

George H. Stowell Free Library Trustees
Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Library Trustees
August 21, 2024

PRESENT:

Selectman: Dillon Gallagher, John Hammond, Jason Bourne

Library Trustees: Laura Cousineau, Kathi Patterson, Marie De Rusha

Presenters: Ingrid Nichols of Banwell Architects

Members of the public: Keith Mullane, Colleen O'Neill, John Dryfhout, Susan Chandler, Wells Chandler, Peter Storrs, Caroline Storrs, Linda B. Coolidge, Hudson Fitch, Hayden Fitch, Corey Fitch, Cindy Griffin, Barbara Cieslicki, Sylvia Platt, Heidi Jaarsma, Troy Simino, Alicia Simino, Richard Thompson, Mariann Thompson, Judith Kaufman, Brian Meyette

The meeting was called to order by Selectman Gallagher at 6:30 PM. He explained to the members of the public that the purpose of the meeting was for the Board of Selectmen to see and consider the similarity between the plans presented at the 2023 Town Meeting and the Final plans to be presented by Ingrid Nichols of Banwell Architects. There would be time for public comment after the presentation by Ms. Nichols. The Selectmen pointed out that the scope of the meeting was limited to the comparison of plans.

Ingrid Nichols showed a PowerPoint presentation comparing the two plans. Some interior changes were noted. Ingrid then offered to answer some questions from the public.

Barbara Cieslicki asked about the exterior colors. Ms. Nichols replied that it will be white with white trim and black windows.

Heidi Jaarsma asked about the number of parking spaces. Ms. Nichols replied that 14 were presented at Town Meeting and there are now 17 on site.

John Dryfhout asked if there was tech space. He was shown the tech area.

Selectman Bourne asked if the office was also a workspace. Is there a counter? Ms. Nichols replied that the office was a workspace with room for a table but that there was no sink.

Heidi Jaarsma asked if the mezzanine was ADA accessible? Ms. Nichols replied that accessibility would be a 6-figure endeavor.

John Dryfhout asked about access to the mezzanine. Ms. Nichols stated that there will be stairs.

John Dryfhout suggested a new air powered elevator that could access all three levels.

John also asked why there was no workspace in the basement. Ms. Nichols stated that the ceilings are too low for code. It will be used for electrical, mechanical, etc.

Alicia Simino asked if the cost was still the same. Selectman Gallagher reminded her that the scope of the meeting was to consider the similarity of the 2 plans.

Troy Simino asked if there would be an answer to the question about the cost. Ingrid began to explain that the first estimates were based on early drawings with preliminary costs. The current plans would go out to bid so the costs might change but could not be quantified. Selectmen Gallagher reminded Troy that the topic of the meeting was limited to the comparison of the plans. Troy said that his First Amendment rights were being abridged.

Judith Kaufman suggested that this project had no construction costs to the Town of Comish. Selectman Gallagher reminded her that the scope of the meeting was limited.

Trustee Cousineau asked the Board of Selectmen if they were going to vote. Selectman Gallagher polled the Board on their opinion if the plans were substantially consistent with those presented at the 2023 Town Meeting. Selectman Hammond considered the plans pretty similar. Selectman Bourne found the plans substantially similar to what was presented. Selectman Gallagher said that the exterior shape has not changed and that the small changes do not seem significantly different.

Alicia Simino asked how many parking spots were for patrons. Ms. Nichols stated that there will be at least 14 spaces plus two ADA spaces.

Heidi Jaarsma asked if there were areas that stacks could not go due to floor strength. No floor has been reinforced. She also reiterated her concern that the mezzanine was not accessible as some children may feel left out. Ms. Nichols replied that the engineers have made the calculations for floor strength. Ms. Cousineau replied that the mezzanine is in compliance with ADA regulations as it is not a unique space (a space that holds something not in another location).

Brian Meyette asked how many more books could be stored. The estimated was about three times the amount.

Jason moved, Laura and John seconded to adjourn. The vote was 6-0 in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie De Rusha, Secretary