

Stamford Community Building Group Meeting

May 8, 2018

Attendees: Pat Sullivan, Caroline Burch, Sara Bonthuis, Gina Zauli, Susan Flash, Micah Hayre, Victoria Jefferies, Bill Levine, Joan Levine, Larry Potvin, Chris Derby Kilfoyle, Eleanor Derby Kilfoyle, Carolyn Brooks, Carolyn Bobowiec, Sally Bohl, Maura Hawkins, Priscilla Tracy

Review of Project – Beginning to Present

Community members and the school principal expressed a desire to create a visible gathering space both to help identify Stamford as a community and to offer a gathering space for use by students and community members. The community members formed the Stamford Community Building Group which is open to all community members and has no formal membership or membership requirements. After a couple of meetings during which the desire for a visible space that is easily accessed by students was discussed, the school property emerged as the only viable location for a structure. It was agreed early in conversation that the options for the structure design extend well beyond the traditional gazebo found in many towns and that a design that is aesthetically consistent with the architecture of the school and unique to Stamford would be most desirable.

Victoria agreed to develop sketches of design options as a starting point for discussion among as many community members as possible. The sketches have been presented at two meetings of the Community Building Group (publicized on the stamfordvt.org website) and were offered for viewing and discussion during Green Up Day. The canopies for Green Up Day were set up in the approximate space that a structure would be built.

Victoria has shared the sketches with two architects, one of whom has visited the site. Both are enthusiastic about the potential of the project. There is a possibility that the Stamford project could be “adopted” by a professional architecture school which would make the services of architects, students, and an engineer available at no cost. Should this approach be acceptable to both the architecture school and the town, representatives would make a presentation to the town that would include design options and cost estimates. The cost estimate would allow for work to begin on finding funding sources for the project. Work on the detailed design phase would take place during the August – December semester.

Review of Sketches and Input Gathered from Community Members

The design elements and related comments discussed include:

- Architectural consistency with the school building
- Handicapped accessibility
- A concrete “patio” and hardscaping/landscaping that creates purposeful transitions from one space to another
- Wide steps that could be used for seating
- Incorporate seating benches
- Solar panels to power outlets
- Two enclosed sides: full wall on the west side and partial or full wall on the north
- Use of landscaping to tie together the entire area including Leo’s garden

- Use decorate posts to integrate various spaces – the posts (which could also be used to help identify the town cemeteries) could have inset tiles made by members of the community and could be used in some way as memorials to individuals
- A unified aesthetic is critical to the creation of a “town center” visible to residents and visitors
- A bulletin board and sign-up sheet for use of the structure could be incorporated
- A butterfly roof could be part of the design
- A skateboard ramp was suggested
- A fireplace/fire pit was suggested as a way to create hominess and extend use of the structure into the colder months
- Uses are numerous and include performance space, open classroom, farmer’s market, community events (road race, Seed Savers, library functions)
- The availability of overflow parking space at the church would allow the entire space to be closed to traffic, thereby expanding seating and function space
- Use natural materials that are relevant to Stamford’s location and geological history (e.g., glacial erratic)
- Consider a safety feature that separates the space from the road
- Include aspects of Stamford’s industrial/agricultural/geological history
- Consider elements that would increase grant funding opportunities (e.g., bike rack, bus stop, open classroom, educational programming)
- It would be helpful to determine how many people the structure should be able to accommodate

Process and Next Steps

In an effort to offer more opportunities for community involvement in the project, information about the project and upcoming meetings will be posted on the stamfordvt.org website, in the town office, at the recycling center, and at the community tag sale. The months of May, June, and July will be used to gather input from the community that will both inform a presentation to the selectboard and be shared with the architecture school in advance of their presentation to the town (should the selectboard agree with that plan of action).

It was agreed that the project should be presented to the selectboard by mid-summer. The goal of the detailed presentation about the work done thus far would be to secure agreement that the planning phase should continue, to get the “ok” to pursue a relationship with the architectural school, and to learn about the process for securing a building permit and a variance if required. A maintenance budget will need to be developed and shared with the selectboard.

The possibility of gaining legal non-profit status, which is helpful and sometimes necessary for securing grants and donations, will be pursued. The project could be tied to the Seed Savers non-profit status.

The agenda items for the next meeting will be to plan for the presentation to the selectboard and to begin developing a list of people who may be willing to donate expertise, labor, and materials.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 22, 6 pm, at the school.
All are welcome.**