

Session 5 Video; How to find, acquire, and design a space

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0:00:05.1 Tom Llewellyn: Alright, well, as Keenan said, welcome all to join us. Today's topic is going to be focused on space. So, how to find one, how to acquire one, and how to design a library of things. I'm going to go ahead and share my screen. Actually, I did it too late. Alright, excellent. So yeah, so this is our topic today. This is going to be a little bit of a different session than we've had thus far. So, instead of having a single presenter or two co-presenters, we're going to be running this as a series of case studies, because finding space can be so different for different groups. And depending on what cities you're in, what other circumstances, projects you might need, or available partners that might be in your communities. So we're going to be hearing from Keenan Phillips about the Asheville Tool Library, from Steve Bade about the Toolbox Project, and we're going to hear from Amanda Miller again about the South King Tool Libraries, the two different locations.

0:01:34.2 Tom Llewellyn: And we'll be running this as kind of a series of 10-minute presentations, and there'll be about five minutes for questions about each one of those case studies directly afterwards. And then once we've gone through all of the case studies, we'll have more time for questions at the end. And as we did last week, we're going to be keeping the room open for an additional 15 minutes after our hour has come to an end in case anybody has anything they want to talk about, about their communities or their specific projects, want to check in with any of the work that we're doing at Shareable. So, with that, we're going to get started, and I'm actually going to, rather than passing it right to Keenan, I'm going to start by talking a little bit more about Asheville, because I was involved in co-founding Asheville Tool Library back in, well, we got started on the project in 2013.

0:02:25.3 Tom Llewellyn: And that's where I want to actually begin is, is the kind of the building community around finding the first space. And we had a series of spaces that we thought were going to come together that fell apart and a bunch of amazing partnerships. And some of them were, you know, we were working with the local food co-op. You can see myself there in the middle on the far left with other co-founder... Excuse me, with other co-founders, Dominic and, or Julian, Dominic and Nick Letts. And we were working to partner with the food co-op because they already had this awesome bite kitchen in the basement. And, but there was all sorts of problems with the bite kitchen because it wasn't as accessible as it needed to be. The space that they had available for us had some leaks and all sorts of things. And so we had to pull out of that space and we ended up going into what was going to be, what we thought was going to be an amazing community center. And after spending, and that's the picture on the far right, having a whole crew, we remodeled a chunk of this building. We spent about three months building it out and starting to collect the tools there.

0:03:51.2 Tom Llewellyn: And then we found out that the building was sold out from underneath us. And so it really speaks to the need for finding permanent space whenever possible. But we were not thwarted. And in 2016, the Tool Library opened in its first location, which was in the basement of another space originally called Open Space, changed their name to Base Camp later. And that was just an amazing opportunity because it was in the center of town. There, it was easily accessible. But the issues were that there was not that much space. And so the design for the space was super important. And so one of our other co-founders, Ben Harper, is very good with SketchUp and did a pre-design of the whole space to be able to get the maximum efficiency use out of it. And as you can see, this is the original kind of mock-ups and this is how it ended up looking, which was very similar when you look at the storage and everything else. And so this was key just to getting started. Again, it was only I think about 350 square feet. So it was pretty small, very tight quarters.

There was storage that had to be outside of the building in the parking lot.

0:05:08.5 Tom Llewellyn: But it was the necessary step to get to what was a home for four years and really was able to build it out. And this was a spot that was, the partnership that got this was that there was a transmission shop, which was starting to, they didn't need as much space as they had once needed. And so they at a pretty affordable rate opened up one section of the transmission shop, which had its own facilities and everything to the Tool Library. And you can see the kind of first picture there, and then the picture on the right after it was all built out. And this picture was taken just a month before the Tool Library had to move. And the transmission shop, once again, after many, many years in business, the owner is retired and Keenan can speak to this more, and lost the space. And so there was, they decided to sell the building. And so the building was being redeveloped and that led to the finding of the new, hopefully permanent space. And for that, I'm going to hand it off to Keenan.

0:06:18.9 Keenan Philips: Thanks so much, Tom. And just want to say thanks to you and Ben and Kira and so many people that were around early phases. I can't imagine how challenging that must've been. So I got started getting involved with the Asheville Tool Library a little bit before COVID in the space that Tom was showing on the former slide. And yeah, we had a great time at that location. It was very accessible to people from all around Asheville and I think that really helped us establish when we left there, we had a little bit over 600 members. We're getting close to 900 now. But yeah, we had a three-year lease and the owners of the building were retiring, getting out of it. And they said it's been great, but the lease is over and we don't want to renew it. And we had already been kind of feeling like we were maxing out that space and wanting to be able to do more, specifically programming, teaching classes and other kinds of things.

0:07:30.5 Keenan Philips: So it was really a great thing. And we started searching. The board was kind of in flux at the time. There were only three of us on the board and we all searched as hard as we could. I ended up teaching a workshop at a place called Smith Millworks which is an old greenhouse complex where they keep ornamentals and I know other friends that have spaces that they're renting there. They've had really good experiences with that landlord and he was very supportive of our mission and what we're excited about doing. So he was actually able to find some of the space within one of the warehouses they had there. So this is the warehouse. It's about 50 feet in the short dimension and 100 in the long dimension. The blank space over to the right is actually occupied by a woodworker and then a lawn maintenance company, which is pretty nice. The woodworker is not there much, and the lawn maintenance company, they come, they get their equipment in the morning, they load it up, they're gone all day, and then they unload in the evening. So there's about 15 minutes of noise each day.

0:08:48.7 Keenan Philips: But basically we, as far as designing this new space, we took the best parts of our design at our former space and kept them. So we had a set of shelvings, shelving we called the 100 and 200 series, as well as the 300 and 400 shelves. So basically everything stayed in the same place as they were on those shelves and just got kind of put into the new space. And then we looked at what things we were really lacking and one of them was much space for maintenance, which is a big need of any tool library or tool rental service. You're going to have to be fixing things. So we really increased the size of our maintenance area, which made our maintenance folks very happy. And then we left a good bit of space flexible. Over to the left in the center is a big garage door and that's really nice when the weather's nice to open that up and we've got this flexible space. So when we're hosting workshops we're teaching them usually in that space and now we're

also able to host something called the WNC Repair Cafe. Maybe you've heard of repair cafes happening all over the world, but that's been really awesome to have a little extra space to be able to share.

