Northwest Montgomery Village Center Foundation
Community Design Workshop Summary

Exploring the Reuse of Prices Fork Elementary School

Prepared by the Community Design Assistance Center
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The Community Design Assistance Center worked with the Northwest Montgomery Village Center Foundation (NWMVCF) to organize and host the Community Design Workshop. CDAC project team members included:

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The Community Design Assistance Center would like to express their appreciation to the community members, design professionals, and the Virginia Tech students who shared their time and ideas at the Community Design Workshop on October 28th, 2010. Workshop participants included:

Bennett Teates, community member, NWMVCF
Mike Gunther, community member
Blaine Keesee, Draper Aden & Assoc.
Early Smith, community member
Larry Linkous, community member
Judy Kidinger, community member
Judy K. Teates, community member
L. N. L., community member
Kyle Rogers, Community Housing Partners
Randi Lemmon, representing Anne Yates
John Laughead, graduate student, Mechanical Engineering
John Low, community member, NWMVCF
Anita Puckett, NWMVCF
Vicki Miller, community member, NWMVCF
Michael LaRoche, Landscape Architect
Stephen Cox, graduate student, Planning
Jeff Hughes, graduate student, Civil Engineering
Laurel Heile, CDAC
Elizabeth Grant, VT Architecture Faculty
Brook Smith, community member
Mary Ellen Llyod, community member, NWMVCF
Elizabeth Gilboy, CDAC
Ken Wolfe, community member
Jimmy Crane, community member
Shaoging GE, PhD student, Civil Engineering
Angela Gunther, community member
Bill Brown, Montgomery County BOS
Gloria Smith, community member
C.L. Bohannon, PhD student, CAUS
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Ruth Ann Low, community member, NWMVCF
Delbert Jones, community member, NWMVCF
Jeffrey Weisman, Colley Architects
Rosie Higdon, Hi-Di-Ho Dog Training
Lois Walters, community member
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Tim Owen, Graduate Student, Architecture
The current Prices Fork Elementary School, built in 1952, will soon be closed and replaced with a new school that is being built just a few blocks down the road. Citizens of the communities in Northwest Montgomery County have come together in an effort to save the Prices Fork Elementary School and transform it into a Village Center that will serve people of all ages in NW Montgomery County. A non-profit foundation – the Northwest Montgomery Village Center Foundation (NWMVCF) – has formed to help mold the vision for the reuse of the school and bring it forward to realization! The Community Design Assistance Center, partnered with NWMVCF to host this design workshop at Prices Fork Elementary School on October 28th, 2010 to gather additional ideas from the community and develop an array of preliminary design options for the reuse of the site. Goals for the design workshop included:

- For citizens to be able to partner with designers to see the school as a space with potential!
- To think out of the box
- To think of ways the site can serve as a HUB for the community, a private/public partnership
- For citizens to sign up to help move things forward!

Virginia Tech students and local design professionals partnered with community members, working in groups to explore ideas for the reuse of the school. Each group discussed ideas and preferences for the and then documented that discussion graphically in plan and sketch form.
One thought that came out of the groups was **First things First** – a charge to focus on the programming/purpose of the space before jumping into the design details. Community members want the place to be an exciting and vibrant community asset and to house uses that will be a draw for community members and visitors alike. Groups expressed they would like some current site amenities to be maintained. These amenities included the **size** of the site, in that it is the only space in NW Montgomery County that is large enough to host the entire NW part of the County for discussions or events, and the site’s **recreation** value - its outdoor fields are heavily used.

The following pages summarize the major ideas and graphics that each group produced. Intensive overlapping and paired uses of space will be important to create the vibrancy and economic sustainability desired. Pages are organized by theme, which include:

- community/multipurpose
- village connection
- museum
- businesses/tenants
- daycare
- outdoor
- infrastructure
- restaurant
- partners
- out of the box

Each theme page lists needs to be met by the space, as specified by the groups at the design workshop, and also gives inspiration examples in terms of character and qualities they felt the space should embody.

**DD = used in descriptions to signify design details**
Needs to be met:

- **formal and informal** meeting spaces
- **artisans** – storytellers, musicians, practice facility, blue grass, events
- **special events** – baby showers, weddings, family reunions, receptions, private rental
  
  DD: take advantage of the central location and private backyard.
- **theater** – black box, small theatre stage, rehearsal space, drama related events, dance practice facility, auditorium
- **community multi-purpose** – stage, kitchen, large open area, seating
  
  DD – cafeteria/auditorium only need minor improvements and should largely be kept the same for community activities, same goes for Pre-existing rooms that provide for multi-use, limiting cost by utilizing existing conditions.

