

## **DESIGN - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How will the size of the new town office, library and community space compare to our current facilities?**

The existing Town Offices are approximately 1,400sf. The current proposal includes approximately 1,900sf of new Town Office space on the Main Level. In broad strokes, this space includes three individual offices (460sf), a workroom (460sf), a lobby (475sf), a vault (350sf) and a small meeting room and kitchenette (160sf).

Also on the Main Level is a new Community Space of approximately 880sf. This includes two public restrooms and other code-required elements, such as an elevator.

The existing Library is less than 620sf. The current proposal includes approximately 1,600sf of new Library space on the Lower Level. The bulk of this space is for the collection, seating and work space at 1,100sf. Also included in the Library is a meeting room space (140sf), a lobby (250sf), storage (80sf) and a public restroom (50sf).

For a more detailed breakdown of the above spaces, see the [Square Feet Summary](#).

### **2. What will Monkton residents be able to use the community space for?**

The community space is one of several shared spaces in this design, what it is used for depends on the user. To Town Committees and the Selectboard, it is meeting space, to the library it is large program space, to the community it could host weekly films, talks, or classes. It could even be rented for private events to the extent that it didn't interfere with other uses. The community space is available even when the Town Offices and Library are closed.

If the community space were rented; it would be recommended that the Selectboard develop a rental policy. This topic could be discussed at any moment in the future.

### **3. What's the status of the septic system?**

There is a mound system designed for the site. The property purchase did include a complete septic design for "Lot 2" which includes an engineered wastewater disposal system designed for an anticipated daily volume of 600 gpd. The architect and civil engineer have evaluated the occupant load and the current septic design is adequate for the proposed building.

### **4. How will water needs be addressed?**

The Town will share the existing well of the Friends Methodist Church next door. Two sets of tests were run on the well. One test was the standard well test which tests for coliform, nitrates, arsenic, lead and the like. The second test looked for any trace of petroleum contamination. Both tests passed with flying colors.

### **5. Has the church granted shared parking?**

The Friends Methodist Church is happy to share parking space with the Town and they are excited about having extended parking available for church services.

### **6. How has the building been designed for maximum energy efficiency? Can the roof support a solar array?**

Once the bond vote passes, the architects will detail the building to be Net Zero ready. It will be an all-electric building, utilizing air-source heat pumps for heating and cooling, with no fossil fuel backup. Insulation will be maximized in coordination with economical construction practices. The roof will be built to support solar PV panels.

For those interested, the following references the basis of the building envelope construction for the project estimate. The estimate includes minimum code for commercial buildings R10 under the concrete slab, 2” of Rigid foam on the outside of the foundation walls. The estimate also includes a wall assembly that includes a 2” continuous layer of insulation combined with bat insulation in the stud cavities. (R9.6 Zip-R sheathing and 5.5” of Rockwool insulation is assumed). Finally, for the roof assembly, R60 has been estimated. This will be achieved with cellulose (flat ceiling) and foam (sloped ceiling).

**7. In the event of a long power outage, does the building need electric back up, such as a Tesla Powerwall or a generator?**

Emergency backup is not currently included in the budget, however a plug to allow a connection to a portable generator will be included in the project scope. Following bond approval, the balance of architectural and engineering services can be completed. Bellwether Architects and their consultants will identify the building energy needs (Heat, Cooling, and Electricity). This analysis, coupled with historical power outage data can be evaluated by the committee to determine the best approach for stand-by power.

**8. How will the Town Offices be secured when other functions are taking place in the building? Can library users access the upstairs community room when the town hall is closed and vice versa?**

The building is designed such that each program element—Town Offices, Library, and Community Meeting Room—has a separate entry that can be locked. The shared small meeting room on the main level, with the kitchenette, can be accessed, and therefore locked, from either the Community Meeting Room or from the Town Offices.

**9. What mitigation will there be against mold, especially with regards to a subterranean library with books?**

As conditioned space, the relative humidity is controlled by the heating and cooling system and will keep humidity levels at a minimum. In addition to the mechanical ventilation, the foundation will be waterproofed, insulated, and will include a perimeter drain to move water away from the foundation. With these systems engineered, and installed properly there will not be a mold issue.

**10. Why do we need a stairway AND an elevator?**

These are both required by code. Having an elevator allows for handicapped accessibility to the lower floor as well as to the outdoor patio at the West end of the building and is specifically required by code.

**11. What is the reasoning behind the location of the Town Offices, Community Meeting Room and Library on each floor?**

First and foremost, it is important that the Town Offices be easily accessed from the parking area, both for ADA and accessibility in general. Therefore, the Town Offices are logically located on the upper floor towards the North East corner where there is the most level ground for parking. Also, since the community’s priority is for new Town Offices there seemed to be consensus that these offices should provide the most public face on the street.

Second, it was felt by all on the committee, and underscored in the outreach meetings, that the community space should have optimized western views. There was much debate in the committee about whether or not the Community Meeting Room should be on the lower level for easy access outside, or on the main floor adjacent to the Town Offices. It was finally agreed that it was best placed on the main level for the following reasons: 1) the location optimized views West, 2) the adjacency to the Town Offices allowed for the

sharing of the smaller meeting room and kitchenette, 3) the community space could be used in conjunction with Town functions, such as development review meetings, planning commission and Selectboard meetings, 4) if the space were on the lower level it would be less dramatic and less “inspiring,” a criteria that was mentioned repeatedly at the outreach meetings, as well as allowing the library to benefit from great views, and, 5) the organization of the various program elements, and the square footages, fit most compactly in this arrangement.

**12. Shouldn't the vault should be on the ground floor due to its weight and the fact that it doesn't need windows?**

While it would be more economical to locate the vault on the lower level, there are many issues to consider. Most importantly the vault needs to be visible by the Clerk at all times, so it must therefore be on the main level. The added cost is \$12,979 as identified in the project estimate to support the vault on the second floor. In terms of the total project cost, the committee felt this added cost was justified. There will be back up storage on the lower level that does not have the same requirements

**13. Isn't this design more expensive than just a simple rectangular structure?**

Yes, it is likely to be a bit more expensive. But at the Community outreach meetings the Committee heard from participants that they want a building that is architecturally appropriate, and the feedback was generally in support of the “Cross Gable” design, not the more rectangular design also presented. The Committee, and community feedback, supported this design because it fit better on the site, had a more functional floor plan, and looked more appropriate in its context.

**14. How has the public outreach informed the proposed design?**

Public feedback clearly favored a historic style that reflected the history of the town and that referenced the existing Town Hall. The new building is in a Greek Revival style (like the existing Town Hall) and its general scale and massing are designed to fit in this village context.

There has been significant feedback about building the new facility into the existing landscape to keep the project economical, and to take advantage of opening the rear of the structure to views and the outdoors. Therefore, the proposed lower level is buried inside the hill, yet is also open at the rear.

The public consistently recommended setting the building back from the street.

A significant amount of feedback proposed taking advantage of Western views, allowing public access to these views, and working with these views to create an “inspirational” experience.