

## **Narrative: The Vestry – A Hinesburg Community Cultural Center**

A group of engaged Hinesburg citizens are working to renew and restore the Vestry Building. This structure is one of the oldest buildings in Hinesburg (circa 1840) and is in very poor condition. Our group seeks Site Plan Approval from the Hinesburg Development Review Board so as to initiate restorative work on this 1300 square foot building.

Although the use of the Vestry is not fully defined, the proposed use would be as a cultural community center open to people of all ages, both from Hinesburg and other communities. The focus of the center would be on art, literature and music as well as the history of our community within Vermont. In many ways, this continues the community use of the structure both for religious and secular meetings and activities

**Proposed Uses:** within the Vestry we see the following spaces being shaped:

1. An entry area by the entry door along route 116/Main Street
2. A modestly size meeting/display room that would be 800 square feet and would be a venue for community gatherings/meetings with the focus on literature, music and art events. It is hoped that books and documents relevant to the arts would line the outer walls of this space. Seating would be loose and various configurations would be possible.
3. A small serving kitchen by the east door of the building.
4. A small unenclosed office space for administrative activity.
5. An accessible bathroom
6. Storage space for materials and for visitor coats etc.
7. A stairway to a possible basement space.
8. A mechanical room, likely in the basement or crawl space.

### **Parking and Access:**

Given the proposed uses and the nature of interior spaces we project that the building's user capacity would be 35 people. Such "larger" gatherings might occur twice per month. This would result in a parking demand of approximately 12 spaces and only one of these can exist on the small lot of the Vestry (this space would be to the east of the structure ... see site plan). We would propose to "share" parking spaces with both St. Jude's Catholic Church and with the United Church, 400 yards to the north. The St. Jude's option is preferred as this parking area is both substantial and is positioned directly adjacent to the Vestry. Use of these spaces is by informal (not signed) agreement. The use of the United Church spaces would be by agreement (see attached) and dependent on schedule coordination.

We would structure an understanding around the events and uses of the church. Religious services, weddings, funerals and concerts would eliminate significant events at the Vestry.

### **Hours of use:**

In addition to the scheduling of events that deferred to events at St. Jude's, we would also wish to define "hours of operation" so as to minimize impact on our residential neighbors. Perhaps with added discussion this impact will be further defined but we see all events ending by 10 PM in the evening. Furthermore the Vestry will be heated, cooled and well-ventilated so operable, triple pane window use would restrict noise transmission during significant events.

### **Energy use and approach:**

The State of Vermont has mandated that all new structures built after 2030 will be energy neutral from an operational standpoint. This means that all new buildings will be required to produce more energy than they

consume. While this applies to new buildings, we feel that the Vestry presents an opportunity to do much the same with an older historic structure and thereby serve as a model for effective restoration and renewal. With significant improvements to the building envelope, combined with a photo voltaic panel array on the south facing roof, the Vestry will be a sturdy example of restoration, re-use and positive energy generation.

### **Historic Restoration**

Bringing the Vestry back to a useful life will be a memorable accomplishment. This part of Hinesburg's Main Street is comprised of a healthy string of significant, historic structures, all of which address the street in a similar and significant manner. The removal of St. Jude's, some 30 years ago left a significant "hole" in this part of Main Street. We think that the restoration of the modest Vestry Building will amplify our community's commitment to this historic part of our village. Overcoming severe site restrictions (lot size, parking availability) are important facets of this restoration.

### **Landscaping, site features and site lighting:**

- New decorative fence 6' high along the east and south east boundary of the site to block view of 1 parking space
- New exterior lighting over the east and west entry doors. These fixtures would be down lit, shielded fixtures with motion sensors.
- New landscape elements would include a 24' long hedge adjoining the west public sidewalk and one new street tree on the southwest corner of the site. Species to be determined.

### **Site and Building dimension information:**

Building footprint/area current and proposed:

- Current lot size area is 2790 sf.
- Current building area is 1500 sf.
- Proposed building area is 1300 sf. (rear shed to east is slated to be removed for 1 parking place)
- Setbacks existing/proposed: 33' west (front); 0' south; 4.5' north; 12' east (rear)
- Lot frontage: 28.6'
- Proposed percent lot coverage inclusive of building, walk ways and 1 parking area: 1670 sf or 60% of lot area