

Library Exploratory Committee Minutes  
31 May 2022, 6:30 pm  
Town Office Building

Committee Members Present: Laura Cousineau (library trustee), Susan Chandler, Dillon Gallagher, Kathi Patterson (library trustee), Caroline Storrs, Larry Dingee, Heidi Jaarsma.

Community Members Present: Jill Edson, Judith Kaufman, Keith Mullane, Nancy Newbold, John Dryfhout, Marie DeRusha, Marth Zoerheide, Colleen O'Neill, Stephanie McAndrew, Larissa Sharff.

1. Call to order - Laura called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.
2. Approval of minutes - Kathi made a motion to approve the April 19th meeting minutes (as amended in red) and the May 17th meeting minutes. Susan seconded the motion, and the vote by the committee was in the affirmative.

Laura stated that she had been working on the flyer for the July 23 forum and had provided copies for the committee members.

3. Proposed timeline and tasks to be completed - Laura reviewed the proposed timeline for the completion of committee duties that she and Caroline had completed.
  - a. May 31 - Review of Tom Ladd report
  - b. June 14 - Soft cost estimates for furniture.
    - i. Caroline suggested that there be a subcommittee member working on finding office furniture at free and reduced prices since so many offices are downsizing.
    - ii. Heidi asked if there would be a firm number for the actual cost or will the subcommittee have just contracted with someone to provide an estimate of the soft costs. Laura replied that she hoped to have an actual cost figure.
  - c. June 28 - Report on meeting/community rooms - The subcommittee is working on collecting data as reported at the last meeting.
  - d. ASAP - Meeting with Chris Kennedy from MA+KE. Give him Tom Ladd's ADA report and same requirements for property, e.g. book collections space, bathrooms, accessibility, parking, etc., energy changes(?) -
    - i. Larry stated that there is a subcommittee meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, June 1, at 6:30 pm at the Stowell Library where the hope is to come to a consensus as to the key points to be discussed. He gave a ball park figure of June 21 for a meeting with MA+KE to discuss these key points.
  - e. July 9 - Send mailing for the Open Forum - The Tasker Grant will pay the costs of the mailing.
    - i. Laura has drafted a full-size page.

- ii. Heidi suggested that a link to an electronic survey be included on the flyer. Caroline suggested that the flyer should go out with the survey. The committee decided that, since this survey is not yet completed, Heidi, Caroline, and Susan will work to have a survey completed by the June 28th meeting. Kathi noted that we already have a draft survey completed for us by Tom Ladd, that she has also been researching surveys, and has begun to compile a list of survey questions. Heid mentioned the previous use of surveys by the town and that drop boxes were placed around town for the completed paper surveys.
- f. July 23 - Open Forum. Community Input - A suggested format was presented by Susan at the last meeting.
- g. August 1 - Receive plans and cost estimates from MA+KE -
  - i. Larry felt that there was no way of knowing for sure if August 1 is the date to shoot for to receive plans and cost estimates.
- h. August 15 - Completed estimated operating costs for each building - This was assigned as a trustee duty.
  - i. Caroline asked Colleen for clarification on the process. Colleen said that, if the Town votes to accept the building, she will donate the property to the CCI who will in turn raise the funds for the renovation at no cost to the Cornish taxpayers. The completely renovated building would then become the new library.
  - ii. Banwell has been asked, as part of their Phase 1 project, to provide cost estimates for the construction.
  - iii. Both Caroline and Susan reiterated that the use of local contractors such as Parry Construction be explored as possible cost saving options.
  - iv. Judith felt that the scope of services will be different for the two buildings and would make "apple-to-apple" comparisons difficult. Laura replied that "we are on it."
- i. September 13 - Open forum with MA+KE -
  - i. MA+KE would be presenting their new plan for renovations to the Stowell building. The place and time have not yet been determined.
- j. September 20 - Open forum with Banwell -
  - i. Banwell Architects would be presenting their Phase 1 plans. The place and time have not yet been determined.
- k. September 30 - Comparative analysis write-up presented to the committee -
  - i. Kathi suggested that her comparison handout could be a place to start with this type of analysis. Dollar amounts should be in present dollars as trying to project future costs will be difficult.
  - ii. Caroline asked that the Selectboard be asked to give the LEC, before the October 6 deadline, a list of everything the committee will need to address in the completed report. Dillon will check with the other Selectboard members for any other information they might need. If any LEC members wish to attend a Selectboard meeting, the Monday 6:30 -8:30 pm meeting times are the best.

