

Maple Corner Community Center Board meeting - Tuesday, July 17, 2018

Present: Pres. Dirk Van Susteren, Treasurer John Rosenblum, Andrew Nemethy, Jamie Moorby, Carolyn Morton, Annmarie John

The primary purpose of this meeting was to alert the board to an important community endeavor by a local group of residents to buy and run the Maple Corner Store and run it as some form of cooperative community operation. The effort, explained by board members Jamie Moorby and Annmarie John, who are both on the exploratory committee looking at the idea, is relevant to the MCCC because participation in several ways may be requested from the MCCC and board approval will be required.

Moorby told the board that an exploratory committee had formed to find a way to fund the purchase of the store, which has been up for sale for a year. The primary goal is to preserve this commercial and social hub of the community, whose closure would be a real loss, and also to try and operate it with innovations that would draw more business and improve the store's viability.

John added that the store was vital in many under-appreciated ways and said "the idea of losing that.. is a heartbreaking thought." As a longtime employee there for 8 years, she mentioned, for example, that the store

provided community services that few were aware of, such as opening at 7 a.m. so high schoolers waiting for the bus have a place to go if it is brutally cold or raining. “There’s so many things like that that are important,” she said.

The pair reported that the ideas being explored to raise funds are focusing on selling shares that would create member ownership and mentioned that the community group was looking at what pricing of shares might work, suggesting around \$2,000 or so, though those were very preliminary figures. What kind of ownership structure would work best is being discussed with a lawyer, Moorby explained, in an effort to find the easiest and simplest ownership. A Sept. 15 goal had been set to incorporate and a Nov. 1 goal for purchase. The owners were reported excited about the prospect, Moorby said, but no purchase price or deal had been discussed yet.

Moorby said the group will propose that the MCCC participate in the effort. She suggested a couple of ways that could happen. One would be for the board to approve using MCCC non-profit status as a “pass-through” for money to fund the effort so that contributions would be tax-deductible. Another would be for the MCCC to make “a direct financial contribution.”

John Rosenblum said the obvious source for some funds would be \$30,000 set aside years ago by MCCC to help make repairs of the Curtis Pond dam, which have never come to fruition.

Carolyn Morton was enthusiastic about the prospects of saving the store with a community buyout. “It’s a best-case scenario if you can get this thing to fly,” she said. John Rosenblum praised the effort by the pair and noted a big plus is they both had worked there and knew the operation.

John explained that the reason the MCCC was a logical partner was that it had the same mission as the proposed store, to serve the community, adding, “there’s a lot of community created in that building.”

Andrew Nemethy also praised the effort but noted that it was important to maintain separation between the two entities and the board would need to make clear that both Moorby and John abstain from any votes on the subject during any consideration.

Other business:

Moorby asked whether the board was OK with a policy of letting community member borrow tables and chairs for summer events in turn for making a donation to the MCCC. She has in the past as MCCC manager let this practice occur as a community service on an ad hoc basis. The board voiced agreement.

Moorby also noted considerable cleanup and brush and weed clearing had taken place outside the MCCC in the backyard to make the play space more appealing.

