

Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes August 3, 2023
6:30-8 p.m.

Present: Josh Arneson, Laurie Dana, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy, Linda Parent, Amy Wardwell

Black River: John Hemmelgarn & Andrew McCullough

I. Welcome and Public Comment - None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Review design details with architect

Andrew started with a schedule update and said that the design details have been sent out to the cost estimator for initial cost figures. They are hoping to have these for our meeting on August 17.

Jeff said that they met with Postmistress Erin Lin and discussed with Angelike from MMCTV regarding plans for renovations and relocation that may be needed. Both felt that the need for being out of the space for an amount of time was doable. **John mentioned that we will need to add any costs that might be incurred by relocating staff to the cost of the project. Jeff also mentioned that we need to acknowledge that there would be some loss of rent for the time that the Post Office is not in the space.** Erin has asked for some redesign of the entrance to the Post Office lobby and upgrades to the bathrooms—those are accounted for in the current design documents.

John also mentioned that we should review whether there are funds within either town department budgets or from tenants to cover some of the fit-up costs for various spaces. Examples may include Police Department cameras or the Armory closet, Laurie mentioned that the Historical Society may have money to help with special needs for collection and/or grants for display cases, etc.

Laurie observed that we need to think about whether any furniture, etc. is going to need to be replaced—these costs need to be added to Bond.

Jeff wanted to revisit the flood mitigation requirements. Andrew talked about the need to fill in pipe trench in post office, move mechanicals above slab. John said he thought we agreed that flood gates in basement windows were not needed—they are actually above the flood plain so would not really function. Definitely need the relief valves in basement floor. Other items include changing the wood columns in the basement to steel—might mean columns in current Planning & Zoning can go away. Engineer feels that wood stairs in basement could stay as they are open enough to dry out. **Would need to change to metal shelving for off-the-floor storage—this is a cost to be added to list.** Current design assumes the basement windows would be replaced with new windows—may not need all of them but the Bridge Street and Parking Lot facades should be done. Because this is a contributing resource to the Richmond Historic District, we can take the historic building exemption on Zoning. Jeff wants to make sure that Zoning Administrator signs off on this—Andrew said that Kevin is setting up a meeting with Richmond Zoning Administrator and State Zoning to review all of this. Jeff offered to be at that meeting if needed.

John suggested that we might want to come up with an estimated tax cost for a bond, starting with the costs for a \$1 million bond, Jeff suggested assuming a 30/year bond at 5%. Laurie wondered if the Bond Bank could come up with a figure for this. Josh will reach out to them and/or work with

Connie to figure this out. This would provide good information for we go forward with community outreach.

We are still assuming that all existing windows will be replaced with more energy efficient windows that still maintain the look of the old windows. This will be a large amount of the cost as there are many windows.

Andrew showed a floor plan that allows the central staircase to be opened up to look more like the original building—at least on the first landing. There may be a way to do this on the 2nd landing as well.

Meeting schedule – The committee recognizes that there is a lot of work to be done between now and going to the Selectboard in early September. The committee will plan to meet on August, 17, 24 & 31 with an eye toward a presentation at the Selectboard meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Post Office – Andrew opened this discussion by saying this could be a “slippery slope” as the scope of work has the potential to be pretty extensive.

- **Roof** – A core of the existing roof showed wood construction with 1 ½” of insulation and a little gravel. This may not be to code for solar panels—but they are still exploring the construction and Josh says the openings have been cut for the engineers to check on this. We would want to increase the insulation of the roof—may mean the roof will need to be rebuilt. If a rebuild is done, should it be done so as to support solar panels?
- **Pipe Trench** – the pipe trench which is up to 6 ft deep needs to be filled in and compacted and the mechanicals will be moved. He explained the construction of the trench with 2 concrete block walls and a concrete slab at the bottom. Currently there is no insulation on the outer wall, just the concrete block which has holes in it. They are proposing pouring a new outer cement foundation wall and insulating it from the outside and covering it with some appropriate material.
- **Flooring & Concrete** – A concrete topping slap in the corner to bring that section up above flood plain will be done, overall flooring is in bad shape and should be replaced.
- **Energy Efficiency** – there was a lot of discussion about the energy efficiency of the post office space with its many windows. The windows are not failing and have been replaced since the building was built. There is a question of cost-effectiveness of addressing improving the insulation of walls by rebuilding with less glass.
- **Cost** – Committee members felt that this may come down to cost – consensus agreed that pipe trench needs to be taken care of—we may need more breakdown on costs of more extensive projects on this portion of the building. Don't want to come back in 5-10 years and spend more but don't want to have a significant portion of total being spend on this space.

b. Discuss hiring an Architectural Historian as suggested at Funder's Conference

After some discussion, we felt that this might only be necessary if we received the \$500,000 grant from the CDS. Most of the other historic preservation grants available are too small to be worth the increased costs that would be required. Hold on this for now.

c. Planning for Community Outreach

First step will be a presentation at Selectboard meeting, Sept. 5 – 30 minutes

The full 30-minutes should be reserved for a presentation will be by John & Andrew, Jeff will introduce them.

Committee asked if there could be a couple of additions to the Site Plan and Design, elevations and drawing to show the “opened up” stairwell. Andrew recommended one or two historic photos to put next to a picture of the renovated facade. We will also have preliminary cost numbers.

Karen Yaggy, Richmond Historical Society, mentioned to Jeff that they wanted to do an Open House in September/November and talk about the building. Laurie will reach out to her and to Martha Nye, Community Senior Center to explore doing one or more community meetings sponsored by these organizations—perhaps in Community Room with refreshments. These are key groups that we need to support this project. Laurie & Amy can make a presentation at the September Library Trustees meeting—could explore inviting Friends of Richmond Free Library board and members to that meeting?

Need to think about other key individuals in town -- Denise Barnard and other Justices of the Peace that work elections comes to mind. Business community can be invited via emails that the Town has. Be sure to invite other community volunteers and their members.

Again, once we have materials for the 9/5 Selectboard meeting we can use them for all other meetings.

a) Approval of June 15 & June 29 , 2023 meeting minutes

Laurie moved and Amy seconded approval of minutes from June 15 & 20 meetings. Unanimously approved.

b) Other business- None

c) Items for next agenda – August 17 meeting

- Cost estimates for review
- Information from Post Office roof exploration

8:30 PM IV. Adjourn