

**Town of Richmond
Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes – September 1, 2022**

Present: Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy, Laurie Dana, Amy Wardwell, Christine Werneke

I. Welcome & Public Comment – None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

Library elevator update

Historic Preservation Grant update on Library exterior work

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion

a) Follow up on initial meeting and discussion of future meetings with Black River Design

A planned site visit with John Hemmelgarn (lead architect) and Andrew McCullough (designer) from Black River did not happen due to illness and it is being rescheduled. Jeff reported that he has forwarded the summary of results of the Community Visioning meetings the committee has conducted. He passed along the conceptual floor plans that Breadloaf had developed in their report, noting these are not construction plans. Karen Yaggy has found the original building blueprints which Jeff will have digitized to provide to Black River.

Jeff had an initial discussion with John about the frequency of committee meetings, John felt that our current 2x a month schedule works well and that we may need to make the meetings longer. Black River is also planning to meet with town staff to explore their needs and wants.

Our next meeting, September 15, will be with Black River staff. In preparation for that meeting, the committee discussed their ideas around the process and project plan going forward.

Christine outlined the ideas for elements of a project plan with timelines that she expects Black River will be able to flesh out and which might include:

- 1) Discovery phase – gathering more information on building, town, tenants & community needs and wants
- 2) Synthesizing the information and presenting options for a decision
- 3) Multiple iterations of a plan
- 4) Narrowing down the options
- 5) Documentation for a bond vote

Our assumption is that Black River will have a process they use. Jeff will communicate with Black River about that as something we want to explore in our first meeting. Another question for the initial meeting is around how do they want to interact with us. Jeff has offered to be the single point of contact between Black River and the Town Center Committee and the group felt that was appropriate.

Jeff said that John felt they may be able to complete their work by the end of 2022 and that Jeff feels we might be able to have a bond vote in 2023m but likely not at March town meeting. The Committee supported the idea of making a presentation at March town meeting to update community members on progress and next steps. A special bond vote could take place at any point in 2023 as there is no November vote in 2023.

The Committee also had a preliminary discussion about the points at which the Town Center Committee, as an Advisory Committee, will need to bring recommendations to the Selectboard for a final decision. We can foresee decision points such as renovation vs. new build, Net Zero or something less, design options to estimate, design option(s)

& budget information to bring to bond vote. Once we have a project plan and timeline developed with Black River we should have a better idea of these decision points. Christine encouraged working with Selectboard Chair June Heston to get these decision points on the calendar as quickly as possible.

Laurie observed that we need to be careful in public meetings and statements to acknowledge that building a new building is another option being explored in addition to renovation of the existing building. There are community members who feel that rebuilding a smaller building is preferable and we have a duty to explore both.

b) Preservation Trust of Vermont retreat attendance by committee member

Laurie will plan to attend this workshop and the \$135 conference fee will come out of the Town Center fund. Josh will add approval of this to the Selectboard's agenda for Monday. Laurie will forward the "blurb" about the conference to Josh for inclusion.

c) Approval of minutes from August 11, 2022.

Minutes from August 11 were unanimously approved.

d) Library Grant update

Laurie stated that she has communicated with Caitlin Corkins at the State Division of Historic Preservation on the progress of Library exterior work covered by the grant. As a reminder, we sent out RFPs for this work to 17 firms and received no bids. Jay is going to contact the 6 firms we identified as most likely to do the steeple and exterior building woodwork to ask if they would be willing to bid on the work for summer 2023 (or summer 2024?). He will start these calls after Labor Day. Caitlin said that we are not alone in experiencing this issue. We will keep her informed about our progress

e) Library Elevator

The elevator in the Library failed again in August (4th failure since the spring). We received an estimate from Otis for a repair that they believe will fix the ongoing problems—the cost is \$1,135.98. Rebecca is going ahead with trying to schedule this work, although the contract specifies that the work must be paid for before scheduling.

The committee had a discussion about this contract, the elevator itself (which is only 20 years old and should not be failing) and other issues. This also is a good example of the need for ongoing maintenance.

Laurie asked if, based on the new MOU, this should be a cost covered by the Town Center Fund (TCF) or library funds. After some discussion, the committee felt that this is an ADA compliance issue related to access to the building and should be funded by the TCF. Josh suggested that Rebecca go ahead with this repair and then gather the invoices for the repairs already attempted (work that is not "regular maintenance") and present them all to the Selectboard for approval of payment out of the TCF

Next meeting is Thursday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m.