

**Town of Richmond
Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes September 29, 2022**

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

For Black River Design: John Hemmelgarn and Andrew McCullough

For Engineering Ventures: Kevin Worden

- I. **Welcome & Public Comment** – None
- II. **Additions or Deletions to Agenda** -- None
- III. **Items for Presentation or Discussion**

a) Update from Architect on interview process with Town Staff

Flood Plain Issues: Kevin Worden of Engineering Ventures walked the Committee through the issues that relate to the Town Center building, the Post Office addition and the current flood map (dated 5/3/22).

He first stated that the baseline elevation for the flood plain is set at 311.3 and that there is a requirement that the Town have flood plain regulations due to insurance. Each Town sets its own flood plain rules so he reviewed Richmond's. Richmond's current regulations would allow only storage or parking in areas below the flood plain, such as the basement of the Town Center building.

Kevin briefly reviewed the two basic options that relate to flood plain mitigation in a space below the flood plain:

- Dry proofing – which is the most costly and often not feasible. This requires that the building be sealed to resist water from flooding and ground water pressure from beneath a basement or slab.
- Wet proofing—which allows water to flow in and out of the space via flood vents and other engineering items like pressure valves. This is much less costly.

The Post Office floor may be above the 311.3 standard but they could not find exact numbers. It appears to be just above or just below the standard and filling the mechanical chase underneath the slab and possibly pouring additional flooring material might resolve this problem.

The Town Center basement is about 3 ft. below the 311.3 standard so to dry flood proof it would need to raise the floor 3 ft and dry flood proof to 2 ft. above that—this is not an option for this space due to cost. Wet proofing would allow storage there and flood vents could go in existing windows and pressure valves could be added. If there was an extensive flood event, this area would flood so storage considerations need to take this into account.

Dave & Jeff both commented that in addition to following “regulations” we need to do what is prudent to protect this building from flooding as we know that it is likely to happen again.

Kevin concurred with Jeff's understanding that flood mitigation is required if you are doing “substantial renovations” that cost more than 50% of the buildings' current value. Kevin pointed out that there is some language in the Town's regulations around exceptions for Historic Structures (Town Center is part of the state-designated Richmond Historic District) that might offer some latitude or flexibility. The Town Zoning Administrator would need to interpret that. Christine observed that it would have saved time to have the Zoning Administrator at this meeting and we should think about that for future meetings.

Jeff observed that his understanding from talking with State and FEMA officials is that there might be some FEMA grant money available for this.

Kevin recommended hiring a surveyor to do a Topo and Elevation Survey to clarify the actual levels for the building and the post office addition.

Meetings with Employees & Tenants

John & Andrew reported that they have completed their meetings with the employees and tenants, except for the Police Department. Some of the general comments that they heard were:

Town Employees:

- Town employees would like to be on one floor, ease of public access is important, a welcoming space that is easy to get to
- Security for the building can be done through design, not isolated spaces. Security of elevator going to 2nd floor with no restriction is issue.
- Existing kitchenettes are not being used.
- Town Center employees in general have enough space – storage was mentioned by all and Andrew commented about consolidating storage spaces as one option
- Interest in larger gathering space (town meeting, election, 30+ attendees at CSC)

Tenants:

- Being near each other is not necessary
- Look at shared break out spaces
- Radiate current has studio, office, bath & small room around 1,700 sq. ft. in basement
- MMCTV has specific needs like sound separation, black out curtains. Mentioned that they do camps and could share space with Radiate
- Storage in basement for Rec Dept. & Comm Cares Camp—mold & mildew and non-compliance with ADA in basement is an issue

Committee Comment:

Two overarching concerns brought up during this discussion:

- We should not be designing spaces for specific tenants' needs – tenants may not be there in 5, 10, 20+ years. Need flexible space.
- Currently about 20% of building being used for storage—need to consider how much storage is needed and how it could be combined. John commented, not completely jokingly, that we could potentially rent or construct a storage space for Rec. Dept., OCC and other's needs for less money than committing space for seasonal storage needs in the building. Document storage needs are also evolving as more and more documents are going digital.

b) Status of Library and Town Center work

Opus is working on Library and Town Center projects, and the fire alarm work should begin next week. Library work is underway Jay & Jeff also talked about how to deal with ongoing maintenance in all of the town buildings and whether they could develop an RFP for that.

c) Update on Library projects

Jay reported that he recontacted contractors and a few were interested in a portion of the Library work. He will follow up.

d) Consideration of approval of minutes from Sept. 15 meeting

Minutes from the Sept. 15 meeting were approved.

The next meeting of the Committee will be October 20, 2022 and will be a hybrid meeting.