

MERIDEN LIBRARY/VILLAGE STUDY COMMITTEE

The Meriden Library/Post Office Study Committee was formed by the Selectboard after the 2016 Town Meeting to undertake the following charge: “To engage the Meriden Village community in a discussion of alternatives for bringing the Meriden Library into meaningful compliance with the Americans with Disability Act including opportunities to consolidate and enhance existing town and public services and facilities in the village of Meriden.” The committee was composed of the following members: Harold Jones, Chair; Brad Atwater; Cindy Heath; Mary King; Amy Lappin; Mark Pensgen; Shawn Rogers; Suzanne Spencer; Steve Taylor; Rod Wendt.

The committee gathered for the first time officially on June 21st at the Meriden Library to walk around the building and to visually survey the layout of the property. The committee met a total of seven times through the year. The work of the committee centered on library issues but also addressed the proposed changes in Meriden village with Kimball Union Academy intending to move the Post Office out its current Main Street location.

It became evident at the beginning that the Meriden Library and the relocation of the Meriden Post Office were two separate issues and should be addressed separately. We did contact a TDS phone company official in charge of TDS buildings to see if TDS might negotiate with the Town about access to part of the TDS building. The official responded that for security reasons, TDS would not allow access to the building. However, there remains the future possibility of negotiating an easement for use of the parking lot and driveway, or for right-of-way for a project that might abut the TDS property. The committee discussed and looked into the possible acquisition of the Meriden Grange property located adjacent to the TDS lot and next to the Meriden Library. We discussed the possibility that this location be used for the site of a future post office.

Mr. Hunter Ulf, head of operations at KUA, met with us in July and suggested we contact Plan NH to help the Town in developing plans for the kind of work we are considering. Plan NH assists communities with projects through a Community Charrette, which brings together members of a community to help it visualize goals for the community. Following a weekend of meetings, recommendations are offered to support the vision of the community. Our committee believes a process like this would assist us in planning for future change taking place in relocation of the center of Meriden Village.

The bulk of the committee’s energy and time was spent addressing issues faced at Meriden Library with ADA compliance. In light of our discussions and research, we found that the Meriden Library offers a vital service to Plainfield residents living in Meriden village and there is a pressing need to remedy the lack of ADA compliance. Consequently, the committee offers the following recommendations:

A. We recommend the formation of a building committee to resolve ADA compliance problems at the Meriden Library.

B. We recommend the Town pursue acquisition of the building and land of Meriden Grange and establish a memorial recognizing the significant contributions that Meriden

Grange made to Plainfield and New Hampshire and maintain open communication with Kimball Union Academy.

C. We recommend that the Town of Plainfield pursue negotiations with TDS that might give Plainfield an advantage if there are changes at TDS in the future, and to further maintain friendly relationships with abutters to the Library/Grange properties, including Tariki Stoneware; TDS; Thom's Tavern; the McNamara family; and the Aidron Duckworth Art Museum.

Submitted,

Harold "Dewey" Jones