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

- **Floyd General Store (also VA Beach example)** – multi-use, business during the day, music/ events at night, a place to eat
- **SW Virginia Towns** – example of places in the coal fields where artists come into the store and jam
- **Room at BMS** – lacks availability, look at amenities
- **“The Grange”** – gathering space decaying
Group 1: multipurpose space with stage and cafe; part of the community space - locate near museum

Group 2: secondary multipurpose spaces, youth room and cafe

Group 3: more informal for meetings

Group 4: general purpose room supporting social functions

Group 5: transformable space for public meetings and large group classes; ie: dance lessons, boy scouts
Needs to be met:

**Busy** – community involvement, connectedness, what will bring people in, destination, people should be excited about what going to happen inside site

**Multi-generational** – something here for everybody

**Icon/memory** – really just about the people

**Technology** – software classes, computer lab, onsite assistance

**Teens** – teen room, modern media, interactive video games

**DD:** open hallway/walls for self-policing and monitoring

**Inspiration and Existing Examples:**

**Meadowbrook:** busy
Group 1: museum, classroom space and technology center located near main entrance and community room.

Group 2: full circle of all age art rooms, incubator, and selling in cafe.

Group 3: rental space for special events with outdoor connection, plaza.

Group 4: retiree housing with a community garden or pool and vegetable market stand in front.

Group 5: outdoor pavilion for rental for events such as weddings and reunions; kindergarden room as health and fitness center.
Needs to be met:

**History** – capture history of the area, genealogy center, oral histories
DD: active and engaging

**Artifacts** – indoor, outdoor, local archive (donations), constantly changing
DD: outdoors terrace for larger artifacts such as farm machinery or coal mining models, potential retrofit of display cases in hall

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

- **O. Winston Link Museum** – multi-media, experiential
- **Virginia Museum of Transportation** – life size artifacts
Group 1: interactive space, with oral histories and displays from each community

Group 2: importance of adjacent outdoor display space

Group 4: area for memorabilia representing the community of Price’s Fork

Group 5: place for everyone in the community to submit artifacts, holistic history of the area
Needs to be met:

**Competition** – do not negatively affect local businesses, key = new use, create something is not in Blacksburg/Christiansburg

**Sustainability** – businesses that bring in revenue, the entire building needs to bring in money, businesses that offer creative extra events and add to community building

**Identity** – attract businesses within Southern/Appalachian identity, quirky and unique
  - DD: front facade individual business entrances

**Food** – “Milkman”, restaurant, bakery, coffee shop, cheese factory, farmer’s market, fresh veggies, Co-op with farmer’s market, Creamery, “The fish ladies”

**Retail** – Bookstore, Local book mobile stop, Flea market, Flower shop/florist

**Agricultural/Outdoors** – Fish and tackle shop, Feed store
  - DD: Utilize proximity of river and outdoor activities (canoeing; hiking), quick drive by convenience

**Service** – Barber shop/stylist, dog training, day care for pets, upholstery
  - DD: classrooms for apprentice work for upholstery etc., indoor outdoor for dog training, main road optimal for dropping off and picking up pets daily

**Incubator** – craft place, gallery, studio, dance studio, creative imagination space, young student art
  - DD: creates unity of creating and selling all in one building

**Government** – Sheriff’s office satellite station, DMV services, voting center

**Professional** – Pediatrician (could be co-related to daycare), geriatric clinic, Doctor’s office, lawyers, pharmacists, Vet clinic, local clinic (flu shots), HCA opportunity (less private practice)
  - DD: infrastructure set up cost for doctors for plumbing and waste management may be prohibitive

**Education** – Private school, New River Community College class

**Fitness** – all ages, class over weight room(yoga, cycling), may not have demand for membership, but does have neighborhood convenience and community,
  - DD: hardwood floors, mirrors, overlap with dance/theatre

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

**Third Street Center** – Colorado school turned village center, lots of tenants

**Meadowbrook** – examples of rental spaces

**Lucy Monroe’s** – unique character
Group 1: opportunity for artisan retail space in the front to correspond with space for lessons related to the craft in the back

Group 2: interior and exterior entrances, seating out front

Group 4: cafe, florist, and artist area to sell products associated with residents in the community

Group 5: commercial uses that would not require major renovations (grease traps and ventilation) ie: barber, pizza pickup, outdoor rentals
Needs to be met:

**Users** – toddlers, pre-K, after school, activities for elderly
- DD: elderly near the children

**Monetary** – fiscal connection, contributes to renovation of site

**Public to Private** – maximize space, daycare may have private area but have access to public multipurpose rooms as overflow space
- DD: build a daycare addition to current kindergarten room, kindergarten room is overflow for the daycare in the day and used by the community in the evening

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

**Rainbow Riders** –

**VT Wallace Day** – Care adult and children next to each other
Group 1: children’s daycare located adjacent to proposed gym. The daycare could serve both full time attendees and patrons who wanted hourly childcare while exercising.

