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Squamscott Community Commons is alive and well

Opinion
May 28, 2010 2:00 AM

To the Editor:

I also want to clarify a few things that were not addressed in the Exeter News-Letter article on May 25, as we have had a number of people contact us with questions.

Most important, I want to state clearly that SCC is alive and well. Our goal is still the same as it has been from the start — to build a center for the entire community, to house the agencies that provide many vital services to our neighbors, to create a common space for the use of people of all ages, backgrounds and interests and to build a recreational facility that addresses the needs of everyone. With respect to the latter, our recreational priorities remain the same; a swimming pool, an exercise/wellness facility and a number of other amenities. We have been reviewing the size and scope of the building's design to see if there are ways to economize. We are also exploring the idea of building the facility in stages to reduce the costs incrementally.

We are reevaluating the original notion of demolishing the old junior high school in favor of reusing some of the building. SCC is working with well regarded builders, experienced in this type of project, evaluating the site and expect to have their feedback in the next few weeks.

As your story reported, we have been exploring the possibility of relocating the facility to the former Great Bay Community College. It seems possible we could reduce the overall cost of the project and complete it sooner. The building is well suited to accommodate our agencies programs and services. I believe this was the right thing for us to do because we have a duty to explore any viable option that will enable us to achieve our objective.

Today our focus is clearly on the Linden Street location in Exeter and our resources and efforts are directed to deciding how best to proceed in that location.

The dissolution of SCC's relationship with the Southern District YMCA/Camp Lincoln will enable us to move forward with our capital campaign. The primary reason we felt compelled to end the long-standing partnership was our organizations were unable to agree on the management of fund-raising efforts. The national YMCA has mandated that any fund-raising is aimed towards building a YMCA must be led by the YMCA. While SCC understands this position, it is antithetical to our own. Until that issue was resolved SCC was not in a position to solicit funds because there were too many questions we could not answer about the nature of the YMCA's involvement. SDY/Camp Lincoln is a tremendous resource to this community and I am happy to have them nearby.

With respect to our future, the SCC board has assigned working groups to review every aspect of our plans and to report back to the board early this summer so we can make concrete decisions about how to proceed. Our intention is to make decisions regarding the new design, scope and schedule of the project as early in the summer as we can so we can push forward with the capital campaign immediately thereafter.

We continue to enjoy the support of our member agencies, our major donors and the federal government in the form of the \$1 million grant awarded earlier this year. Equally as important, we have the full commitment of a large and very gifted group of volunteers and professional staff and, we hope, the community we serve. The Squamscott Community Commons mission is very much alive and with your continued support we have every intention of seeing it through to completion.

Davis Farmer

Chairman, SCC Board of Directors

Thank you for supporting Main Street Art

To the Editor:

Thank you to all the vendors, volunteers and shoppers who made the Main Street Art Community Yard Sale such a great success. Thank you to Coed Sportswear of Newfields for the use of their parking lot. Thank you to The Meat House of Exeter for donating hot dogs. Thank you to The Space Station of Newfields for donating a large storage unit to hold all the donations. The yard sale wouldn't have been such a tremendous success without the leadership of Karen Lynch and Chantal DeFeo who organized the yard sale, and Etta Williams for organizing the bake sale. Many thanks to our tireless volunteers including Win Fream, Gwen Jefferson, Christine Mikkelson and Rebecca Watts and to the many other community members who donated the goods

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