

## Shaftsbury CCDC Meeting (Community Center Development Committee)

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

April 17, 2024

1) The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by temporary town administrator David Kiernan. Present were Martha Cornwell, Joan Dornhoeffer, Zoe Contros Kearnl, Marlene Hall, and Marie Watson.

2) Conflict of interest

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3) Nominations for chair and vice-chair

Ms. Cornwell was nominated and seconded. The motion passed 3-0-1. Ms. Cornwell took over the gavel. Ms. Contros Kearnl moved to nominate herself as vice chair. The motion passed 4-0-0.

4) Change to deadline for expenditure of ARPA funds

Mr. Kiernan reported that previously the deadline was 2026. It is now the end of 2024 (this because Congress has threatened to claw back the funds). He said VLCT has proposed a variety of approaches that Mr. Kiernan finds distasteful, but thinks that much of the Town's earlier plans can be implemented. \$682,000 must be spent by the end of 2024.

An earlier plan for an elevator at Cole Hall is unaffordable. The group discussed earlier site plans prepared by Goldstone Architects. The community center then proposed cost \$900,000 for 2240 s.f. – too much for the present situation. Mr. Kiernan noted that the larger space required but that proposal would have required difficult discussions about staff, cleaning, and use policies.

Mr. Kiernan said the Cole Hall structure is solid but needs a lot of work, including work to secure ADA compliance. The interior stair, for example, is dangerous and must go. He said he will ask the architects to redesign the front for ADA-compliance, and redesign the existing eastern staircase for functional and aesthetic purposes. Cole Hall also needs to be painted and the windows replaced.

Ms. Dornhoeffer asked about connecting the community center and Cole Hall on the second floor level.

A short discussion of the need for and expense of a commercial kitchen was held.

Mr. Kiernan said he thought we might target \$200,000 for Cole Hall and start work in October. Ms. Cornwell reminded the group that a MERP grant will likely support a new heat system for Cole Hall. (That program is funded by state ARPA funds.) The possibility of receiving MERP funds somewhat complicates construction planning as changes made before the grant is received conceivably could be contrary to grant requirements.

Ms. Cornwell noted that a pavilion is also proposed; should the leftover ARPA funds go toward the community center or toward the pavilion?

Ms. Hall asked whether Cole Hall offices could be replaced by a new structure, or whether the proposed community center could at a later time be redeveloped for offices.

Ms. Cornwell noted that the parcel recently purchased by the Town will need to be reconfigured and enlarged. The veteran's memorial will also have to be moved. And the Cole Hall site

and its accompanying two parcels should be designated as lying within the state-designated Village Center.

Ms. Cornwell returned to the community center, its use and function. Ms. Hall said elections take up more space than the community center could offer. Additionally, anyone can vote by absentee ballot ahead of time. Even Town meeting could be held elsewhere.

Ms. Dornhoeffer asked about farmers markets. All agreed outdoor markets would be suited to the Town Green. Ms. Cornwell said the three local market gardeners all sponsor winter CSAs, so winter markets wouldn't necessarily be attractive to them.

The group brainstormed about who might use the center: non-profit groups, Select Board meetings, senior citizens service groups were suggested. Mr. Kiernan said the community center shouldn't be designed for the biggest imaginable event that could be held in it. Mr. Kiernan said he needs to ask the architect to rethink the space needed – 100 attendees (the original number) for any event might be too many. The group discussed how best to locate the plumbing in the community center. Whether a kitchen is warranted and where it might go was discussed.

Ms. Cornwell brought up fundraising. She suggested a non-profit should be created to accept gifts. She said Arlington has created such a structure.

Also down the road, the committee will need to research organizations that might take over the recently purchased house next door and create workforce housing on the parcel. Ms. Hall asked if the price paid for the parcel could be used to help develop the community center. Mr. Kiernan said that effort will take a few years, so probably won't fit into the community center schedule.

Ms. Cornwell noted that landscaping for the whole project will also need attention.

Finally, the committee will need to be involved in disposing of the old barn standing on the community green parcel. Any proceeds from the auction of the materials in the barn will go back to the community center/green project. (Ideally, the interior beams and boilers and perhaps other items can be sold.)

Ms. Cornwell said Mr. Kiernan will be continuing to assist with the Cole Hall/community center projects even after the arrival of the new Town Administrator on May 1. He will be meeting with the architects to discuss revisions shortly. The group decided upon May 2, 4:30 p.m. for the next meeting.

Ms. Hall moved to adjourn at 5:38 p.m. Ms. Contros Kearl seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.