

Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes January 25, 2024
7-8:30 p.m.

Present: Josh Arneson, Laurie Dana, Jeff Forward, Amy Wardwell

Community Members: Lisa Miller

I. Welcome and Public Comment – None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

Library grant opportunity

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Review results from tabling, FPF posts, Times Ink and other questions being asked

- The Friday Food Affair tabling event on 2/2/24 went well and we talked with many voters.
- The tour & presentations on February 1 had a good turnout and there were some excellent questions.
- *Times Ink* is out with a full-page article on the vote, Marshall Paulsen commented that he appreciated the history and thought the article was excellent.
- Jeff and Laurie received FPF response questions about budget and post office and have responded to them. Laurie thinks, if bond passes, we may still want to explore cost of tearing down and rebuilding the post office, particularly since it is primarily “warehouse” not “Class I Office” space.

b) Decide on further FPF Posts, dates, topics and assignments

- Jeff will post the content of the Times Ink article on Front Porch Forum this week.
- Laurie will post a reminder that the Town Center project will be discussed as part of the Public Information Meeting on February 26 on Front Porch Forum. She will use the content from the town website and include the Zoom link.
- *Times Ink* “election” edition comes out at the end of February and we will have an ad and article
- Jeff and possibly Laurie will table at the Friday Food Affair on 2/16.

c) Start to Plan for 2/26 presentation

The Town Center renovation plan will be part of the Public Information Meeting on 2/26 along with the proposed Town Budget and the Conservation Fund item on the ballot. This will be in-person in the Selectboard meeting room and have a virtual link. Josh commented that this is not usually very well attended. The same presentation will be given at Town Meeting on March 5.

Amy and Laurie stated that they felt that 10-15 minutes at the most should be in the presentation with edited down slides from the Power Point (4-5 at most?). Jeff will send out the Power Point slides he plans to use and will work on editing down the presentation. There should be ample time for questions from voters and let questions drive getting specific information out.

d) Library Grant Opportunity

Laurie stated that the Library Trustees intend to apply for the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund for Libraries which has \$16.4 million for Vermont Libraries. This funding comes from ARPA funds. The fund is intended to ensure and improve public access to high-speed internet for the purposes of work, education and health monitoring. We know that there are community members currently accessing the library’s internet for these purposes. Rebecca and Laurie feel that the best option is to apply for funding to improve access and safety of the public to enter the building by funding the change to the handicap access ramp embedded in the Town Center renovation plan and to rebuild the front steps to code as it is a 2nd means of egress from the building. We would like to do the handicap ramp project, even if the bond does not pass.

Laurie will work with Andrew to pull out the handicap access ramp costs and with Alex to get a reasonable estimate for engineering design and rebuild of the stairs to code. We can include funds to have an engineer design the new front steps as well as rebuilding the steps. Laurie will seek e Selectboard approval to apply at the meeting on 2/20 and get the information to Josh by 2/15. The grant application deadline is March 12 so we will know if the bond has passed or not before we apply and can adjust grant language accordingly.

e) Approval of 1/14/24, 1/22/24, 1/25/24 and 2/1/24 minutes

Laurie moved to approve these 4 minutes and Jake seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

f) Next meeting

This will be the last committee meeting in February. Jeff proposed a meeting on March 7 (after the bond vote) to review vote results and plan any needed next steps.

Public Information Meeting presentation – 2/26 at 7 p.m.

Town Meeting Day presentation – March 5 at 9 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.