

Musconetcong Watershed Association

River Resource Center, Asbury NJ

Owner's Requirements

Overview

The River Resource Center, Musconetcong Watershed Association's headquarters, is proposed to be a workspace and environmental teaching tool for the community. The Association is rebuilding a 2150 sq. ft. abandoned industrial structure, adapting it into a meeting hall with support space for administrative work and environmental education programs. The organization's activities involve public education, municipal outreach, workshops, stream cleanup and bank restoration, well-testing and water quality monitoring. The Center will be a convenient site for river-based recreation activities: canoeing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, and nature study.

The Center is being designed and renovated to achieve the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. A "green" structure will allow the Association to provide a constructive example of our mission to protect the watershed. A successful project will demonstrate the practical application of environmentally sound building and landscaping principles. It is our intention to show that green design concepts can be employed to create a practical, functional and cost-effective workspace using practices and methods that can be incorporated into any similar office project.

Owner's Requirements

Overall

- The building should provide for office space, meeting space and limited storage space. One office should be designed so that it can be rented for a compatible use.
- Limited kitchen facilities should include a sink, microwave and small refrigerator. Local exhaust should not be required.
- The building itself should be an educational tool as well as a functional space. It should provide demonstration and teaching opportunities where possible.
- Design should employ cost-effective and practical solutions that can be easily emulated.
- The building should be designed to obtain Silver LEED certification or better.
- Design and construction must comply with local codes and ADA regulations with a minimum of variances from municipal requirements.

Security/Access Issues

- Public access to first floor area and ground floor area will only be under MWA supervision.
- Standard key-lock door hardware is acceptable; a security system is not required at this time.
- Alarm system is needed for smoke and intrusion (outside sound and light alarm)
- Potential rental office does not require a separate entry or separate electric meter or HVAC system.
- Rental tenant would be trusted with key access to building after normal operating hours.

Operating Hours

- Operating hours are expected to be 9-5 on weekdays with some Saturday workshops.
- Use after daylight hours: several evening meetings per month.
- Expected occupancy level: 4-5
- Average number of daily visitors: 8-10, with occasional groups of 15-20
- Expected peak number of visitors: 30

Communications

- No intercom or public address system is required at this time
- Phone system will probably be a cordless small business phone system with up to 8 station/4 line capability. Tenant will provide for own phone service.

Workshops

- Workshops will be conducted in the large meeting room area or outside.
- Workshops may be conducted after normal working hours.
- Storage space is required for folding tables and folding chairs. Storage space may be on the ground floor.
- A blank white wall or projection screen will be needed for programs.

Sustainable Site Requirements

- The building must remain within the current building footprint.
- Impervious surface must remain within 125% of existing impervious surface (a requirement imposed by the building location in the Highlands Preservation Area.)
- Exterior lighting should not be obtrusive to neighbors.

Water Efficiency

- The design must incorporate composting toilets, necessary due to site constraints.
- Composting toilets must be the "flushable" type.

- Landscaping must be such that minimal or no irrigation is required.
- Boats/paddles will generally be rinsed at the river's edge, however, it would be useful to have a standard outdoor hose hookup for rinsing educational materials that are too large for the utility sink.
- Rain collector barrels will be used to water plants near the building. The barrel would probably be most convenient to empty if they were fitted with a spigot to which we could attach a small hose. The hose would need to be long enough to cross the driveway and be used on the slope area or riparian planting.

Energy & Atmosphere

- The building must be designed for high energy efficiency.
- Solar energy collectors may be employed if the budget permits.

Materials & Resources

- Design must re-use the existing building shell.
- Design must conform to existing window/door openings where practical.
- Materials should be made from recycled content or produced locally, wherever possible and within budget

Indoor Environmental Quality

- Low-toxin emitting materials should be used wherever possible and within budget.
- Building should be well ventilated using natural ventilation whenever possible.
- Work areas should provide abundant natural lighting and views.
- Thermal Comfort: Temperatures may vary between 65-80 F.
- Interior lighting must be functional, unobtrusive and contribute to an inviting work space environment

Miscellaneous

- Recyclables can be carried to the recyclable storage area; chutes are not required.
- A utility sink in the basement will be needed.
- Storage racks for canoes/kayaks will be needed in the basement area. Mounted wall shelves will be needed for holding Rubbermaid-type plastic containers.
- The building and grounds will be maintained by staff and volunteers. In the foreseeable future there will probably not be a need to store gasoline-powered equipment (i.e. volunteers will bring their own lawn mowers; snow removal will be a paid service.)