



Town of La Pointe
&
Madeline Island Public Library
Community Center Work Group Final Report
June 2021-October 2021

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HISTORY

There have been past efforts to create a community center on Madeline Island. The following two accounts summarize the most organized efforts to date. The first account is from Julie Stryker and the second from Jim Rodgers. The last section reviews the role of the Madeline Island Public Library in satisfying community needs in terms of a community center.

Back in 1992, Richter Hartig started the Positivity Polebarn Playhouse out on Big Bay Road. It was a pole barn that he converted into a performance space. Over the next 5 years we (Positivity Players) created various theatrical performances during the summer months. Positivity Children's Theatre started in 1994 and our programs were housed in the pole barn, before we moved to the LaPointe School in 1996. There were also movie nights during the summer months. Even the Madeline Island Music Camp students played some concerts out there. Due to insurance reasons and the logistics of having a performance space so far out of town, the children's theatre needed to be housed in a more convenient location. I have been creating and building a black box theater in the LaPointe School gym since 1996. Positivity has flourished over the years and the Bayfield School District has been more than generous with allowing us to take over the little gym for most of the month of July and early August, for the past 24 years. But, the time and energy it takes to reinvent a theater every year is over and we need to create a new space that encompasses our needs and the needs of our community. @ 2004-05 Ric Gilman, Pat Sebranek, Todd Carlson and myself decided it was time to build a community theater/center. We began meeting to discuss the logistics. We had a generous donor, who was willing to put up @\$130,000. Our first step was to procure land. We decided the downtown area would best suit our needs and the needs of the community. We approached Gene Nelson about buying the land behind the motel. The price he was asking was well beyond the money we had. We also considered buying the property next to the museum, and heard that the state was planning on buying that. There was really no other pieces of property big enough to build our vision so, the project began to falter. Charlie Meech approached us about putting it out at MISA. Again, we felt it needed to be in the downtown area, so it would be more accessible. Carl Frederickson had designed a building, the plans of which, I believe, the library has a copy of. But, because of various roadblocks, we decided it best to take the wait and see approach. When the time and circumstances were right, we would see our vision come to fruition.

I believe the time is right.

Julie Stryker North

In the summer of 2004/05, Barb and I chaired a monthly, sometimes bi-monthly meeting, to determine if the need for a community center was a viable idea to pursue. There was anywhere from 8-12 people that would attend. Our first order of business was to determine

what kind of center it should be and what services should be included. The following is what we felt was necessary:

1. An auditorium with a stage for plays, music, parties, weddings etc. It should have storage for chairs, tables, sets, equipment and a sound booth.
2. Teen Room
3. Babysitting Room with crib(s), toys, shelves, games, etc
4. Senior Room with tables and chairs, and area for socializing
5. Maintenance Room
6. Workout Room
7. 2 Bathrooms
8. Office for manager
9. Coat room
10. Kitchen - not commercial

Carl Frederickson was one of our members and he created a mock-up of what the building could look like to include all of our needs.

The building was 100'x50' @5000 square feet

We discussed where to put it and we agreed that it should be somewhere in town or very close. Our first choice was the Kron property, next to the ball field.

We thought we could stick build as there weren't as many restrictions and we figured the cost would run somewhere between \$1.5 and \$2 million.

One of the big questions was how we were going to support it. We discussed an endowment and figured \$1.5 million would be necessary, along with a \$30,000 contribution from the Town of LaPointe at a 5% return on the endowment (\$75,000) plus the \$30,000 from the town would be enough to cover a full time employee and cover maintenance costs. This brought the project to as much as \$3.5 million. As the winter wore on we decided that we needed at least \$500,000 to get the project started. We did quite a bit of searching for a lead contributor and found it wasn't feasible. In the late Spring we disbanded the project.

We never did a questionnaire as we felt we represented a good cross section of the island. The world was vastly different in those days.

The Madeline Island Public Library's role in fulfilling community needs The Madeline Island Public Library was formed in 1960's and has been serving our unique community ever since in more ways than just providing reading materials. Historically the MIPL has functioned as the community center. The Library sponsors: yoga, tai chi, knitting, stem classes for children, afterschool support, tax planning, book presentation, guest speakers, live performances, movies, technology classes, computer rental, hotspot lending, wi-fi, ski and skate libraries, medical equipment library, trips to Mt. Ashwabay, plays at Stage North, ferry support for water aerobics, the childrens summer recreation program, professional development, print services, community building, Little learners preschool, safe space for teens, free indoor space, temperature controlled environment and so much more. It is the heartbeat of the community. In an increasingly digital world our library along with many others has focused on bringing people to people despite scrutiny and dissection of relevancy. The Library's Mission statement reads that the Library will continue to provide materials, programs and services needed to meet citizens recreational needs. The survey results highlight the needs that are not being met. Every one of the top priority needs are entirely possible for the library to support with the correct space.

