

Next step for Community Center project

After a great deal of preliminary work, including site evaluation, structural considerations regarding the existing building and consultation with members of the Town’s Recreation Department, the Town is ready to move to the next step in the process of rehabilitating our Spiegel Community Center.

Our architects will present to me next week three design options. Evaluating them and proposing changes will comprise the work of the Spiegel Center Citizens Advisory Committee that we assembled last year. Town Council Member Mary Gehl Doyle is the Town Board’s point person for the project.

The evaluation process will involve extensive participation by the public. You can expect to read and hear in the months ahead about public meetings for the project. The most important purpose of these meetings will be to obtain your views and advice. So I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend. Turnout for our public meetings for the Comprehensive Plan update has been tremendously encouraging. So has turnout at the recent public meeting for our Active Transportation Plan. I hope we’ll see the same level of participation for the Community Center project. It’s central to what we’re trying to accomplish.

To me, the renovation of our Spiegel Community Center underscores three core aspirations that shape our approach to municipal government in Pittsford.

One involves providing the best facilities that we can for the use and enjoyment of our residents, balanced with reasonableness in public expenditure necessary to accomplish the goal. Our Pittsford Community Library represents a prime example of this principle in practical application.

Another involves Pittsford’s decades-long commitment to historic preservation. This commitment profoundly influenced our quality of life for the better, adding immeasurably to the physical beauty of our Town. As I mentioned in a recent column, it’s important to remember that this hasn’t happened by accident. It’s the result of initiatives in the past just like what we’re doing now with our community center. The Spiegel Building is 100 years old as of this year. We’ll mark its centenary with a makeover and restoration worthy of our community’s previous successes.

Finally, restoring this venerable structure dovetails precisely with some of the goals and aspirations central to our work in updating the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and in drafting our Active Transportation Plan. The Spiegel Center is a key community facility, sited in a central, walkable location. Among Pittsford’s strongest attributes is that, although a suburban community, it lends itself to establishing a strong walkability network because of the way in which it has grown over time. We can look forward to a restored Spiegel Center, providing for the needs of our residents and respecting our architectural heritage, standing at the core of that network as it serves Pittsford residents for years to come.

As always, you may contact me any time – on this or any other issue – at bsmith@townofpittsford.org or by phone at 248-6220.