

Monday, November 21, 2022

Lydia Taft Library, Dummerston VT Strategic Planning Meeting #2

5:30 - 7:00 pm

Facilitated by Luella Strattner

Attended by 18 community members, including one member of the DCC board of trustees, and two LTP Trustees, and LTP Librarian.

AGENDA

1. Pizza and socializing
2. Introductions:
 - a. Icebreaker: "Tell us about your best/most positive memory of an interaction with a library, either as an adult or from when you were a child."
3. Review progress made at the last meeting (Dena)
4. Update on the status of the Dummerston Community Center Board (Melody)
5. Why a Friends Group is crucial to the future of LTP Library (Catherine)
6. Discussion: on Library Strategic Planning and the Role of the Community
 - a. What would make you more interested in being more active with the Library (either as a user or someone invested in building/expanding the Library)?
 - b. What would you like to see at the Library that we have not yet discussed?
7. Next Steps
 - a. Library Trustees meet monthly - next meeting is in December
 - b. Trustees & Dena will begin to identify priorities for strategic plan based on community feedback
 - c. Consider adding a final method for soliciting community input for Library programming - either online survey published on FPF/Newsletter or a paper form patrons can fill out at the library.

MEETING NOTES

Updates from Dena on last meeting

- Reviewed notes from previous meeting
- Overall there is a desire for more open hours, more programming, & a playground/revitalized use of outdoor space.

Dummerston Community Center Board Updates - Melody

The current board is stepping down in the spring - there is opportunity now for a new board to form. Melody is leading an effort to reform a new DCC Board and invites everyone to consider joining the board if they would like to see this beautiful, historical building used to its full potential. Need 5 members but would like more.

Discussion following comments from Melody:

- The future of the library is closely tied to the state and condition of the building.
- Town of Dummerston needs to take responsibility for the upkeep of the building.
- In the last meeting, two selectboard members were present, and they said they would look into the quote for needed repairs to the building, potentially calling in a Structural Engineer/inspector. There are moisture issues in basement, concerns with the current heating/boiler system, electrical and septic issues.
- The Town owns the building and rents it to the Dummerston Community Center, who has been overseeing the building use, maintenance, and repairs.
- Note: the Dummerston Community Center Board was founded ~30 years ago in order to take some financial pressure off the townsfolk for the upkeep of the building. The Dummerston Community Center Board is a 501c3 non-profit. Fuel costs last year were estimated by a member of the DCC Board present at around 7k, electricity around 3k. -
- It is not too late to start a petition for Town Meeting Day to have a line item request for Dummerston Community Center upkeep/maintenance/repairs.
- It might be easier/faster for the select board to add this item to the agenda for Town Meeting Day, rather than going the route of a petition.
- The Selectboard will want to know the annual operating budget of the Dummerston Community Center and what the funds are to be used for.
- The Dummerston Community Center Board has approached the town about the ARPA Funds,
- In order for funds to be allocated, there needs to be a budget for requested repairs/work, which requires quotes.

- Outstanding Questions from discussion:
 - Is the Dummerston Community Center already a line item on the town's annual budget, and if so, how much is allocated?
 - What is the annual operating budget of the Dummerston Community Center? Suggestion to look at the last 5 years worth of records, and add 20% for an accurate amount to account for inflation and necessary repairs.

- Next Steps from Discussion - Melody will hold preliminary/initial meeting of the 'new' Dummerston Community Center Board on Monday, December 5th at 5 p.m. to discuss a strategy for approaching the Selectboard regarding additional funding for the building/community center.
- Catherine will follow up with Zeke about the select board's responsibility/promise to get a quote for the needed repairs to the building.

Friends of the Library

- Catherine A Friends of the Library Group is an important part of the future of the Lydia Taft Library as a Friends Group does two things: Advocacy and Fundraising. The Friends group will advocate for the library in public meetings, including selectboard meetings, as well as socially and they will also host fundraisers to help fund programming at the

Library. Catherine has re-started the Friends of Lydia group, and encourages all to join. She is looking for 4-5 core members for regular meetings, and would love a large group to be able to call upon for the big events, like a geranium fundraiser in the spring. She promises to have quick, efficient meetings.

Discussion:

What would you like to see more of/what would help you to be more engaged in the Library as a user/advocate?

- More information about library offerings is needed
- many people do not know Dummerston has a library or where it is.
- All new residents should be invited to come visit the Library
- More volunteers/volunteer opportunities - Saturday volunteers exist - what about other days/times of the week?
- Volunteers to read a book at the local schools/classrooms and explain about the library -
- Community Sharing opportunities - informally or formally - Fermentation Workshop? Boaz? Skill Sharing sessions
- Sandwich board at Dummerston Center with Library Hours - In addition to event board sign - a sign that lives on the green all the time with set library hours -
- Website - Suggestion to contact Career Center at BUHS - students can build a website for free for community service hours
- Summer Meal Site? -
- Music performances in the summer, outdoors
- Increased exposure and education about what the library has to offer
- more postings on FPF, having events is great as publicity about those events/programs helps people understand that there is a library

Next Steps

- Meeting Monday, Dec 5 @ 5pm of the potential new DCC Board to discuss strategy for approaching selectboard RE: funding for Dummerston Community Center.
- Library Trustees will meet again in Dec to continue work on the strategic plan, and will start to identify priorities from community input. - Will consider if additional community input is needed, and if so make a plan to implement that (survey/form). -
- Volunteers to join Dummerston Community Center Board and/or Friends of Lydia Taft Library Group
- Dena will inform community via regular channels about next community meeting regarding Library Strategic Planning.