Group 2: addition of daycare building, use multipurpose as satellite daycare space

Group 3: adult and child daycare near each other and green space

Group 4: adult oriented with educational training, civic organizations, and social activities.
Needs to be met:

**Gardens** – co-op, rent out community garden plots, master gardeners club could run, flower and ornamental courtyard maintained by volunteers, farmer’s market
  
  DD: sun, farmer’s market facing street front for pedestrian access

**Gathering** – pavilion structure, gazebo, picnic area, plaza, green space
  
  DD: fountain, for multiple events

**Circulation/Parking** – connection to the Huckleberry Trail, create a new circulation loop around the school, not enough parking for large uses, pedestrian access to Montgomery Farms

**Landscape** – look good and be maintained with minimal budget/resources, park setting, mobile units removed

**Events** – seasonal (apple butter), agricultural events (tractor pull, farm day demonstrations)

**Pool** – indoor/outdoor

**Dog Park** – well liked

**Sports** – fields, soccer complex, baseball field, field partnership with the new school

**Art** – outdoors, all ages

**Events** – tournaments, archery

Group 1: amphitheater, complimentary outdoor space for artisans (sculpture, etc), utilize basketball courts in connection with the gym
Group 3: dog park as an outdoor niche and amphitheater and plaza as multi-purpose outdoor gathering spaces

Group 2: playground and museum display

Group 4a: indoor and outdoor pool with workout facility

Group 4b: outdoor space in front and back, wandering garden

Group 5: pavilion for events is ideal because it is a semi-private area while still located adjacent to a busy road; maintain the sports fields
Needs to be met:

- **additions** – restrooms, number, location, and size
- **accessibility** – Dentist office to day care, requirements are different, hallway for deliveries
- **updates** – may need new roof, has a new heating system, replace windows (but don’t lose sunlight)
- **streetscape** – nice signage is important,
- **facade** – vernacular architecture, blend with rest of community, pizzazz

DD: could add three entrances, museum entrance with porch, outdoor seating in front, open shops to outside through external entrances

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

- **Methodist church** – vernacular architecture
- **historic homes on the street** – scale
- **Cracker Barrel** – front porch, welcoming
Group 1: improve front facade to make it more inviting

Group 2: front porch business entrance, old school entrance as community entrance

Group 3: new welcoming centralized entrance

Group 4: outdoor seating with privacy wall, new entrance in the center of the structure, and front canopies or overhangs

Group 5: create a loop driveway for easy accessibility and safer (one-way) circulation;
Needs to be met:

- **Local** – specialty, local foods, not high priced, whatever goes in should be set apart
- **Café/country restaurant** – flexible space use (sit down, counter bar, pick up)
- **Competition** – don’t compete with current businesses, new, not a repeat
- **Pizza** – quick, easy family food, bake there or Pizza delivery staging; place for pick-up

Inspiration and Existing Examples:

- **Our Daily Bread** – uniqueness, not a franchise
- **Floyd General Store** – food; community stuff at night
- **Mikie’s 7th** – sit down, counter bar, pick up, local foods
- **Lucy Monroe’s** – unique character
VT – VT arts development project, are they interested in community outreach, are they lacking some type of amenity

“The Grange” – gathering space decaying, incorporate as a satellite facility, has already built community, events on a regular basis, move it, incorporate it, invite to see if interested, would they be interested in part of the space for some of the Grange activities

Rainbow Riders – potential new branch

Roanoke Daycare – potential satellite branch in this area

Churches – go in jointly on creating a youth space, pool resources

Appalachian regional commission – potential funding for incubator and arts

New River Community College – class space

Masonic lodge – purchase space to function independently on the site (Kindergarten room)

Blacksburg Parks and Recreation – town could purchase from county for indoor recreation facility

second story – can the foundation support, apartments, DD: overlook green space, solar power

BT route – add a stop out at price’s fork

game day parking – revenue