0:10:14.7 Keenan Philips: I've got a few more slides of the design, just, yeah, closer up of the maintenance area. Things changed for sure, but we at least knew kind of when it was time to move from one space to the other and we had a couple big U-Haul trucks and tons of volunteers. We had kind of a plan of, okay, this is where things are at least going initially. But we kind of left, we left room for adjustment as we went along and found out what our needs were and where we wanted to shift things around. So just a little better view of the other corner. We didn't end up doing the desk and couch in this area. We've actually just recently gotten them up front to kind of have a community lounging area and that's, that's really sweet. And then this over here, this building actually has two bathrooms and then kind of a kitchen and break room that we have use of, but other people that use the building facility also do. So we are using those two walls to the outside of it. We actually have consumables where it says ladders were, and then the weed eaters are slightly further back towards maintenance. And somebody was asking, I saw a pop up in the chat, how high these ceilings are there. I think it's around 16 feet. So over to the left of the picture on the bottom left, you can see some kind of lofted space, which we are working on building out.

0:11:41.8 Keenan Philips: Some folks are getting some printmaking equipment and going to be doing some stuff up there, hosting classes, as well as having open and kind of private working hours. The picture on the bottom right, that is our, I believe that's the 300 and 400 shelf units. That's myself on the left and other board member Stephanie on the right. And then the top picture is the same shelves, just a little more filled out. We've got some racking overhead that an awesome volunteer built with some lighting. And then this is a self-explanatory tour. You want to play that, Tom?

0:12:40.9 Keenan Philips: We have recently gotten an awesome volunteer who's been doing a great job with our social media stuff. We just did some filming recently. So follow along with us if you want to see more videos like this.

0:12:58.5 Tom Llewellyn: I've got to reshare the screen, optimizing for sound and video. Nope, wrong one. All right, let's start this over.

[video playback]

0:13:34.9 Speaker 3: The Asheville Tool Library, we're located at the Smith Mill Works in West Asheville, North Carolina. Up front, we're working on building out a lounge with a little community area where we can share knowledge and ideas. And we have a little merch section if you want to show your support. Up front, we also have our battery charging station for any of the power tools that get checked out. On the other side, we're developing a little seed library. And we have a section for consumables. All of this is supplied by donation. You'll find that most of our tools are grouped by what they're used for and size. For instance, on this far wall, we have all of our hand tools. And in the back, we store all of our ladders and scaffolding. We have a whole aisle of kitchen tools or things you might need while hosting or homesteading or things to help you move. In the middle aisles, you'll find more hand tools, power tools, and pneumatic tools. And then you'll find a lot of things for car repair and bike repair. In the back corner, you'll find our newly formed and being developed camping section. And on the end, we like to keep our larger rolling tools like

lawnmowers, pressure washers, carpet cleaners, and yard tools like weed wackers. That's just a quick tour. You can see our whole inventory online or just come by and give us a visit.

0:15:03.7 Tom Llewellyn: All right, so that's the view of the new space.

0:15:11.8 Keenan Philips: Yeah, and I would say, just like a little, I don't know if it's a tip but the landlord here I mentioned he's really into our mission and what we're doing. I just found out at our board meeting meeting this past Sunday evening that he's, that loft space, he likes the idea of what we're wanting to do up there so much that he's going to offer it rent free for six months. We did have a, I think it was going to be \$250 a month, but he's, he loves what we're doing. He said you can trial it out and we can talk about extending that even. And then he's also got some greenhouse space that he's allowing us to extend into rent free to try out some other things. So that is really helping us with being able to try things out, expand and increase our offerings without taking on too much risk, having a really awesome and supportive landowner.

0:16:10.3 Tom Llewellyn: So I've got a question for you. When you were showing the kind of layout, we were looking at the design version, not the actual photos, I saw there was a section that said fuels. So do you rent or lend out fuel powered tools, chainsaws, anything else like that? And if so, I know a lot of tool libraries have chosen not to, are there any things that you have to do from like a safety perspective and any additional kind of maintenance issues with offering tools like that?

0:16:43.7 Keenan Philips: Absolutely. So yeah, we offer several fuel things and fuel things can be tricky because some use just regular gasoline and have their own oil tank. Some are two stroke machines where you mix in a little bit of oil with the gas, but there are different ratios. So that's probably the biggest reason we keep our own fuel cabinet and we actually just provide fuel with those tools. It's easier to make sure that good gasoline in the proper mix is going to go into our tool and really reduces maintenance. We have had a few gasoline tools like a concrete saw that, that one twice, I think the engine was rebuilt 'cause somebody put the wrong fuel in it and the piston rings blew up. So we finally converted to electric powered concrete saws.

0:17:37.9 Keenan Philips: I don't know what it was with that one tool that was hard for people to get the fuel mix correct. But, and then yeah, we actually have a proper fuel cabinet. I think that is the National Fire Protection Agency is the one that gives guidelines on that. We can build them with simple plywood. They do give specifications. It has to be so thick and the doors have to close in a certain way and stuff, but, you know, pretty big liability. We've got probably 40 gallons of fuel at a time when our cabinet is totally full.

0:18:20.5 Tom Llewellyn: Great. Thank you for that. Another question in the chat was about the, you know, asking for more details about the supportive landlord, wondering if you're given any kind of subsidized rental charges in addition to like this kind of free number of months usage of an additional space.

0:18:40.7 Keenan Philips: I think the rent was, I mean, we only found a few spaces that were even seemingly feasible in for storage, and we didn't even get so far as getting like exact prices on those other ones. So, I don't know, like comparing to the rest of the market, how good or not it is. But we're paying, I want to say it's about a dollar a square foot, which seems pretty reasonable for smooth concrete pad in a fairly insulated building that's got a heating system and it's... But the landlords before I would say were definitely giving us a great deal. They were getting offers of four

to five times what we were paying in rent for that space and most importantly, the location.

