

Village Center Revitalization Committee
Saturday March 6, 2004
Community House

Members present: Reynolds, Riley, Rankin, Griesinger, Johns, Rice, Slavin, Smith, Morris, Whidden Members absent: AuWerter, Galloway
Guests present: Robert Reitman, JoAnn Lechman, Connie White, Ray Burke, Sally Burke, Mary Lee Cianciolo, David Dinger, Diane Welsh, Sally Broome, Trina Nemastil, Chuck Johns, Karen Schneider, T. David Mitchell

The meeting was called to order by Mary Reynolds at 8:40 a.m. The **minutes** of the January 24, 2004 meeting were **amended**. Karen Johns noted that the Mission and Vision statements presented to the committee at the January meeting were changed without committee approval. Tom Slavin moved that we accept the changes that had been presented at the February 13, 2004 Council meeting. Tom Slavin also moved that the minutes be accepted as amended and it was seconded by Roger Rankin.

Larry Rice updated the committee on the progress of the **Communications** subcommittee. Peerless is the Village Web host. Our website has 38 pages. Navigation needs to be adjusted. This summer there may be page dedicated to the VCRC and possibly a web cam so residents could see revitalization progress in real time. A proposal will be made to Council to add new software and 4-5 pages to the Gates Mills website. He will make a formal presentation at the March Council meeting.

Tom Slavin said the **Buildings and Grounds** subcommittee consists of himself, Rick Dekaser, Warren Morris and Gary Pesuit. He said two architectural firms are looking at the Mills Building. Collins, Gordon and Bostwick is one. They have a strong background in library construction and are very familiar with the downtown village center. Visio Architects has also examined the Mills Building for rehab possibilities. The subcommittee will have extensive proposals from each and will discuss them with Council on March 9. Prospective tenants include a coffee shop, high-end bakery and a beauty shop. They would all be locally owned. In 30-45 days, the subcommittee will be able to bring a package to Council concerning financing. What is not yet known is the environmental aspect, whether the fuel tanks that were buried behind the Mills Building are leaking and the amount of asbestos in the buildings. Current tenants are on a month-to-month contract except for Smythe Cramer which has a lease until 2012. Chuck Johns asked if there was a cost comparison between rehabbing the Mills Building as opposed to tearing it down and starting over. He feels that the cost of rehab should not be more than the price of the building itself. He has discussed his concerns with Mayor White. Tom Slavin agreed with this premise and spoke of "sunk-costs", trying to "architecturally preserve and environmentally enhance an economically viable project that will be the pride of the Village rather than a thorn in its side." Once again, Tom said all documents are in a file in Gary Pesuit's office for public scrutiny. Shawn Riley reiterated Chuck Johns' concern about getting a detailed cost analysis for the replacement or rehab of the Mills Building. Tom said they are first going to try for preservation. Bob Reitman asked about the condition of the buried gas tanks. Karen Johns questioned why phase two was

proceeding before phase one was completed. It was decided to change the phrasing for clarification so both could run concurrently.

Mary Reynolds spoke of the progress of the new **library**. Sally Burke commented that the new library as planned will be too large. Mike Morely of the CCPL has said new libraries are planned for one square foot per resident. Sally also questioned the size of the meeting room and the parking implications. She would like to see a smaller library and recommended the interior of the new Strongsville Library be used as a model. Mary Reynolds answered Sally Burke's questions by saying the library is starting out at the minimum 2500 feet (as opposed to our present 650 square foot library in the Historical Society location). Added to that is the 20x20 foot meeting room and space for library staff, etc which brings the total square footage to the 3200 square foot proposal. The existing Cahill's covers 3500 square feet. Tom Slavin suggested a business center within the library, with a meeting area and pertinent periodicals.

Collins Gordon and Bostwick have been retained at a price of \$5000 for a concept/model to be paid by the Friends of the Gates Mills Library and from the VCRC budget. Collins Gordon and Bostwick has an excellent existing relationship with the Village and a long history of library work. They also have a good relationship with the CCPL and that helps when designing the exterior and interior of the library. The CCPL wants our library to be state of the art. Mary spoke of why we should maintain a library in Gates Mills. She feels for a Village our size, a library is a neighborly community gathering place. For those who think we can use the Mayfield Regional Library, a comparison was made to having a local post office. There are two others close by but we still like having our own in the Village. The CCPL has also expressed an interest in keeping the library a part of the Village center. The Ohio Bell site is too isolated and it would be difficult to reuse the building in a different manner if the CCPL would ever decide to move from the building. To answer the question of why Cahill's and not the Red Fox site, Mary talked of the safety and parking issues. Regarding the cost of one million dollars, Mary explained that the price was broken down to a \$200/225 per square foot (a CCPL rule of thumb) times 3200 sq./ft. for \$640,000/\$720,000. A 10% architect fee, a 10% allowance for overruns, upgrades, landscaping and interior design brings the price close to one million dollars. Soft fees include environmental studies costs, permits, fees, a security system, etc. Shawn Riley said an "atrium" does not fit into the design and instead should be characterized as a "commons" area. Connie White spoke of the objectives of a common area: a handicapped access, bathrooms for the community room, and an elevator. Peter Greisinger said families moving into the area like the idea that we have our own post office and library. Sally Burke questioned how the meeting room would be used when the library was closed. Robert Reitman said the meeting room may not get a lot of use. A meeting with the CCPL Program department is planned and the use of the room will be discussed. Sally Broome questioned what would happen if the one million dollars is not raised and wondered if there was a contingency plan. Mary Reynolds said there have been expressions of interest in five figure contributions. Also foundations for continuing education and libraries and grants will be explored as well as money available on the state level. Sally Broome asked if the Villagers will be asked on the ballot for their opinions or will it be a "this is what we are going to do." Mary said it will not go on the

ballot, that consensus will be determined through community meetings. These meetings will be a launching pad for discussions. She sees them as a way to present hard figures and to ask residents if they support the plan. The consensus will come in this manner. The meetings will take place in April and May and Mike Morely from the CCPL and an architect from CGB will be at all the meetings. Sally Broome questioned whether lost revenues has been calculated by putting the library instead of a business on the Cahill site. Chuck Johns questioned after hours use of the meeting room. Mary said it was possible. Sally Burke asked who would maintain the meeting room. Mary will ask the CCPL. Sally Broome questioned the amount of parking that will be available and how far into the hillside the lot can go. Chuck Johns asked if the parking was part of the one million dollar cost.

Roger Rankin moved for adjournment at 9:55. Nat Smith seconded the motion.