The Survey

Please see attached survey

Survey Synopsis

Madeline Island Work Group Community Center Survey Summary

Survey Distribution Information

MIWG distributed a survey to the community in the spring of this year to help better discern needs and desires for a potential community center on Madeline Island. The survey, created as a Google survey, was launched on May 20th and was available to the public through June 14th. The survey was distributed electronically through social media, on the Madeline Island Chamber's website and through their email distribution, on the Town of Lapointe's website, and on the Madeline Island Library website. The survey was also provided in paper form and distributed to PO boxes, made available at the library, at Town Hall and at the Chamber offices.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Results were tabulated and paper copies were collected and entered by members of the group at the close of the survey. Information was collected from 184 unique survey submissions. Basic demographic data was collected, and distribution reflected submissions from 48.9% full time island residents, 37.5% island summer residents and 13.6% island visitors. 48.4% of survey respondents identified their age as over 60, 25% as aged 50-59, 9.2% as aged 40-49, 14.7% as aged 30-39, and 2.7% under 30. A separate children's survey was distributed to children under the age of 13.

Individuals completing the survey identified themselves as being affiliated with a variety of groups and organizations. The top four affiliated groups represented were LaPointe Center (3 submissions), Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve (4 submissions), Positivity Children's Theater (5 submissions), and Madeline Island Community Garden / Island Harvesters (4 submissions). Other affiliated groups include Healing Motion, Island Association, Lapointe Community Clinic, Lapointe Center for the Arts, Matter of Balance, Stage North Groundlings, Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce, Madeline Island EMS, Stories of Our Hearts, Sustainable Nation, Woods Hall and Anishinabe Grassroots.

Potential Health & Fitness Use of a Community Center

Three questions on the survey solicited responses in regards to incorporating facilities, equipment and programming related to health, fitness and recreation. Approximately 70% of respondents indicated a strong or very strong desire to include a multipurpose room as a part of a community center. The submissions for likelihood of use of fitness equipment suggested on the survey included free weights (47.8% of respondents), treadmills (44.6% of respondents),

elliptical machines (37.5% of respondents), rowing machines (37% of respondents), spin bikes (28.8% of respondents), swim spa (28.8% of respondents), climbing wall (19.6% of respondents), pilates equipment (17.9% of respondents), stairmaster (16.3% of respondents) and NordicTrack (14.7% of respondents). Additional write-in submissions included jacuzzi, sauna, balance equipment and yoga mats and equipment. Finally, of the fitness classes suggested on the survey, the likelihood of participation included yoga (66.8% of respondents), Tai Chi (34.2% of respondents), spin classes (20.7% of respondents), aerobics (19.6% of respondents), Zumba (17.4% of respondents), certification classes (16.3% of respondents), basketball (14.7% of respondents), volleyball (13.6% of respondents), kickboxing (13% of respondents), and soccer (9.8% of respondents). Additional write-in submissions included martial arts classes and weight training.

Potential Education and Social Service Use of a Community Center

Survey submissions indicating the likelihood of participation in the programs, courses or classes suggested by the survey included guest speakers (58.2% of respondents), arts and trades classes (50.5% of respondents), instructional classes (43.5% of respondents), cooking classes (42.4% of respondents), book club (41.3% of respondents), dance classes, (29.9% of respondents), certification classes, (26.1% of respondents), spiritual gatherings (23.9% of respondents), and theater classes (18.5% of respondents). 78.8% of respondents indicated a strong or very strong desire to see a specific effort from a community center to be inclusive of affinity groups such as LGBTQ, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Elders, Children, Teenagers, Multiple Abilities.

Potential Performing Arts Use of a Community Center

Of the performing arts suggested on the survey, respondents expressed interest in concerts / live music (84.2% of respondents), film / movies (66.3% of respondents), community / childrens theater (60.3% of respondents), guest theater group (57.6%), guest dance group (42.4% of respondents), and recording studio (20.7% of respondents).

Event Space Use and Rental in a Community Center

57% of survey respondents expressed a strong or very strong desire to have the ability to rent a space in a community center. In response to a question asking about specific use of a rented or used community space, the functions included birthday, retirement or other party (58.7% of respondents), fundraisers (30.4% of respondents), funeral or memorial (27.2% of respondents), weddings (22.3% of respondents), massage (21.7% of respondents), acupuncture (14.7% of respondents), sports event coordination (14.7% of respondents) and Pow Wow (8.7% of respondents). 65.7% of respondents felt strongly or very strongly that a community center should collaborate with local nonprofits. 41.8% of respondents felt strongly or very strongly that in considering space rental and use alcohol consumption should be permitted. 34.2 percent of respondents indicated they would use a community center 1 day a week or more. 20.1%

indicated they would use a community center on a monthly basis. The remaining 45.7 % of respondents indicated they would use a community center only occasionally or not at all.

Building Design, Sustainability and Location

55.9% of respondents indicated it would be important or very important for a community center to be located in or near the town of LaPointe. Specific sustainable design features were suggested by the survey and respondents showed support of solar panels (73.4% of respondents), exterior land management (70.1% of respondents), green building materials and finishes (61.4 % of respondents) and a rooftop garden (33.2% of respondents).