0:19:36.0 Tom Llewellyn: And just speaking of the location, before we wrap up and pass it over to Steve, you moved from being basically South slope of Asheville, North Carolina, pretty centrally located to being towards the edge of West Asheville, which there's a lot of stuff going in West Asheville, but you're out towards the far side of it. Have you had any issues with accessibility for members with that move? And if so, how have you addressed that?

0:20:03.2 Keenan Philips: Yeah, that was definitely one of the hardest parts of our move. At first we were trying to stay close to where we were to make sure we were able to continue serving our membership. We used the My Turn program for [0:20:20.4] [REDACTED] and so we're actually really normally able to export a specific spreadsheet with just the zip codes of all of our members. And then I've put that into Google, I think it's Google Earth Map or I don't know, something Google Mappy thing. And look at where our concentrations of folks were. And we found that we were actually, while we were moving away from some people, we were moving closer to a lot more people, and not further from quite a few. So that, we felt pretty good about that.

0:20:54.6 Tom Llewellyn: Great. Alright, well, we've got another question from Dugin but I'm going to hold that until the end 'cause some of these things might get addressed by other speakers, and then we will come back to that question if we still have more time left and it's not otherwise addressed. So thank you Keenan very much for talking about Asheville. And I'm going to pass it over to Steve to talk about Toolbox. And Steve, you want to go ahead and share your screen?

0:21:20.8 Steve Bade: Are we seeing it?

0:21:24.4 Tom Llewellyn: We are.

0:21:25.2 Steve Bade: Excellent. I'm here from Toolbox Project in Eugene, Oregon. We are a purpose built freestanding building, which makes us perhaps a little unusual in the tool library land. We started at the beginning, I'm not a founder. I overlapped with the founder, second generation. Fall of 2013, Beth and Anya got the idea and got started on the 10,000 calls you make to get space. By the summer of 2014, we'd found a site, I.e, a location. And I want to talk a little bit about the location within the city. So we're given a timeline context. We're given a spatial context, 380,000 people in the metro area. We aim to serve all of those. Beth and Anya focused on Friendly neighborhood and the Bethel neighborhood up north. Friendly's very active. Bethel is an underserved neighborhood. I think they probably did make a few thousand calls outside those ranges, but the tens and tens of thousands of calls, do you have space?

0:22:22.3 Steve Bade: Can you support us? We're focused on these two neighborhoods. So Friendly neighborhood itself is pretty dense. It qualifies as suburban on the census track data, but a little on the denser side. So historical timeline, that's context in the city where we're at. The first phases for those first three-ish years were just about contacting people and making friends and all of that. And I think the important part about what we did, what they did back then was actually, and there's some of the friends that we made, you won't, don't take notes, we'll get to 'em later. They started lending tools as soon as Pastor Mike at Friendly Street Church said, yeah, we can work something out. His idea originally was a pad that existed on the site, but the existence of a power line was going to interfere with popping up a shipping container or even building underneath it.

0:23:23.4 Steve Bade: So even while we were continuing to talk about how to do, what to do, where to do, Beth and Anya were at the church parking lot on Saturdays, every Saturday, graduated from the pickup truck and the card table to a sprinter van and a card table, borrowing the sprinter van, we did not buy it. And then transitioned over to looking at the space onsite that was available. Now, the church gives this plot, clearly fairly not used for one of these dollar a year in perpetuity leases. The energy around the build was incredible. That's when all those friends that we'd talked to about, we want to do this thing, say institutional partners like Lane County Waste Management and their waste reduction programs or the City of Eugene. That's when they're, yeah, we're interested, we'll help you. That's when it got real.

0:24:23.9 Steve Bade: Okay, we're getting ready to build. Can you come through with that money that you described? And it actually happened. And we had a lot of good friends who were willing to donate labor or services or materials. Some of them commercial operations like lumberyards, some of them trades operations like the concrete people, some of them construction people. But there were just neighbor volunteers on site every day of the 60 or so days worth of the build. And I think an interesting aspect of building it was that it created a community as much as talking about it created it, more than being in the church parking lot every Saturday was creating a community. All of that was effective. Everybody would come out and say what's going on? We had early board members that were neighbors. We had a lot of member borrowers that just lived in the neighborhood and walked past.

0:25:25.8 Steve Bade: This is where we're at today. It's a 440 square foot shed with about a hundred square feet worth of covered patio there. Just this spring we got 110 foot auxiliary shed, a tough shed product. It was less expensive than I thought it would be and they're pretty well built. So we're very pleased with that. And for the last four or five years, we've had 150 square feet or so of conditioned office space in the basement of the church. That's good for our cider presses off season. They like being in a little more temperate weather, that comes to us below market rate rent. One of our board members is a realtor. So, some of us wished it could be cheaper, but his sense of the world was, if this is reasonable, let's go for it.

0:26:10.9 Steve Bade: So after the original exciting community building stages of building this building, I'd say the energy dropped off a little bit. We still had a lot of work to do. We had to do a rain shed garden for city code requirements. And of course we had to build out the interior. And we found out early on that the pergola, that the patio got pretty dang hot on a Saturday morning. It faces east and the sun comes up and you start cooking. So we got the pergola. And ongoingly, we're adding electrical outlets even right now. So it's just like moving into your starter home or any kind of, you know, accept what's acceptable and make it work for you. Oh, wrong arrow. So here's a picture of the rain garden and you see the sprinter in the background.

0:27:06.7 Steve Bade: We're still out there lending tools. We haven't fully moved into this shed yet. Here's the pergola, and again, this was volunteer built. The woman in the ball cap and the blue T-shirt is a architect and contractor. She gave us the design and the build for free. She and Anya were friends in their graduate programs, and I think Anya said, we can pay you. And she said, I'll just do it for free. She was getting started on her firm and her career and she was willing to do a real life portfolio for us. Interestingly about the pergola and about that weird thing in the high middle, that's supposed to be a pole handled tool holder, it didn't work so great. Volunteers designed and built that and gave it to us and we only finally got rid of it a couple of years ago.

