

Dexter Regional Development Corporation & Community Farm Project meeting -- February 2, 2010

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. With DRDC President Roger Brawn welcoming everyone. He asked Dave Pearson (as acting treasurer) to give a report on how we ended the year financially.

Money spent out: The new 200 amp service cost \$1735.99, we paid a \$45.00 water bill and after the media bill was paid off. Our CD is at Skowhegan savings bank.

DRDC Executive Director Judy Craig spoke about the property (the ditch) that was deeded to us from the town, on the east side of the building, and how it be used with a deck on that side of the building, also providing handicap access. She also gave a brief summary of the Farm Project for the new people attending the meeting.

She passed around a sketch of the layout of the interior design that QA 13 had given us. The group reviewed the plan and one of the thoughts was that the bins should be on casters, so that they can be moved. It would be a good idea for the seasonal changing of goods as well as cleaning.

Mr. Mullis brought up about the possibility of the shelving being too high and that things should be kept at eye level, but not block the clear vision to the back of the store where the homemade local ice cream area will be.

Roger reviewed the meeting of the 26th when QA 13 Architects came to visit, and went over some of the design elements. The 2 architects from the firm, Ken and Paula, took a look at the ten burner stove and beautiful double sided slate sink. Both will be moved from the old Odd Fellows kitchen to our new general store, to act as part of the vintage design element.

Brack brought up the plan that we should move the sink and stove first so that things can be fitted and designed around them. The slate sink will not be operational; but be used as display only.

Ken and Paula also reviewed ways that we can save money, by having people lend a hand with some of the work we can do ourselves. Steve Wintle has been advising the group on the different hazardous materials that need to be properly handled. Steve is an expert on the subject and has worked for the state before. We can work with a group of leaders for different areas of clean up.

Our timing has to be right because the Federal grant will limit us once the general contractor begins. Around March 1st we need to have leaders of the groups ready to direct their group. It was also brought up by Dave Pearson said that we need at least sixty hours of heat to be able to do an accurate Radon test. Even though we have a full tank of oil, the burner is not running.

Bradley Heating will be looking at the furnace to see if he can get it up and running. We have been advised that the wiring in the building could be a problem if we were to run electric heaters for any length of time.

Judy suggest holding workshops in the near future to help people understand the kind of food licensing they will need and how to get their kitchens licensed or will they use the Fossa General Store certified kitchen. It will be a general question and answer workshop, for whatever kind of information might be needed from the community with specific speakers.

We also spoke about getting our own kitchen in the new general store certified, so that we can cook and have less waste of perishable products. It will cost more money to get the certification, but in the long run it will help the farmers.

Judy talked about her trip to Belfast with Sue Watson of USDA RC&D and farmer Gloria DeNicola, to see the co-op there. Judy took many pictures to spin off ideas from. Even though we do not plan to be a co-op, the kitchen supervisor in Belfast, was very helpful in suggesting different ideas on how they run their store. Judy spoke to Jim Fossa (former owner), about the old sign that was left in the building. We will be talking to the Historical society to see if we can retain the sign because it was intended to go to the Historical society. The sign would remain inside for a decoration.

We talked about how nice it would be to have some seating for people to relax and enjoy an ice cream cone or just reminisce about the old store that the Fossa family owned for so many years. The second time the building was rebuilt around 1920, a clothing store was added. Since it was not making enough money during the War, they changed it and put in an ice cream counter instead. Jim Fossa is going to look for the old family recipe.

Judy thought it would be nice to have the children in the area name some of the ice-cream. Dana mentioned that he felt that the area for ice cream shop (in the architects design) might be too big. It was also noticed that an area for the cash register for the ice cream window was missing. The group agreed that more planning needs to be done.

We also talked about the location of milk, and the fact that we want people to walk through the store to get to it. That way they can see all the other goodies on the way.

The architects suggested that we will need \$60K in additional money for a kitchen. Judy mentioned her conversation with Chris Reardon, who installed a kitchen in the grange. He said that he was able to install a kitchen for around \$6500 by using second hand items that cleaned up just fine. He also gave Judy the number for a fabricator of stainless steel, who can make up whatever we need.

Judy mentioned the email from the Koals family. They were very helpful and kind to work with the graphic design of the sign. Several designs were sent to Judy. Judy also spoke of Amber Lambski of Skowhegan. She purchased the old Jailhouse and is using it for grain. She would like to partner with us in the future for a Sara Trust grant. This type of grant would not put as many limitations on how we use the grant money.

Commissioner Seth Bradstreet talked to Judy about the project and we are keeping him up to date.

The idea of asking the Rent a Center building to put signage in the upper windows was brought up by Lauraine. A sign with the revitalization of Dexter mentioned would get people more involved. Roger and Judy recommended for Lauraine to look into the possible use of the vacant windows.

Dana brought up the question of how hot the second floor of the building will be in the summer. Brack asked if we had a plan for air conditioning in the store. The group agreed that with the fresh farm products and meats, that air conditioning will be needed. Judy spoke about a combo heat/ac unit that was being invented by HydroPhi. She also brought up the idea of tunnel sky lights, and how nice it would be to have natural light in the store.

A wonderful idea was brought up by Brack to have a chalk board to list any specials we might have in the general store that day. We talked about the outside sign and how we should have one on both on Spring Street and Main Street. It was also mentioned how important the vintage look and lighting would be.

Sampling was another topic brought up. Smoked flavors and BBQ scents through the air will bring people in. Judy made mention about how important it was to select the right person to manage the store. Someone with extensive knowledge and a friendly personality should be chosen. Judy also said how Tim Wilson's "Seeds of peace" project was an important step to get the community involved.

Fred Sherburne recommended going to see speaker Joel Salutin at a seminar at the Bangor Motor Inn on 2/9 & 2/10. He has published a book called "Poultry profits" The session will be on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00- 4:00.

The meeting came to an end at 8:45p.m.