Financial Support and Fundraising

58.7% of respondents would be willing to make a financial donation between \$1-200. 20.1% of respondents would be willing to make a financial contribution between \$200-1000. 7.1% of respondents would be willing to make a financial contribution between \$1000-\$4999. 57.1% of respondents indicated they would be willing to make a one time contribution to a fundraising campaign. 53.3% of respondents would commit to a membership fee. If a sustaining contribution model were to be established, 60.3% of respondents would be interested in a monthly or yearly commitment. 39.1% of respondents would commit to a per use contribution. 27.7% of respondents would be interested in assisting with fundraising and 7.6% would be interested in assisting with grant writing.

Comment, Concerns and Questions

Attached for your review are the comments, questions and concerns submitted by respondents. Overall, of the 53 comments submitted, 51% demonstrated support of a community center, 26% were against, and 23% were neutral.

Limitations of the Survey

We have made every effort to make the survey available in multiple formats at multiple locations to ensure the most accessibility to the community. However, it is essential to address potential bias in any survey. We acknowledge that survey respondents may self-select based on factors including, but not limited to, interest in a community center, current community involvement, ability to prioritize the survey among other life priorities (busyness), and peer awareness. We also acknowledge that a survey consultant was not utilized in the creation of the survey in the interest of keeping a needs assessment affordable at this stage in the process.

We would like to see a specific dive into the responses of our younger demographics, specifically those under the age of 39. This includes children and teenagers who are growing up on the island, folks who have recently started a family, and those who are in a likely demographic to start a family on—or relocate to—the island. While we did get responses from

30-and-younger demographics, the majority of respondents (over 70%) were ages 50 and older. Therefore, the survey results may be overly representative of an older demographic. If we want to attract families and young people, it is important that we build a community center that reflects the values and represents the usage desires of this demographic. We recommend keeping this in mind when prioritizing community center design features and programming.

We did not collect information on individuals' gender, race/ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Thus, the survey results do not tell us to what extent a broad range of voices are represented by survey respondents.

Interpretation and Recommendations Based on Survey Results

Based on the survey results, we recommend that any funding explicitly prioritizes the inclusion of affinity groups such as LGBTQ, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Elders, Children, Teenagers, and People of Multiple Abilities.

The majority of survey respondents (78.8%) indicated a strong or very strong desire to see a specific effort to ensure the community center is representative of the cultural identities of all members of our community. This cultural representation can be integrated into the programs that are offered, the design and design process of the space, and the identities of people involved in planning and managing the facility. This was one of the strongest responses of any component of the survey.

We recommend that a space for performing arts, especially musical performing arts, be prioritized with a focus on concerts and live music. Survey respondents expressed a strong preference (84.2%) for attending concerts and live music at a community center over all other performing arts activities, with film/movies coming in 17.9 percentage points lower (66.3%). With consideration of cultural representation of affinity groups, we recommend that multiple forms of live music and concerts be considered when naming the layout and design needs of the space, as well as with regard to programming.

Survey respondents expressed a strong preference for using the community center as a place to incorporate physical movement into their lives. We recommend prioritizing funding toward health and fitness when considering design elements of a community center. With respect to representation of affinity groups, we recommend prioritizing the inclusion of multiple forms of movement and exercise—for all types of bodies, ages, and abilities—into the design and management of the space. This aligns with respondents' preference that the most important element in movement and exercise facilities is a multipurpose room (70%).

We recommend prioritizing passive or renewable energy sources wherever possible in the funding of a community center. Survey respondents showed strong support for solar energy (e.g. solar panels or a passive solar design) and exterior land management to create a regenerative campus. With consideration of cultural representation, we recommend consulting

communities who share our climate, are representative of the named affinity groups, and who have experience with regenerative community structures and spaces.

The CCWG recognizes it is important to acknowledge some of the written comments submitted through the survey. With many opinions being expressed we explored a couple of the questions asked.

1. We already have a Rec Center (Harry Nelson) why not refurbish that? The CCWG explored the current space that comprises the Harry Nelson Recreation Center and found that there is not sufficient space or amenities to accommodate the highest percentage needs: performing arts and indoor physical activity space. In addition the suggested site of building on what is currently the ice rink in the winter at the Rec Center is unavailable as it is considered floodplain according to the Plat map via Ashland County and confirmed by the Town zoning administrator.
2. Why not use the Bell Street Tavern? CCWG found that the Bell Street Tavern is a privately owned event center business that requires rental of the space provided. It is not financially or timeline feasible to contract for the highest needs expressed.

Finally, we recommend the Town of La Pointe with the oversight of the Madeline Island Public Library Board to move forward with a full feasibility plan of a Community Center including but not limited to: construction budget, site specific plans, operating and maintenance budget estimates. The group recommends one area of land to be considered, parcel numbers 014004700100 and 014004390310. These are town owned parcels located directly behind the Madeline Island Public Library.