0:27:57.5 Steve Bade: The pergola, the pitch on the roof could be a lot steeper. It does not shed rain well. And it sticks, it's built away from the shed itself, so there's rain coming down all the way around it. So interesting got you with free anything, right? What kind of stuff does it come with? Now, I don't mean to look at the teeth on that gift horse, but whoops, we're living with it. So, this is what we look like pretty much now. Very standard. Not imagining spending a ton of time talking about this 'cause I think it looks like a lot of y'all's ideas and a lot of y'all's existing tool libraries. The middle shot in there is the new version of dealing with pole handle tools after we got rid of that weird cart. So they're just hanging from those cleats in the wall and there's a top pretty long one and we've got bungees around some of the tools.

0:28:57.2 Steve Bade: And then the bays and the framing are storage for some of the other stuff. And those all have locations. You see the drawer numbers, 19, 20, 21, et cetera. Bay H1, Bay J, Bay K, Bay L, stuff like that. I talked about relationships at the beginning and that three-ish year process before we started actually building. That's when you get those connections, that's when you find out who's willing and supportive. And that's when you call a church and they don't even understand what you're asking, you know, what do you mean do we have any space? You saw it, it's a big building, it's in the neighborhood, they don't get it. Or it's not part of their mission. We currently are thinking about maybe setting up another location somewhere and have had a conversation with a church, took a tour, didn't have quite the right space for us, price wasn't going to be acceptable.

0:29:53.2 Steve Bade: We've also talked about co-locating with Habitat for Humanity ReStores here. They're imagining moving within a few years and we've got a great relationship with them that started that relationship thing when Beth and Anya first started asking around, can we do this thing? Some of those conversations were just about money, and the city promised money, and the county promised money, and we had access to that money. The liquidity of the money, we had access to that money based on the relationships, based on the trust that had built and the commitment that we had shown actually being there every Saturday lending tools, developing a community around this thing, those friendships based on relationships in the lower right hand quarter are the people in the organizations that are still supporting us.

0:30:46.6 Steve Bade: Some folks move away from town. Some folks, individual people, their financial situation changes or they just, they're done with that project. The energy around a work party is what we exploited for three, four months when we were building the building. And I think many of us here understand that that's a different kind of energy than showing up every Tuesday at 5:00, Thursday at 5:00 and Saturday morning at 9:00 to actually operate the tool lending library. Of course, some of what you're talking about with people is their capabilities and what they can do. They have a tool, they've got that excavator, they've got access to the concrete truck, et cetera, like that. We need them actually to commit, we needed worker hours and we needed all of the labor kinds of jobs that go with any kind of building project and we were able to provide that pretty much for free rather than having the trades people's crews. So the big part of all of that is the magic in my mind. Two plus two can equal five when the synergy of having a conversation with the city turns into, they're still talking to us and offered us money. Here's X amount of money, what do you want to use it for? Expansion, capacity building, that kind of stuff. So I think that's my last slide. And I'm open to questions. Whoops.

0:32:19.6 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah, I mean, can you actually speak to a little bit more about some of those community groups? You mentioned Habitat for Humanity, you mentioned the the city. Were there specific departments, and do you know how those conversations were started?

0:32:36.6 Steve Bade: Oh yeah. The State Department of Environment quality is, you know, you're going to want to find out. I don't want to give advice. We found out about that, that they existed. Lane County Waste Management is very active in garbage hauling and recycling. We own our own landfill here. It's publicly owned rather than privately owned. So they were an important early one. They offer master recycling classes out of Lane County Waste Management. BRING is a local nonprofit originally called Begin Recycling in Neighborhood Groups, just about getting cans and glass back in the early 1970s. They're basically a building materials salvage yard at this point. A woman that was working there on the floor is actually now the head of the city of Eugene Waste Reduction and Green Building, a department within the city. So we're that kind of city, where people are interested and willing to try new things.

0:33:32.9 Steve Bade: Who else? And of course Pastor Mike in the church. I mean, that's a real commitment, letting us build on their land, letting us stay on their land. And at this point, it's a just a fantastic partnership. We help with security with their building. We don't regularly offer work parties to mow their lawn or anything like that. The congregation takes care of stuff like that, but they've got a key and they can come in and use our tools. Who else comes up? Lots of construction companies came through because it was a thing, you know, Anya's very persuasive. And she shows up and persuades people and they follow through when it's a real thing, when we can show data on my turn checkouts without even having a building.

0:34:23.0 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah. So actually can you speak a little bit more to that about how you attracted those people? Was there specific media work that you were doing, were you cold calling those companies together? What did that look like?

0:34:42.6 Steve Bade: I think there was a lot of cold calling. We had tradespeople involved in the volunteer community around us and they called their friends or their boss or whatever. There's a really sweet story. I'd say that 90% of what we're looking at there was solicited, and we came to some terms. Somebody gave it to us for free or we bought it on the cheap, or we just paid full price. 10% of it was unsolicited, like the pergola design and build. A guy was driving past and came up in the parking lot, Beth and Anya were on site, what's going on here, the building's being built. He was the local representative for the Solatube Sun Skylight Company. And he gave us the skylights and installed them and let us know when he wanted to get into the building in terms of the construction of our steel roof and all of that.

0:35:39.1 Steve Bade: So I think the black and white answer, Tom, is a lot of cold calls. A lot of chutzpah to make that call, but a lot of context from which we're making this call, there's more of us than just me. In fact, there's more of us than just Beth and Anya. There's a whole bunch of people and we're already doing the thing that we want to do and we're doing it without a building. Will you help us build a building at this stage? They did not imagine designing a building. Just give us a space was the first ask. And I don't know what their conditions were. Our conditions at this point, if we're thinking about creating an extra location, a new tool lending library, it's got to be in the right neighborhood, underserved. And it's got to be basically free and it's got to be conditioned space with access to washrooms, somebody takes care of the trash hauling and stuff like that. I don't think that's crazy. I think it'll be a little bit like winning the lottery if we pull that off. But that's the discussion we're having with Habitat for Humanity ReStores. The guy that runs Restore said, yeah, we could look at numbers and I could find a way to sell it to my higher ups that it's marketing for the Restore. Does that help?

