

Town of Guilford Community Visit

Priorities

Decided in Community Meeting, November 12, 2013

Redevelop the Grange Building

The Guilford Grange building is an irreplaceable community resource that can have a growing role as a community center and focal point for culture, youth activities and programs, entertainment and civic life in the community. A new Task Force, or new volunteers joining the Grange, could develop and implement an ambitious plan to improve and refurbish the building, improve the kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing and electric systems, improve parking, and advance handicap accessibility. A redeveloped Grange building could become much more central to civic life. To make it so, the board, and/or a community task force should evaluate the appropriate ownership of the building, the potential for 501C(3) status, state and federal programs that could be accessed for help in redevelopment, the potential activities and services that could be provided in what could become over time, a true Guilford cultural and civic center.

Develop Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford

A Task Force could inventory potential building space, like the back of the country store, the bee barn building in Algiers, the barn at the fairgrounds, and other potential sites, for their suitability for small business development, and then lead in promoting the development of business incubation space in town. Guilford needs to incubate young businesses and encourage young entrepreneurs who will be the foundations of the next generation of the economy in town. Guilford may not be the center for industry in the future, but it could be the center for cottage industries. An incubator building could include office space, but also provision for light manufacturing, art studios, or food systems businesses, including community kitchen space that could be leased by the day to encourage small value-adding producers to grow beyond their home kitchen scale.

Support the Development of the Church as a Community and Early Education Center

As a small and dispersed rural community, it has been hard for Guilford to afford the resources of larger communities for pre-school services and early childhood education opportunities. Good work has already moved forward to redevelop the church in Algiers to serve many of the needs of a community center which can provide early childhood education resources. A Guilford Task Force can support and expand on existing efforts to plan and advance steps to develop community center resources at the church especially in the area of child care services and other enrichment opportunities for youth in the community.