

Walker School Property Repurposing Committee

Meeting #5 – March 11, 2026

Attendance: Richard King, Elise Brown, Carol McGovern, Barbara Edmond, Joanne Pease, Dean Bartlett, Jane Leibler, Harry Schadei, Peter Beckford, Bob Kohl, at 6:20 Cheryl Ball joined through an internet link.

Whole Committee Agenda:

HOUSEKEEPING

- Meeting called to order at 6:00 by Richard.
- Approval minutes - Postpone til next meeting
- Barbara reminded us that minutes are on Google Docs and the expectation is that everyone previews and comments prior to the next meeting.
- For those who have not, please update Richard's email to:
WalkerSchoolCommittee@proton.me

CELEBRATIONS

- 1st Federal grant application has been submitted to Rep. Golden's office for \$2 million. Submitted yesterday by Barbara Edmond, with Autumn's help. Barbara commented that we received several good letters of support and had the application submitted on time. It will be reviewed in about 6 months to see if we are on the list for approval. If approved, the funds would start distribution around June of 2027, we believe. There will be a match of 25% required.
- Liberty newsletter mailer hit every mailbox informing residents of upcoming newsletter & soliciting the method of receipt (postal mail, email) each resident prefers
- Jane expressed that the response has been a bit low so far. They will work to get the word out more. Barbara suggested it could help to be clearer about wanting a response. That wasn't clear in the initial message.

REPORTS

- Funding
 - Submissions for federal funding:
 - Golden: submitted
 - Collins: due 3/17
 - King: due 3/24
 - The funding committee is focused on finding other sources for the matching funds.
 - Dean stated that talking to alumni as possible donors is a good option.
 - Elise stated that the local fund raising will be more active in the spring.

- There are several town elders to consider for this. It was suggested to organize around 200 year Liberty and 250 year Country celebrations.
- Elise stated that we will be applying to each of the above grants. Staff from MCOG suggested that we apply to all three offices and they work together to sort out which applications are moved forward. They are similar but not the same. We would not receive duplicate grants.
- Many committee members were active in putting together different sections of the applications (real TEAM effort).
- We are able to use MCOG as a review process prior to sending applications. It is very helpful as they have a great deal of experience with these grants.
- Elise is currently working with Carol Woodcock from Senator Collins office for their application coming up on 3/17
- Communications/Community
 - New email for submissions to the newsletter: libertynewssheet@gmail.com
- Facilities
 - Richard stated that at the next meeting he will present how far he has come with design and other facilities information. Richard and his committee will be meeting with Town Office staff 3/12 at 10:00 to discuss their design needs at the new location.

OLD BUSINESS

- Google Drive tutorial
 - Elise shared a powerpoint. Autumn has sent us a link to a "Walker Property Repurposing Committee" . Once drive is opened up, start with Shared with me.
 - Everything we are doing with this project will be found here.
 - Folders have been created within the drive . Elise has begun to fill those folders.
 - Minutes will be added there once approved.
 - Richard suggested that having a google account could make using the drive easier.
 - Documents can be worked on together. Either editing directly into the document or adding to the comment section. Most often we should be commenting only.
 - Adding something to a folder:
 - Download the attachment from an email to your computer. To upload to the drive, File upload and it will load into whatever folder you have open.
 - You could just create a new document within a folder or share the link to a document.
 - Access rights have to be determined. Elise and Autumn have set rights to everyone for minutes and agendas so far. Everyone can see everything but there will be limits on editing rights.
 - Time tracking:

- Everyone has their own tab. Need to be listed hr:min in 15 minute increments. We will use this for grants that allow for in-kind contributions.

NEW BUSINESS

- Annual Town meeting presentation - brainstorm
 - What will be most important to include for a 5-10 minute presentation?<<I suggest a general update on the work we've doing (stay away from \$\$ at the moment, but talk about the grant applications. Also, maybe a ¼ sheet instructions on the town website, newsletter, etc. at the check-in table.
 - Richard stated that we need numbers for grants, but at this time they are only our best educated guess. Elise stated we want to focus on the process and help them understand we are working on a process for obtaining matching funds.
 - Barbara- we want to begin with a focus on the positive aspects of this building renovation process. At the moment, our job is to come up with the plan. We have to dream and think big with the opportunity of getting a lot of money.
 - Jane- Money will be the biggest point and topic of conversation probably.
 - Remember that our goal is to become "tax neutral". Renovation and business model are required to remain tax neutral.
 - Dean- We could have a date set and announced at town meeting for future information meetings.
 - Once we are approved for the grants, we have to have a town commitment to accept it and agree to matching funds needed.
 - Concerns raised for many towns folks that couldn't absorb more taxes. It has been a focus from the beginning for this committee to address that concern.
 - Discussion about when to have another formal meeting. Important to remind residents that our regular planning meetings are open to the public, Suggested to have the meeting once we have more specific information.
 - Richard suggested a good question is to focus on the answer to the questions "What is the value of coming to this building?" It can be many different things to different people.
 - Elise - Talked to Waldo County Bountly which have a big interest in being a part of this facility.
 - There was a question about insurance. It will be taken over by Liberty once we have ownership of the building.
 - Consensus is to have the Town presentation brief and let the town know about upcoming informational meetings and members of the committee.
 - We can apply next year for Congressional grant if we aren't successful this year.
 - Dean- question about current Community hall solar panels. Richard is researching the cost of removing the solar panels and if it's reasonable to move them to the Walker Building. It will ultimately be up to the selectboard to decide about the solar panels.

- Elise- we will include a powerpoint
- Explore using Walker gym as town's community halls - hold-over question from Harry from 3/5 meeting:
 - Get all the pros and cons on the table
 - Identify knowledge gaps
 - Take info we have gathered and digest to discuss at next meeting
 - This will be tabled until the next meeting.

FOR NEXT MEETING - 3/25

- Visioning exercise: how to translate the feelings we identified we want into design features of the property - led by Barbara this will be at 3/25 meeting.
- Building layout presentation - Richard

BREAKOUT TEAMS

- Communications/local fundraising team
 - Update on Newsletter
 - Distribution sign-ups
 - Newsletter name
 - Content, etc.
 - Review last meeting's brainstorming list
 - organize by priority & timing
 - develop actions steps and deadlines
 - Discuss organizing structure, who will lead, note-taking, etc.
 - Brain-storm other community members to recruit to join
- Grant-writing team
 - Federal Earmark Grants
 - Jared Golden application experience - update & what we learned
 - Next up - Susan Collins, submitting 3/17 - review for knowledge gaps
 - Angus King, submitting 3/24 - need someone to lead this effort
 - Queuing up tasks for Select Board, Town residents
 - Securing Matching Funds
 - Sales of Town Office - broker's recommended listing price is \$265,000.
 - ? Low: \$180,000
 - ? High: \$362,500
 - Use of other grants - possibly 2 Community Resiliency Grants @\$75K each for \$150,000
 - Fundraising - would need ~\$85K if we sell at \$265 and raise \$150K from resiliency grants
 - Undesignated Funds in Surplus: \$135K
 - Bond, if needed as bridge
 - Other Grants
 - Community Resilience Partnership - Deadline 6/5 5pm

- Maine Arts Commission Creative Community Grant - Deadline 3/30 5pm
- Interested folks: Alan & Lorna Crichton, youth arts educator Bridget Matrol (has taught at Walker), Nell Parker, perhaps Victoria Barnes. Martha Piscuskas can give Maine Arts Commission guidance
- Who can research other options?

Motion to adjourn- Elise; Second- Harry; No objections