0:36:55.3 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah. And there's also, I mean, there's context, there's other restores that already have tool libraries built into 'em, right? So that's not a fresh thing. And I'll say, that was the case when we were starting the Asheville Tool Library as well. And we went and had multiple meetings with Restore, and they decided that in their current space, they just didn't have, they didn't have room for us. All their space was being utilized. So there wasn't that opportunity to be able to build something from the ground up or move into another space with that being part of the intention of bringing a partner along like that.

0:37:28.3 Steve Bade: Right. But they're your friends now. We got a board member from the Habitat organization, and from the city and a woman that was consulting for the city. So not a full on employee, but our early board, the first four people included heavy hitters.

0:37:50.1 Tom Llewellyn: Yep. And I was going to make sure we get to a couple more questions before we pass it on. And again, there's going to be time for more questions at the end when we wrap up. So if we don't get to your specific question right now, please understand that we'll pull back to it again. I think this was a pretty important question that just got asked was, do you find that having a tool library in a church or a religious space prevents people from utilizing the tools? Like are there people that don't feel comfortable? And this is from Leo Nahe, asked this question.

0:38:20.4 Steve Bade: Yeah. I doubt it. I mean, there's a possibility. This is a pretty mellow church to begin with. We're at the back corner of their parking lot, so we almost feel like our own thing, you know, oh, there's this parking lot and there's two things on it, a church at the south end and a little shed at the north end. Yeah, I mean, I get that, and I haven't heard anybody say, well, I'm not coming to you because you're associated with those weirdos. I don't think that's a big deal here and we wouldn't have partnered with a less welcoming, less community minded. It wouldn't have come together, you know? This is the church that puts on... That gives away free root beer floats at the neighborhood picnic every July, so they're pretty outgoing.

0:39:09.8 Tom Llewellyn: And then one last question, and Teddy, we'll get to your question after we hear from Amanda, but this is Claire's question asking that before the shed was built and you had the tools in the van, how did you store the van or tools outside of the van and when they were on the road or not in use, basically when they weren't on the road?

0:39:35.2 Steve Bade: That's a great question. We were borrowing the sprinter, so I'm pretty sure they were getting taken out of the van and dropped in the garage. And the contractor's tools were getting loaded back in. Some of the magic is Beth was married to a contractor and he gave her services at cost. But you look around, I mean, I look around at what's the magic that we have now, you know, who's got magic and how can we use it? We're off grid. We depend on that photovoltaic solar system. Our guy, Solar Dave, takes care of it for us for free. He also does the solar systems for community supported shelters, one of these little micro hut, tiny home homeless support systems. There's folks that have skills and want to share, and back to the idea of the van, it's daunting. But if it's part of the process, oh, we're gonna... It's better than the pickup truck and the weird little trailer and it's not as good as having a building, but we're getting there to having the building, I can imagine an operation fading if you really were dependent on something that was as difficult as that.

0:40:46.9 Tom Llewellyn: And I also wanna say that we're gonna be doing a session on May 7th, I believe, which is gonna be all about going mobile with... And so we'll have somebody from the

Share Shed, which is a tool library truck that drives around throughout the county to multiple locations. And we'll also be learning about people that are doing self-managed shipping containers and kiosks. And so different ways of being able to get out in the community without having kind of a dedicated permanent space. So that'll be coming up on May 7th at this same time. Alright, Steve, thank you so much. We're gonna move on to hearing from Amanda, and I'm gonna go ahead and share my screen and run the slide. So that presentation again.

0:41:36.8 Amanda Miller: Thank you, Tom. Thank you guys. Thanks Steve and Keenan, everybody that's done so much so far, and hi, it's me again. I'm that lady that does things, the South King Tool Library, so my name's Amanda Miller. I'm the executive director of the South King Tool Libraries now, we're working on how to phrase all of these things, but for all terms and purposes for today I thought it was interesting to at least subtitle it as shipping containers and a salon because those are the spaces that we occupy now, but go to the next slide, Tom. I wanted to start... Took a page from Steve there and wanted to give some context. So, on the right hand screen here, I actually made this for our local community, our groups of tool libraries here.

0:42:34.6 Amanda Miller: This is the Pacific Northwest Region, just from Tacoma to Shoreline and this is a obviously a big concentration of tool libraries, I think at least for the region. But if you don't know much about this area, that's totally fine, there are... Everyone knows Seattle for the most part, but there's a lot of folks that work and do a lot to support the infrastructure of the two kind of big hubs, metropolitan hubs of Bellevue and Seattle, and then Tacoma being another one. And so I just threw this map on and put a little bit of a circle, which is just vagaries, but I wanted to show a little bit of why we decided to open a tool library down this direction. So I moved to Seattle sight unseen 'cause I thought it would be cool and lived in West Seattle for a little bit, but I was a little too intimidated to ever use the West Seattle Tool Library, to be quite honest.

0:43:42.0 Amanda Miller: But I moved to Federal Way to start my family and put some roots down. So, but I wanted to show the map on the left hand here because it's pretty diverse community and I don't know if there's a map that exists that could really indicate that. But our area here has refugees to every socio-economic class to over 115 languages spoken in our public schools, and then a lot of the service industry folks that work in... Go into Seattle, actually live down in South Seattle. So I wanted to show the concentration, a lot of the tool libraries that are in the region do focus on the neighborhoods and the communities that are in Seattle, which is great and needed, but we decided we really needed to do something for the folks in South King County. So, next slide.

0:44:42.4 Amanda Miller: So, I mean, this is going to be a very long session. I will shorten it for you guys. Around 2014, actually, the idea was brought to one of my friends who I give her credit for being the founder of the tool library. And they said, someone suggested to her she start a tool library in Federal Way. They said, yeah, six months, \$10,000, that should be about how much it could cost to start a tool library, which, I don't know, but I would laugh at that, even not knowing what I know now. So, needless to say, 2016 is when I actually got involved with the tool library, and all we really had at that point was what you see on the left hand side, which is a really lovely architectural rendering, and then what you see on the right hand side is about 2019 I wanna say, or no, that would actually be after 2020, so it took us a lot of time to really get to this point. We lost, just like Asheville, lost the first site we were looking at, we landed on building a building because of our research probably talking to a lot of you guys about how it's really difficult to move. And finding secure location was a big challenge for all of the tool libraries we talked to. And I mean, secured not just in safety and security's sake, but also just rent and permanent or how to foster those

relationships, just like you guys are asking us now. So we landed on this space which is very unique. Let's go to the next slide.

