

September 26, 2024
Warner Economic Development Committee
Community Center Visioning Session Summary

Summary Findings

- Establish criteria for charging rent to potential tenants based on the nature of the organization and the mix of uses.
- Improvements should be targeted and prioritized, including pricing and phasing. A list of options should be developed for the Town to choose the improvements based on cost and prioritization.
- Shovel ready projects should be identified.
- Funding should include establishing a capital reserve, identifying grants, and participation in the CNHRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program.
- Some felt the building could be sold.
- If building is to be used by the Town, it must be upgraded to meet federal guidelines if significantly renovated.

Do you use services at the Community Center?

- All participants have or are using services at the Community Center in the past.
- People not using services at the Community Center now, may in the future.
- Aerobics used to be offered at the Community Center.
- CAP office serves other towns.
- There used to be a senior center there.

Should other services be provided at the Community Center?

- Income tax assistance.
- Financial literacy for foster kids.
- Reestablish senior center.
- It can be a place to eat with others.
- The main space can serve as a multi-purpose room.
- Adult education could be offered.
- Business and rental opportunities.
- Child Care should be a staple there.
- Multi-use approaches with day and night different uses.
- Art classes and possibly an art gallery.
- Business Incubator.

Should money be budgeted by the Town to maintain the Community Center?

- Yes, until it becomes cost prohibitive. Selling the facility could actually be cost-prohibitive.
- Budget Committee felt they could support providing funding to maintain the facility.
- The facility works fine as is. It has provided a lot of services over the years, and it can do a lot more into the future.
- Funding could be raised through a variety of grants such as LCHIP, moose plates etc. Some communities have committee to apply for grants – better to have on-going plans in place.
- Services are important to a lot of people, and they address a lot of needs.
- A lot of elderly and disabled people use the food pantry.

- The facility blends multi-generational interactions as services are provided.
- The facility is regionally significant.
- Many people are learning more and more about what services are provided.

Should improvements be made to the Community Center?

- Yes, but the needs need to be defined and safety should be a priority.
- Selling the building is an option.
- Energy improvements should be considered.
- Safety should be the first priority.
- Fire Code and Life Safety should be considered.
- There were concerns/questions regarding energy costs year to year.

How could funds be raised?

- Capital reserve fund should be established.
- Grants should be identified.
- Participation in the CNHRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Should rent be collected?

- Rent could be a problem with some of the tenants, especially the food pantry.
- Private sectors could pay rent.
- Rent could be charged based on the type of organization.
- How do you envision the facility in the next 10 years?
- The inside redone with a new elevator outside and the interior updated.
- Community park/garden with better parking
- Fine as is, but with appropriate maintenance.
- Energy efficiency.
- A vibrant building as a source of pride for the community.
- Effective management of space for a mix of uses.
- Cosmetic upgrades only
- Sometimes Towns do charge rent to social service/non-profit orgs. Topics related to deferring rents should be voted on at Town Meeting.
- Rent could be waived for organizations that provide a benefit to the Town. Previously funding from CAP paid for costs.

Ideal Future in Ten Years/possible outcomes

- Remain in use for social services to benefit town.
- There could be other paying tenants if room.
- Outside area could be improved – make it look like more like a part of town.
- The building could be sold or granted to a non-profit entity.
- If building is to be used by the Town, it must be upgraded to meet federal guidelines if significantly renovated.