

Frequently Asked Questions

If the CFPIA Hall is turned into an Arts Center, what will happen to all the activities that used to be held at the Hall?

The Hall is likely to be called something like “CFP: Arts, Wellness, and Community.” Space and time will definitely be saved for traditional community events, private parties (with scheduling priority continuing to be given to CFP residents), and all the sorts of neighborhood gatherings that continue to keep our community strong. All of our grant proposals made clear that this Hall is and will always be a community center. That is its great strength—it is a place where people meet. The refurbished Hall will host all of the activities it currently accommodates (potluck dinners, community meetings, dance classes, exercise classes, AA meetings, art classes, concerts, etc.), as well as many new activities that will be conveniently close for all residents of our neighborhood.

Why did we need to write grant proposals when we just raised money for renovations a couple years ago and the Hall looks pretty good now?

The money raised by our (ongoing) brick walkway campaign paid for an important “facelift” that made people want to come into the Hall again, but we could not afford to make critical repairs to infrastructure, such as installing a new (legally mandated) septic system, making our stairwells wide enough for safe exit in an emergency, upgrading old plumbing and wiring, and repairing new roof leaks.

Will the new building really look like the pictures in the newspaper last year?

Definitely not. These artists’ conceptions were designed to catch the attention of people interested in investing in Rhode Island, and they have fulfilled that purpose. An important part of the process has been to collect ideas from the people who will be living with the building every day. For instance, in the public meeting held in March of 2017, many people voiced concern with the color scheme, and others wondered if the building would fit in with its surroundings. Constructive community input has led to many modifications of the design, and we are sure the final result will blend in with the diverse beauty of Common Fence Point.

What part of the building will stay the same?

The new stage and upgraded restrooms will be a part of the remodeled hall, as will the general layout of the upper hall.

What are the plans for the basement?

Turning the lower level of the building into a welcoming, usable area is an important part of the project. Aside from performing a much-needed modernization of the wiring and plumbing, we hope to create a space with large windows to bring in natural lighting. The plans also include moveable walls that allow users to partition off classrooms for small group activities but open up the space into a single large room for bigger events. Ideas proposed for the lower level include art and music classes, teen and pre-teen recreational events, and afterschool programs.

How soon will all of these changes start happening?

Our new septic system will be installed as soon as the DEM has finished with our paperwork, the project goes out to bid (according to DEM rules), a contractor is selected, and the ground thaws out enough for the work to begin. The current plan for the Hall calls for construction documents to be created in February, after which the RFQs (Requests for Quote) will go out for bid. If all goes well, construction on the Hall itself will begin July 1, 2018.

How will this project affect life in Common Fence Point?

We expect that it will enrich the lives of all residents, since it will provide an even more beautiful place to meet your neighbors for holiday events, community meetings, birthday and anniversary parties, and the like; it will also continue the trend of broadening the array of activities available in our beautiful part of Portsmouth. In addition, it will benefit all of the people who come here because they love CFP, many of whom have been active volunteers in the recent improvements to the Hall. The past few years have seen enhancements to the exterior and interior of the building, new offerings in dance, painting, yoga, meditation, and physical training; toddler playgroups; afterschool programs; and several “clubs.” The air conditioner/heat pump units have made the Hall a much pleasanter place to be in any weather. The new stage has been a great asset to our long-term partner Common Fence Music. The new and ever-changing artwork has brought cultural vitality to any who enter the building for any purpose. We plan to build on this momentum to bring even better things to our neighborhood. Naturally, there will be a transition period, but we are already consulting with architects and contractors about ways to minimize potential inconveniences, and we welcome input from all the communities who call this place home.

What happens to all the usual Hall activities during renovation?

We are currently looking into several other venues for some of our regular activities. As the details become clear we will post them on this website.

How can I get involved?

Okay, maybe this question isn't “frequently” asked yet, but we hope it will be in the coming months. As the project evolves, different kinds of help will be needed. We will regularly ask for volunteers who can take on small, clearly-defined tasks, and we will update our requests at each stage of the progress. We want this project to involve as many residents as possible – this is our Hall.

Who should I contact with questions?

cfpiabuilding@gmail.com. And, as always you can reach out to your CFP Officers or Trustees anytime. The leadership team contact information is on our website at: <https://www.commonfencepoint.org/officerstrustees.html>