0:46:27.8 Amanda Miller: Next slide. Now you guys can keep that image in your head. Yeah. So this space was our second pitch location, the relationships varied from... Senior center was where we were initially going to be. The shipping container design was designed for us by a sustainable architect and was really satisfying for the upcycling, the usability, and sort of what we were circling around with waste reduction, but that relationship actually ended and we found a pretty unlikely partner in a Masonic lodge, so on the left hand side, obviously there's a building, a big black roof, that's us, and the gray roof to the left of that is actually a Masonic Lodge. That's a... So the arrow is pointing at a shed, but to the left of that is gonna be the Masonic Lodge that is there. And while it is a very odd thing, we're mostly female run organization, female led, and Masonic folks are generally male, and there's a whole dynamic there.

0:47:36.1 Amanda Miller: I don't have time to get into all of those things right now, but welcome those questions later if you're super curious, and then behind our building, you see our demonstration rain garden, and that whole space has just grown and been a really cool site for like, we've partnered with Eagle Scouts, we've done a lot of educational classes there, been a really great benefit to be able to grow into that. So I just wanted to show this. It was also really important to us, obviously with equity at the center, being close to transit. So what you can't see is that the next business over is just off of a highway. And so that was a great way to be near bus stops that could be accessible to folks. And then another added benefit is the Masonic Lodge has a dining hall inside and a huge drive-through area, which we didn't realize was gonna be kind of important in order for us to even open.

0:48:35.4 Amanda Miller: So we opened in 2020. Let's go to the next slide because I think, cool. Yeah, we opened in 2020 because it took a long time. We broke ground in 2018 to build this building, to get the funding to do that I convinced our board of directors to float a little bit of some of the costs. So yeah, you try to get volunteers, you try to get them at discounted rates. I was able to connect with college recent graduates for welding that had the certifications to do the overhead welding that we needed to do, we were actually broken into probably three times before we even opened and one of those times garnered a roofer that was willing to put a roof on us because we ended up getting the press to cover it and he found out about us.

0:49:32.6 Amanda Miller: So it still wasn't entirely donated, a lot of the work we did try to compensate people for because they had skilled labor, but some fancy footwork, I'll just say, to get that done. We pressure washed the inside of these containers. They were donated, but they were used and abused. And I can tell you, I found after I made my presentation, the engineer plans, which I don't know if you can see here, Lego bricks. I swear to God, these guys just work in Lego bricks because it was not practical to figure out how to even build this building. So I won't rant too much about that, but it was a interesting journey to say the least to figure out metal shipping containers, how to fasten those with a deck, even ADA compliance and things like that.

0:50:24.1 Amanda Miller: We ended up getting our certificate of occupancy in March of 2020, don't know if you guys remember that time. Probably do, big time, but I went on vacation and then I joked I can never go on vacation again. I might have already told you guys even that joke, but yeah, it was disheartening. We sent several appeals to the governor's office to actually open and kept getting denied. So, let's go to the next slide. This is making me sad. So, right, I stopped asking, and

not that everyone should do that, there's reasons for things, but sometimes when you realize that Home Depot and Lowe's, they're all doing gangbusters and people are eating in drive-throughs, maybe they can check out tools in a drive-through too. So, that space, luckily, again, conducive to that idea and that model.

0:51:19.3 Amanda Miller: Somebody asked about reservations. We actually ended up doing a very much manual reservation system, getting things in inventory, and then we just kept at it really. I think almost all of these pictures were between the years 2020 and 2021. We evolved and continued with things like clothing swaps, repair cafes, Eagle Scouts built into spaces, that we added picnic tables and an herb garden and shelves, and it was a great challenge at very least, obviously there's limitations with the height of shipping containers, the space of shipping containers, they sweat, they're cold, they're hot, there's all kinds of things I won't, again, totally go into detail with. But one of the biggest challenges is just putting stuff up 'cause we don't have wood, and so we had to frame out anything we wanted to put up onto the walls. So that was a process, but people were there and showing up and supportive and we are able to open for folks to come in. I think we started doing that right in, at the end of 2020 but we wanted to try to keep everybody safe. So, let's go to the next one. I don't wanna be too over time. So that's Federal Way. In 2023, we decided to be really ambitious and we went for a King County grant. Now, King County is, that picture that I sent to you, that I showed you guys first, Seattle is part of King County all the way to Tacoma, and it's a big animal, there are a lot of people and a lot of funds really do go to Seattle and not a lot of the other regions.

0:53:16.7 Amanda Miller: So we were really excited to get this grant and work with them to open a second tool library. And I can't help but think it's hilarious that we were in a mall and you guys can... I'm sure there'll be a lot of questions about this, but what I wanted to make sure to note is that I didn't choose it, number one. Number two, this is a really unique space. So this is an outlet collection, we started this venture saying we were gonna open a second tool library, didn't even know what city we were gonna partner with, and so we talked to a few in South King County, got the re plus funding in late 2023. It took them quite some time because grants are super fun and reimbursement grants are even better because then you don't have any money, but you have to spend it, so on and so forth.

0:54:02.9 Amanda Miller: So, there was a lot of work that went into thinking about how we were gonna do this intentionally, how we were gonna get the community involved, we did several community info sessions at the libraries with special service groups and then created a steering committee to help us make decisions because I don't live in Auburn and I didn't want it to be an imposed implanted foreign object or something that people didn't want to have there. So they decided that the mall was going to be the best space for this. And after exploring it, it was actually quite conducive to it. This isn't the sort of the dead malls around the country that you might think of. This is an outlet collection. So they have things like a Best Buy Outlet and they have Nordstrom Rack, and they have a few different things, some small businesses even, and other nonprofits.

