His drawings added 2 bathrooms that would be accessible for meetings when the library was not open, added a storage closet, kept the kitchen space, added windows around the building, and added a separate entrance for the meeting space. He had shortened the front porch and added interior space in the place of the former entrance. He had designed and added a new entrance with a vestibule.

He explained that some aspects of the design are yet to be set, such as the parking design.

He was asked about placement of the mechanical room and would if it would be in the cellar. He said it had not yet been determined, but, with the flood plain a possible issue, it would be best to keep mechanicals out of the cellar. His current thought was that the building would be all electric with solar panels and heat pumps, but these decisions would have to be made after consultation with an engineer.

He was asked about improving the lighting. He said he was speaking with a construction manager, that the building would have all new windows within the current structure, and that the addition of the mezzanine would give more light from the skylights as would using drywall.

He was asked if the placement of the adult stacks over the cellar and not over the slab would cause a problem since the engineering study had said the load would be too great for that space. He replied that it would need some reinforcing structure in the cellar that would add to the cost.

Trumbell Nelson is helping him to develop project costs at no cost to the project.

He was asked if the foundation would require any work. He said that he found no cracking or moisture concerns. The foundation would stay and the wood structure would stay. He felt the wide board floors could be sanded and refinished and the wood ceilings retained. The existing porch roof line would need to be raised to help eliminate the western town look.

He has a to-do list that includes developing an estimate of the cost of the building renovation, providing the projected operating cost for the finished building to this committee, designing the brochure for a community-wide mailing, and attending a community forum before March Town Meeting.

2. Update from the non-profit

Colleen outlined how the donation of the building had progressed from an idea proposed in May by the library trustees to rent a portion of the building to her June announcement at the 2021 Town Meeting of her intention to donate the building, to her pledge of donating a completely renovated building to the town via the Cornish Community Initiative (CCI) non-profit. Her donation would not only be contingent upon the CCI fund-raising covering the cost of the renovation but also that the Town would vote their approval and their acceptance of a completely renovated building. This modern building would then be owned by the Town for use as a library and managed by the library trustees. The Cornish Historical Society has agreed to manage any donations until the CCI obtains its 501(c)3 status. She said that she is waiting for the green light from the community at the March Town Meeting that they are willing to accept the future gift of the building for use as a library and community center before she starts fundraising for the renovation. She also stated that this building will improve and enhance life in Cornish and that she has already received a pledge of \$100,000.

3. Timeline

Heidi reviewed the timeline. She is working with town counsel to craft the wording for the warrant article. Susan hoped that the Cornish Community Initiative would be given the go-ahead with a firm commitment from the Town so it could fund the full design services for the renovation.

The timeline revolves around 2 dates: the 2022 Town Meeting on March 8, 2022 and the Budget Hearing on February 7, 2022.

Because our committee was charged with conducting a feasibility study, we need to have by January 25th the numbers from Banwell Architects for the construction costs of renovating the building and the estimated operating costs for when the building ownership is transferred to the town. Once we, the committee, have those numbers, we will then vote whether or not we believe this is feasible. Once we vote, representative(s) from the committee would meet with the selectmen at their Friday, January 28th meeting to inform them of the committee's vote. Our work will be done.

4. Report to the Selectmen

Laura reviewed the sections needed for the report and assigned writing responsibilities to committee members. Kathi and Larry are in charge of developing the operational impact with figures coming from Jeremiah on Friday. There needs to be a one-page Executive Summary and a list of the benefits and liabilities. She will need the reports by Sunday morning for our next meeting on Tuesday, January 25. The committee will review and vote on the final report at that meeting. After the report is submitted to the Select Board, the committee is dissolved.

5. Other Business

Banwell plans to work on a brochure with the CCI to be mailed to all Cornish citizens by February 10. Banwell will also participate with the trustees in a public forum at the Cornish General Store building on or about February 24.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Patterson, Recording Secretary