

Old junior high soon to be demolished

Community center acquires deed

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EXETER — The former Exeter Area Junior High School building will officially be turned over to Squamscott Community Commons on Monday, June 30.

The Exeter Region Cooperative School Board approved a warranty deed and maintenance agreement and supported signing the appropriate documents that would transfer the building to the community center during a meeting on Tuesday, June 24. The Commons has been in a purchase-and-sale agreement with the Exeter Region Cooperative School District to purchase the old high school "annex" since August 2006.

UN-COMMON CELEBRATION

A private celebration is scheduled next week at the Exeter Inn to honor the hundreds of volunteers and major contributors who have brought the Commons from vision to reality. Contact Carol Walker Aten at carol@squamscott.org or 778-4722.

"I think all of us at Squamscott Community Commons are thrilled that we are closing on June 30 and that the School Board approved the decision," said former executive director

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Carol Walker Aten, who is now a member of the Advisory Council. "It's been a lot of work, collaboration and negotiation to get to this point and all along there has been only full support from the school administration and school board in making this happen in the two-plus years we've been working together. It hasn't been easy, but it's always been good."

Squamscott Community Commons is a multi-tenant non-profit "green" community center to be built on Linden

Street in Exeter. It will house a full-facility Y.M.C.A. and agencies that provide programs and services in health and wellness, arts, culture, nutrition, child care and recreation, and will function as a community focal point for residents of all ages and economic levels throughout the Seacoast.

During Tuesday's meeting, board members discussed the deed, with lawyers representing the school district and the Commons, that includes provisions stating if in the future Squamscott Community Commons sells the property

to a similar organization the deed transfers over. If not, the Commons will first offer the building to the Exeter Region Cooperative School District. If the district turns down the proposal, the Commons could be sold on the open market. If it is sold on the open market to a nonprofit organization, there is no impact on Squamscott Community Commons, but if it is sold to a for-profit, the sale proceeds are split between Squamscott Community Commons and the school district. The deed restrictions stay as written as long as the school district regulates the Tuck Learning Campus next to the Commons.

Now that the closing date is set, the Commons group is revisiting the project schedule and looking at when the abatement and demolition of the former junior high building will be scheduled. Aten said the public will be made aware when the

building is to be demolished as there will be a celebration.

Aten said at this point she would not quote a cost or completion date as the schedule is constantly changing.

The Commons has previously reported a completion date of mid 2009 and estimated cost of more than \$13 million.

A private celebration is scheduled next week at the newly-renovated Exeter Inn to honor the hundreds of volunteers and major contributors who have brought the Commons from vision to reality. For more information, contact Aten at carol@squamscott.org or 778-4722.

Participating agencies of Squamscott Community Commons include Exeter Center for Creative Arts, Great Bay Kids Company, Richie McFarland Children's Center, Rockingham Community Action, SeaCare Health Services and Southern District/YMCA Camp Lincoln.