0:54:58.2 Amanda Miller: So I was interested to work with them, contracts are a whole nother thing as well. I could probably talk about that totally separately, I did note that they thought it was interesting that we actually read the contract, which is funny, but this posed its own challenges. This was a salon for about 35 years. So you guys can see in the bottom right hand picture there are these strips which is actually really helpful. They're about waist high, if you can imagine going to a salon and all the things that they would need to plug in at that height. It worked out really well. Our

biggest challenge again was space. This is about 1,100 square feet and a lot of the other tool libraries are about this size. Our building in Federal Way is 1,500 and we knew that it needed to be totally different.

0:55:51.1 Amanda Miller: So working out with the mall, how we were gonna make it not look like a shed, a garage, they wanted it to look and feel like a store. And we were very adamant that we weren't gonna sell anything because we didn't want to have to deal with that. You'll also note the glitter walls. I don't know if you can see that in the bottom left hand side there, and the brow and lash place that we are across this hall from that was pretty unique. So, go ahead to the next slide, but yep, we did it. So we set out on this late 2023, and we opened in... Nope, late 2022, sorry. And we opened in October of 2023 in this space in the mall, it's a little wild. So we tried to look at the space intentionally about how we were gonna store things, what it was gonna look like. We had a budget and that was the beautiful thing about a grant, is that it gave us the budget flexibility to buy things. In my previous life, I was a hazmat specialist and I didn't wanna... I don't do gas or we don't do anything gas powered at either location, but batteries in and of itself are pretty dangerous things to have to deal with.

0:57:20.0 Amanda Miller: So, it was fascinating to be able to actually buy like a nice battery container from ULine, and other storage solutions that we were able to use in the space. And then we upcycled, of course, that's what we do. So we upcycled as much as possible from other shops and stores that were able to donate to us. And surprisingly, or maybe not, around back by the dumpsters was a great place to find things for the tool library. In a mall, you have stores moving in and out, and a lot of waste. And it was pretty fascinating. So you can see we tried to just convey our message and utilize our space as much as possible. This mall boasts something like 6 million visitors annually. And so we knew we needed to have a lot of good signage in the front, a lot of things tightened down so people could see how it would work. And then, right, just let the natural essence of what it was to be a mall kind of make its way. So let's go to the next slide. I think that was a lot of information. So, I just, oh yeah, had to put this picture in the left to show we are next to Hot Topic.

0:58:31.9 Amanda Miller: It helped me make my argument to the mall. You guys have been asking about relationships and talking about carrying a chainsaw through the mall or even a hammer. And I could look at Hot Topic and say, have you seen those shoes? I mean, I could smash a window with those if I wanted to. So why, you know, taking a pressure washer or a drill shouldn't be that big of a deal. And then another thing on the right-hand side here, obviously getting to 10,000 checkouts was a big deal. But part of our agreement with the mall management was that we needed to, since we were going to be open mall hours, we needed to make sure that we didn't look closed. And so we have this eight foot by eight foot sign that I designed to go in front of the gate when we're not open. So if you combine all of these things, then you get the full view of what it is. But our sign, South King Tool Library, visible from the Nordstrom Rack with, imagine how powerful you can be with the right tools in this huge illuminated sign, just like a flame to the moths of the people walking around the mall at any given day.

0:59:46.9 Amanda Miller: And then we have more signage that we put into the mall that, right in front of the shop space that allows for that. But I'm sure you have a lot of questions about how we could possibly do things in there, and it's already 2:04. So those are our big sort of variations between the two places. Federal Way does not have very good visibility. Weather is awful to have to deal with the variations in Federal Way, but totally pleasant in the mall, of course. And then rent

fluctuations, working with the Masonic Lodge and being in a built space, we do have incremental rent increases, but the mall is much more variable with that. And then, of course, outdoor access where we have a garden, we have drive-through capabilities in Federal Way. We don't really have that in Auburn because we do not have exterior access. We pivot and work around all of those things. But anyway, okay, there we go. Bring on the questions. Tom, do you want me to just go through? You're muted. [chuckle]

1:01:00.0 Tom Llewellyn: Thank you. Can you speak more to the experiences of working out of multiple locations? So this is coming from Margo Kelly, who is in Australia, interning with a library that has a home base in a shed and is working on transitioning to having separate workshop space across the street in partnership with a community college. So any tips and tricks for facilitating this work between the locations, especially with limited number of active volunteers?

1:01:31.2 Amanda Miller: Yeah, I mean, we took kind of a hard line approach to making sure we didn't... Our policy right now is that if you borrow it from one location, it has to be returned to the other, that same location. We try not to do transfers in between. That said, best laid plans, and we're finding as we're going into the busier season, that it's not really... We have three pressure washers in Auburn that are just sitting there. We have a backup of pressure washers in Federal Way, how we adjust to that. It's, I think having both the rigidity but also the mutability can be a big benefit. And then we're not open every day, just period. And people, why aren't you open more? I'm like, well, you can volunteer and help and learn how to do checkouts. But honestly, that's my immediate response. Why aren't you open more? Two days in Auburn and three days in Federal Way. And those are short shifts still because we wanted to have the narrow window. Does that stop people from showing up early? No. Does that stop people from showing up late? Or from us actually being here on other days? Absolutely not. All those things happen.

1:02:36.5 Amanda Miller: So it's, again, both the rigidity of the structure. Ideally, we are in, on Saturdays, 10:00-2:00 in Federal Way. Open from 11:00-1:00. Auburn, 3:00-7:00. Open from 4:00-7:00. Does that work out that way? Not all the time. But people are fairly understanding. So that's, yeah. What do you guys think about it?

1:03:00.8 Tom Llewellyn: Well, and just on that front, I mean, because the location at the mall is so visible, have you set up any way to capture interest when you're not open? So like next to the signage, like ways to capture volunteers or like, hey, sign up for the newsletter, like anything else like that?

