

Danville Train Station Committee Minutes - DRAFT

Meeting of December 14, 2021, 5:30-7:00 pm

Location: Danville Town Hall Meeting Room and via Zoom

Attendees: Michael Hogue, Patty Conly, Kate Whitehead, Kitty Toll, Sally Fishburn, Laural Ruggles, Stan Pekala, Tim Ide, Alison Low, Ross Meaders, Ted Houle, Rob Balivet, Beth Kanell, guest facilitator

Meeting opened at 5:33pm by Michael Hogue, chair. The Danville Train Station Committee (DTSC) is a subcommittee of the Planning Committee. Michael took roll and submitted the agenda for approval. Agenda approved.

Minutes from the November 9th meeting were tabled for the January meeting.

Chair Report – Michael Hogue

Michael reported that he met with the Select Board (SB) regarding the change on cost the cost estimate for the station renovation and the possibility of increasing the Town voter ask to \$100,000. The SB was not surprised by the increased cost; however there was some concern regarding at the overall amount. It was conveyed to the board that we are still working with estimates on estimates and we will not have a good number until the architect and engineer completed plans and we have contractor estimates. The SB indicated full support for the work of the DTSC and asked to be kept informed. In addition we should not change the voter ask until we have better information. The board was also told about our upcoming facilitation on scope and use to help us better determine the cost/value equation.

Parenthetically the issue of a voter ask to allocate \$50,000 to the station renovation was raised again and discussed. It was decided to ask the SB to defer the question until next year when we have a better sense of the cost and the amount assembled from grants. (This was conveyed at the Thursday SB meeting, and approved by the Board).

Team meetings were bypassed in favor of the facilitation on use and scope.

Facilitation-Beth Kanell

Beth announced that we were going to create and ‘elevator pitch’. An elevator pitch is a “brief, persuasive speech that you use to spark interest in what your organization does. You can also use it to create interest in a project, idea or product-or in yourself. A good elevator pitch should last no longer that a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds, hence the name.

It should be interesting, memorable and succinct. It also needs to explain what makes you, or your organization, product or idea, unique.

Beth started the DTSC onto the path to develop the pitch by passing out sticky notes and asking us to put a value or idea that we felt strongly represented our personal feeling for the station and its place in Danville. In total the twelve attendees expressed their emotions in 28 concepts/words:

PRIDE (8 TIMES)	EXCITEMENT	HEALTH&WELLNESS
RICH HERITAGE	WE ARE ADAPTABLE	RESIDENTS STRONGLY CARE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY
NEGLECTED HISTORIC STRUCTURE	CRITICAL TO SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY OF LVRT	A HUB TO WHAT DANVILLE HAS TO OFFER
SENSE OF PLACE	SENSE OF COMMUNITY	OUR HISTORY IS IMPORTANT TO OUR IDENTITY
NOSTALGIA (2)	CONNECTION	SENSE OF PLACE
PRESERVE OUR BUILT HERITAGE	EXCITED	GENEROUS
STEWARDSHIP	GATEWAY TO THE TRAIL	SECURE AND PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE
INTEGRITY	HONESTY	TRANSPORTATION
FAIRNESS	OWED TO THE COMING GENERATION	HISTORIC

GROUPING BY COMMON THEME

		TOTAL\$	#\$500	#\$100
SENSE OF COMMUNITY (DANVILLE RESIDENTS, STRONGLY CARE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY, PRESERVE OUR BUILT HERITAGE, NOSTALGIA-2, HISTORIC, APPRECIATION FO THE RICH HISTORY OF THE RAILROAD AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE TOWN, TRANSPORTATION)	8 MENTIONED VALUES	\$5,940	10	5
PRIDE (PRIDE-4, PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY-3)	7 MENTIONED VALUES	\$2,705	4	3
SENSE OF PLACE (VALUE CONNECTIONS, OUR HISTORY IMPORTANT TO OUR IDENTITIY, RICH HERITAGE, PERSEVERENCE, HISTORIC STRUCTURE)	5 MENTIONED VALUES	\$4,935	7	10
STEWARDSHIP (INTEGRITY, STEWARDSHIP, IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING OUR HISTORY)	3 MENTIONED VALUES	\$3,450	6	2
SINGLES (OWED, GENEROUS, FAIRNESS, HONESTY, EXCITED)				

The grouping above is an attempt to group similar values and weight the groups by the number of mentions; also attempted to signify the overall weight by the amount of money allocated to the grouping. Of course this measure is by no means scientific as each person did not have the same amount or the same denominations. However, I believe participants applied the \$500 and \$100 denominations on their critical values.

On a monetary basis, I believe that SENSE OF PLACE AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY rose to the top followed closely by PRIDE. In fact, the three seem closely aligned.

Beth, our moderator, converted this sense of value into the start of an 'elevator pitch':

“Danville has the real thing, a building full of Town pride and history, with the opportunity to embrace economic growth. All this with expected outside funding at 80% of the cost, independent of the Town budget. And the spending will mostly be in Danville supporting our businesses.” We are Danville-WELCOME ABOARD!

A discussion of this points highlighted how personal the station was to the participants and on reflection how critical it was to Danville's economy, and most importantly, the feeling of shared community. A rich tapestry was woven from personal stories of interaction with the station, the railroad and the people who manned the station and drove the trains.

Now we need to follow these steps to create a great pitch:

1. Identify our goal: think about the objective of our pitch
2. Explain what you do: what do we want the listener to remember most about this project?
3. Communicate what makes this project unique.
4. Engage with a question: 'So what do you value most about this place?'
5. Put it all together
6. Practice: Like anything else, practice makes perfect. Remember, **how** you communicate is just as important as **what** you say. If you don't practice, it's likely that you'll talk too fast, sound unnatural, or forget important elements of your pitch.

Next scheduled meeting is Tuesday January 11, 2022 at 5:30pm. It will be hybrid – in person for those fully vaccinated and wearing masks, as well as available via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Hogue, Chair

APPENDIX ONE

Negative Responses and Possible Rejoinders

#1 Comment: “Knock it down and replace it with a new replica for less money.”

Response: That is a credible idea and one that we examined closely-but:

1. There are **no grants** available for building a new building, thus the Town/fundraising would have to support the entire demolition and construction. So instead of having at most \$100,000 invested it would be closer to \$400,000.
2. The **largest portion of the restoration budget is in the foundation, sill beams and fixing the drainage problem**-no savings to speak of with a new structure.
3. The **current structure is high quality post and beam construction**. Unlikely there would be any savings by replacing the building with a similar high quality building. Of course you could build a cheaper stick building, but that’s not Danville Pride.
4. The **building is on the state register of historic places and demolition or any work requires approval by the Department of Historic Preservation**. This approval would not be forthcoming given it has been deemed important enough to the history of the Town, the LVRT and Vermont to be certified and eligible for the Federal Register of Historic Places.

#2 Comment: “Give it back to the State”.

Response: Ah come on-you are just playing with me!

1. You know this is **not the Danville way to give up an historical asset that defines our sense of place, our sense of community, the history and the nostalgia so many feel for the St J and LC line**.
2. To give up control of the station now when the LVRT will be open from St J to Swanton, **when the use grows even faster for four season recreational activity**, all of which will create economic growth and a closer community here in Danville. Danvillites use the LVRT for workouts that promote mental and physical health.

#3 Comment: PLEASE ADD

#4 Comment: TO THE LIST

#5 Comment:

APPENDIX TWO
A POSSIBLE PITCH with FACTS