

Town Center & Library Building Committee
Community Conversation – November 18, 2021. 7-8:30 p.m.

Committee members: Christine Werneke, Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy, Linda Parent, Amy Wardwell

Committee Chair Christine Werneke opened welcomed attendees and began a slide presentation that:

- reviewed the Committee’s accomplishments to date
- described where we are today
- summarized what the committee has learned from other Vermont town’s projects
- outlined what is next in the Visioning process

Christine then invited input on ideas for how to collect input from a wider audience in the Richmond Community. Some of the ideas included:

- Engaging community groups and clubs and go make presentations
- PTA and fire department
- Senior Center – in person or virtual meetings or attending existing Senior Center activities like Bone Builders (invite them to stay after the session)
- Front Porch Forum and present a survey or just an email to respond
- Direct communication with others committees in town
- Groups that regularly use the Town Center & Library for storage and meetings
- Provide guidance on topics we want feedback on – themes such as culture, energy— have directed and succinct questions
- Develop a list of interested groups and then push out questions one at a time to those groups
- Solicit feedback from the younger generation who will be the ones to interact with the space in the future (middle and high schoolers). Technology could be key—will they even come into the building?

Thoughts on the process

- Post office is still important
- Keep local groups in the space (Christine confirmed this is the intention.)
- Include the site not just the building, parking, landscaping
- Add more (larger?) community gathering spaces
- Need to have construction documents
- Consider the future climate change impacts, best way to mitigate flooding in the future of building and property
- Asked for clarification about how much property can be included in the plan
- Making the front area more welcoming (old hedge plan was to keep trimmed)
- Front and back & library lawn has lots of potential
- Need to keep police and post office there
- Need to consider historical records storage options – not in basement

- Keep in mind environmental resiliency.

Christine spoke to the fact that the Committee recognizes that this will be a long process and there are many steps between the start of visioning and a bond vote. The committee will continue to collect information from the public and to research various funding sources including grants.

Karen asked about new construction vs. renovation of Town Center. She talked about environmental costs of demolishing existing buildings—landfilling a whole building, energy to truck materials to landfill.

Christine thanked Karen for her comments and research and responded that the Committee has had a lot of conversation about this topic and the pros and cons of both options. She feels it is important to let the community conversation process play out and guide us to the correct decision.

Jeff responded that we need to remember that if we renovate existing building it would include new HVAC, wiring, energy efficiency, etc. So that would result in essentially a new building. Jeff also mentioned that annual maintenance is also an aspect of the committee's charge. Even with a "new" building, there is still annual maintenance that needs to be considered.

Finally, Christine invited any community member with an interest in serving on the committee to speak with her or Josh. Those with design experience or communications experience in particular are invited to join.