

**Town of Richmond
Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes –February 17, 2022**

Present:

Committee Members: Christine Werneke, Josh Arneson, Laurie Dana, Amy Wardwell, Jeff Forward, Linda Parent, Dave Healy

Committee Representatives: June Heston, Jay Furr, Cathleen Gent, Allen Knowles, Jon Kart, Lisa Miller, Martha Nye, Jana Brown

I. Welcome & Public Comment – None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion

a) Discussion of the Future of the Town Center building with Town Committee members.

After welcoming Town Committee members, Christine talked about the main purpose of the meeting, which is to gather ideas & needs for the Town Center building for now and into the future. She invited attendees to consider

1. How is your committee using the space today.
2. Does it serve your needs or not, and if not, how could it be improved.
3. Imagine anything, don't be limited by how things are today...dream big.
4. To remember that we are talking about a building that serves the towns' needs now and for the next 50+ years.
5. While we are focusing on the Town Center we want to consider the "campus" which includes green space, parking lot and Library building.

Library Trustee -- Martha Nye

Concerned about talk of using the green space as she feels the Library will need to be expanded at some point in the future and that is the only way to do that. She mentioned Rebecca's concerns about having to weed out collection as there is no space. Laurie also mentioned need for storage for the library. Rebecca also wanted a "messy space" for children's programming that is not appropriate for the Community Room or Mezzanine spaces. Radiate also wanted more messy space, perhaps shared?

Martha also commented that the parking lot is inadequate now on days when Library and Senior Center programming at the Congregational Church conflict. It was observed that there is never going to be enough parking at certain times of the day in town, for example, funerals.

Transportation Committee -- Jon Kart, Cathleen Gent & Allen Knowles

Jon commented that it would be nice to see the 2 buildings as a campus by connecting them with green space. He also wants to keep Library and Town Center as the heart of the town where people meet, education, engage with Town and a civic space. In terms of parking lot, he would prioritize safety over parking spaces.

Cathleen observed that the Transportation Committee is working on how to have a sidewalk on the East side of the street which would be an asset for the Library & Downtown connection. She also observed that the current building is in the Special Flood Hazard area and those issues would need to be addressed.

Allen suggested a new Town Center building, closer to the library and elevated to the level of the Library, thus being out of the Flood Hazard Area.

Jon also feels that making the building useable for the employees who work there every day is the most important. Concern for their health and wellness.

Planning Commission – Lisa Miller

Lisa brought up concerns about permanent technology that will enhance presentation of pictures, drawings and other data. Currently using their own laptops. Better ability to project digitized information.

Cathleen seconded that comment, observing that hybrid (in-person/Zoom) meetings are likely here to stay. She brought up improved acoustics and audio technology so that all involved in hybrid meetings can hear. She mentioned that when the committees use the Library Community Room the same technology and acoustics issues exist there as well.

Jay Furr – His #1 need for the Town is for a Teen Center to provide programming and hang-out space for Richmond teens. Laurie mentioned that this is informally going on at the Library.

Community Senior Center – Martha Nye

Martha mentioned that, while the elevator goes to the basement & Radiate space, it is not actually accessible as there are stairs after you get off the elevator. Accessibility is important.

Christine observed that storage and more space, as well as safety are issues that have come up in other meetings.

Energy Coordinator and Energy Committee – Jeff Forward

His committee has discussed this and feels it is important for any building – new or renovated – to go to Net Zero as an energy standard.

Committee Member -- Linda Parent

Whether we build or renovate, she wants to be certain there is a plan for ongoing maintenance of the building & systems. Other members of the Committee observed that, deferring maintenance is one of the issues that we are facing in both the Library and Town Center buildings and that a maintenance plan is part of this work.

ARPA Committee – June Heston, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward

Christine asked the members of the ARPA Committee if they were hearing anything and June & Jay responded that Economic Development is a goal of this money but they have not started to gather information from the public about needs and vision. They are discussing surveys and public forums as potential information tools. To recap, this is \$1.2 million that the Town of Richmond has (does not have to apply for) and it must be planned for by 2024 and spent by 2026.

Christine stated that, if there are needs for this project that might be appropriate to consider for ARPA funding, the Town Center Committee would make a formal proposal just like any other town entity.

Christine mentioned that in terms of funding this work, the Committee is looking at all options, grants, ARPA money, bonding and even philanthropy and offering community members an opportunity to participate.

Finally, Jon Kart thanked the Committee for reaching out through more than just email to ask community members for their input.

Christine thanked all of the members of Town Committees who attended for their input and invited them to email herself or Josh if they have more ideas.

b)Review quote and funding for replacing two windows in the Radiate Art Space.

Josh presented the estimate for replacing two windows in the basement Radiate Art Space in order to provide more light and operable windows to have more air circulation in the space. The total anticipated budget is \$3,182.30. There is a 5% contingency included. Several bids were solicited but this was the only one received. Radiate will pay \$1,000 of the cost through money they had fundraised for the project. The committee was in favor of asking the Selectboard for the remaining \$2,182.30 to come from the Town Center Fund. Laurie observed that is good that Radiate is putting in some of the money and Amy commented that this is also a way to show the community that we are responding to valued resources in our community.

Christine mentioned that, while the space is not ideal, the Committee should be aware that they are also only paying \$1/month plus utilities currently. It is important to note that, any renovation or rebuild plan will likely require a bigger contribution from them and that they will certainly not get all of their “dreams” in the Town Center renovation.

c)Review quote for mold remediation at the library.

Several committee members commented that they thought \$11,400 was quite high. Laurie mentioned being with one of the firms during their walk around and her impression was the damage was only at the bottom of the stairwell which is quite a small space. There was discussion of what the scope of the work included and that having a more itemized estimate which divides materials and labor would be helpful in evaluating this bid. [Dividing the total by the hourly rate results in 160 hours, which seems excessive.] Again, several bids were requested but only one bid was received. Dave & Laurie mentioned that this was not identified as an “urgent” need in the project plan and Laurie said this was the result of some basement flooding due to a sump pump not working that took place around 3 years ago. The recently moisture work in the basement and new wifi-enabled sump pump should prevent this from happening again.

While the committee recognizes that this work does need to get done, they asked Josh to request a more itemized bid and Jeff will reach out to a mold mitigation firm the school has worked with to see if he can obtain a second bid. Any further action was tabled to the next meeting on **March 3**.