

Community Center Building
Vision for the Future
April 19, 2023

The Community Center building is in need of significant investment to address issues with the foundation, water ingress & moisture, roof replacement, siding replacement, heating, and the overall design and condition of the bathrooms. It's a good time to ask what we want the building to provide for the community, so we can invest in what matters to the people who use it.

The main uses of the community center building have changed a lot recently. Little Peaks is moving to their new location so they can expand their program. The Keene Summer Youth Program started using the school for the summer program because the school building fits the program's needs better than the Community Center. The Community Center will only be used a few days a month starting this summer and for the foreseeable future. There are now many buildings in town with space and facilities for meetings and activities that didn't exist the last time the Community Center was renovated. The Keene Fire Department, the Keene Valley Library, and the Keene Valley Fire Department all have excellent meeting spaces.

How we invest in the project is a big decision and input from residents is critical. What do we want the building to do? What programming and community needs do we want the building to serve? How do we support the recreation that is taking place at the fields and rink? What impact does this have on other town buildings?

Forming a task force composed of volunteers from the community would be an ideal way to develop recommendations for the town board to consider. The task force would meet 5-6 times over the course of 8 to 10 weeks and develop recommendations for how to proceed. There is already an engineering report and the town hall can provide support in gathering figures on the cost of operating the building. The town hall can also offer support for surveying the public, hosting meetings, and other administrative work to help the task force focus on generating good ideas.

There are three basic options that need to be explored.

Option 1

Patch it up and limp along: make the most basic improvements that allow the building to operate safely. Make basic repairs as they come up and continue to keep the building operating as it is.

Option 2

Renovate and refurbish; invest in repairs and upgrades that keep the existing structure in operation. This would involve structural, plumbing, electrical, roofing, siding, and other significant repairs. Having good year-round bathrooms should be a major goal.

Option 3

Replace the building with a new structure that is smaller, more accessible, has better bathrooms, is easier to maintain, and keeps some of the character of the current building. For example, we could keep the cupola and reuse it on the roof of the new building. This building could be designed to have year round bathrooms and support the activities that are taking place such as sports, skating, family gatherings, and outdoor meetings.