1:03:20.8 Amanda Miller: Yeah. So on that big light up sign is actually a Lake Tree, sorry, if I'm jiggling my camera, that is mutable, so we can change and add to it and things. But that has our quick link for volunteer signups, quick link for reservations, quick links for our website and events. And then we do have, because it's just like, I can just sit there and close the gate and listen. And every 10 minutes, a tool library, what's a tool library? So we have a sign that just in the window, what is a tool library? And then a few feet down from where you pass the storefront says, what is a tool library? So people can, you know, at least read that if they're terribly curious. One thing that I'm trying to work around is a hundred languages is a lot. And I am fairly fluent in Spanish, but that does not even translate to Portuguese or other things. So there's, yeah, there is a gap. Of course, you know, I wish I could have Star Trek tech in just like universal translator stuff. But that is one thing that I wish I could work on more with signage. So, yeah.

1:04:44.7 Tom Llewellyn: Got it. And so, you know, speaking of the kind of accessibility of it, like, are you finding that the space feels more accessible? You talked to, you know, you lived in West Seattle and didn't feel comfortable necessarily going to the tool library to begin with. So have you kind of integrated that experience with the design and openness for these new locations?

1:05:10.0 Amanda Miller: I think so. Right? I'm always trying to look at like, who's missing? What are we missing? So we took, we take our, you know, partnerships really seriously, because I'm not going to be able to speak to Islander community. So there's another nonprofit in the mall that is specifically for the Islander community. And I'm like, all right, let's go and work together. And we're going to do workshops and classes. But I will say one of the most satisfying moments is being in Federal Way, not only being adjacent to a Masonic Lodge with all of what that entails and very much of, you know, masculine energy in someone, you are not who I expected to see here. And I'm like, cool, awesome. The fact that we have people that don't look like people that would necessarily be associated with tools or the trades, or, I don't know, whatever pre-concepts you have to tool libraries, then I think that that helps too, letting our faces kind of be that segue. Yeah.

1:06:16.9 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah. And so another follow up question from Dugin about, you know, basically saying like, you kind of went from zero to 10, right? You went from not having a library at all to a full new building build out, you know, with the shipping containers and the whole thing. Do you feel like that was made possible by the fact there was so many other, you know, 10, you know, nine or eight at that point in time, libraries of things in the region? And is that how you would do it again? Would you start with biting off such a big project or would you have started differently?

1:06:54.5 Amanda Miller: I mean, I think there's so many factors that you tend to rationalize, you know, what it is about the decisions that you have to make in a given moment. I think that there, if I would do it again, I would do certain things differently. I would definitely still build a building, that is a great thing. My dad was a civil engineer and I sent him these design plans and all the plans that came with it. And he was like, why are you cutting into a container? It's a perfectly designed thing. How dare you? What is wrong? Like, no, no, you don't do that. And I get that. They're not made to do this. The allure of a shipping container being a space, being upcycled, being used, I think there is a little bit of a testament to that, but I think I would do certain things differently. I think building a building isn't a bad decision to make. What it is has to be more centered to what your long-term goals are and, you know, looking at the long-term, because obviously if you're investing, I wrote down two prices, about \$35,000 for us to build this shipping container building. Now, we have a pretty high, everything's expensive up here, but it was about \$100,000 for us to open Auburn. And that's without staff, allocations, without a lot of that. And that's because of the short, short timeframe too.

1:08:32.6 Amanda Miller: So, there's a sort of, my approach to a lot of this has been if it was easy it would have been done before, and yeah, I think we were definitely facilitated by the other tool libraries in the region, but I think we were really striking out on our own because of where we were and what we were trying to do. We are absolutely free. We do not require membership fees. And I know a lot of other tool libraries don't require them. They're donation based or they're sliding scale, but we're sort of adamant about, no, this is free and you donate the value that you find in it. So we have structures in place. And so that was another sort of cornerstone of how we were trying to create access. And I think I was going to make another point and I already forgot what that was, but, yeah, lots of, hindsight is 2020 and timelines, but, right, it's better to at least try iterate, see what you're going to come up with versus waiting for the perfect circumstances, because that's never

going to happen. And, you know, the best you can do for what you guys need to do right now could definitely be different in a year or two. And I couldn't have predicted a pandemic, right? And the fact that we had a drive through capability was a huge game changer. So there's that too.

1:09:53.0 Tom Llewellyn: All right. We still have a couple more questions in the chat, but we are right at our quarter after time. So I just want to point out that we do have a feedback survey for this session. We're looking at all the feedback we get. We really appreciate everybody that has answered our previous surveys and we're incorporating that, you know, when we have our organizing meetings during the week before the next session. So, thank you for filling out those report backs and please find the link to this one as well. We're going to be having another conversation next week about memberships and talking about those different structures and how you can set up some of those fees and not fees donation based as Amanda was just mentioning.

1:10:35.7 Tom Llewellyn: So if you're interested in learning more about that, I saw that, Mario, you asked a question about, you know, getting people more involved. Thank you Keenan for answering that. We also, I can't remember if you were on the session last week or not, which was all about volunteers. But definitely go into more details about how to get people involved and provide more support. So, we're going to go into that and I think we're going to close this room now, unless there's any final, final questions for us about the CoLab or about what's coming next.

1:11:14.3 Amanda Miller: Will you send the link again to the Canvas so we can answer questions if people have more questions?

1:11:21.0 Tom Llewellyn: Yes. Can you, and that's, thank you very much for making that point. So definitely continue this conversation on Canvas. And, you know, as we think about, you know, what it takes to find a space, the time it takes to develop these, you know, we heard from Toolbox about the three plus years right before building a space, in Asheville we had the same situation and it's important not to get down on the project. And as we talked about in Asheville and all of these, those that are the initial kind of initiators of these projects aren't always going to be the ones that see them through, right? So you can build momentum over time. You can bring more people into the project and at the different stages, different people step up to move that thing forward. And I haven't been involved in the actual tool library since right before it opened, but spent three years building the first set of volunteers, building goodwill, raising money and finding what ended up becoming the first space. Right? And passed it on and people have taken it and it's grown beyond what my dreams were at that point in time. So, stay with it and take your time to find the right space.

1:12:38.3 Tom Llewellyn: All right. Thank you all. And we'll see you next week. And, we'll be sending out, again, that link to everybody that's signed up for Canvas so you can make sure you can get into the conversation.

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