- iii. Kathi reminded those present that the committee's charge was to research the "feasibility" and "advisability" of relocating the library.
  - iv. John Dryfhout wanted to know what the library trustees had for a plan if the Town does not vote to accept the newly renovated building for the new library. Laura replied that the newly requested MA+KE plans and Tom Ladd's report would guide the trustees' future plans if the Town votes down the new building. Kathi spoke to the fact that any renovations of the Stowell building would be at taxpayer expense. Heidi disagreed and felt that were multiple funding sources for renovating the current library if the new building fails.
- l. October 6 - Submit write-up of all community input -
    - i. Laura will compile a write-up of the input from emails, surveys, and forums.
  - m. October 6 - All subcommittees reports due.
  - n. October 7-18 - Writing of report
  - o. October 20 Report is submitted and discussed by committee
  - p. October 27c- Executive summary with recommendation. Vote on report. Report goes to the Select Board.
4. Open forum procedures -
- a. Susan said we will need scribes to write down audience comments and questions.
  - b. There was discussion of whether or not to video the meeting and/or use Zoom. Heidi felt that people might not come if they felt they could watch a video instead. Those who might hesitate to attend in person to listen and/or ask questions have several ways to learn what the committee has been doing (email, attend the bi-weekly LEC meetings, and/or read the posted minutes on the LEC web page).
  - c. Heidi stated that we are all volunteers and we don't want an unwieldy format. There was consensus that we only needed a microphone.
  - d. Laura stated that her flyer was a 1st draft (Susan Chandler not Susan Chambers, etc.). Heidi was going to email Laura the info on mailing requirements.
5. ADA Report from Tom Ladd - Heidi gave an overview of why Tom Ladd had been contracted for his Building Assessment Report. The N.H. State Librarian, Michael York, suggested she contact Mr. Ladd who has a Master's Degree in Library Science and is a librarian, consultant, and trainer. He was contracted to review what was needed to make the Stowell Library building completely ADA compliant and provide a physical manifestation of what a library needs for programming.
- a. Heidi felt we need to ask these questions - What does the town want? Does it want a small library that is ADA compliant? How does the physical space of the current building impact programming?
  - b. Heidi asked Stephanie to share a list of her programming with attendance figures. Most programming was being held at the General Store building.
  - c. Caroline, Susan, and Kathi spoke to Mr. Ladd's recommendations in the report and his summary that he sees "no means of making the current building property accessible and safe without a major addition and proper parking."

- d. Kathi also spoke to the fact that the area in square feet of the Stowell Library building of 3,000 square feet as listed in the N.H. Library Annual Reports included the attic and the cellar space. The main floor of the library is roughly 1,250 square feet.
  - e. Tom Ladd's Space Needs Summary (*Building Assessment Report*, page 7) outlined the need for 3,746 square feet of space using the current usage features of the Stowell Library.
  - f. Larry stated that he had not had time to go through the report and felt we needed more time to review the recommendations.
  - g. Dillon questioned Hancock's programming statistics of 363 total library programs as this would be more than one program a day. (Kathi checked with Hancock's library director who said they have a lot of programs and their programming statistics were calculated by multiplying each program times the number of times it happened in a year so a once-a-month program would equal 12, a weekly program would equal 52, etc.)
  - h. Heidi commented that she had been hearing that Cornish was at the bottom of the list on spending for its library. She projected the 2019 Complete Library Statistics Report on the screen and spoke to the fact that there were 214 libraries listed in the report and how the Stowell library was not at the bottom of the list in expenditures per capita.
  - i. Colleen suggested we ask Michael York to attend a meeting.
  - j. Heidi felt we need to use data to show there is a need.
6. Subcommittee Reports - Larry has scheduled a MA+KE subcommittee meeting for Wednesday at 6:30 pm at the library. In case of rain, a sign will be posted at the library and the meeting will be moved to the Fire Station.
  7. Other business - Laura read a letter from Dale Lawrence (attached).
  8. The next meeting date will be June 13 at 6:30 pm at the Town Office Building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathi Patterson, Recorder

Letter from Dale Lawrence read at the meeting:

May 31, 2022

To the Cornish Library Exploratory Committee Members,

Although I am unable to attend the meeting tonight, I wanted to share my thoughts with you. I am appreciative of your efforts to provide the community with options to be presented at the 2023 Town Meeting.

Democracy is a wonderful thing! Article 17 of this year's town warrant, which was voted on in the affirmative, made it clear that the direction of the committee was to provide both the option of renovating the current George H. Stowell Library, which would allow for handicapped accessibility and more space, as well as plans for the possible acquisition of the Cornish General Store/apartment building as the town's library.

I look forward to seeing the results of your fair and informative efforts so that our community can have a voice in which option we feel works best for all of us.

Sincerely,  
Dale Lawrence