

LIBRARY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

April 17, 2014

Attendees:

Warren Erickson
Pat Messler
Ames Curtis

Absent Members: Jan Rosenbaum, Judy Lindahl and Carole Gartley

Ex officio attendees:

Bill Chapman , Select Board
Ann Filley, Library Director
Kathleen Meil , Library Committee

Also in attendance:

Rick Bates (Rick), Town Manager and guests, Dave Jackson, Stevie Kumble, Mike Sabatini, Cate Monroe, Bill Najpauer

4:00 pm

The meeting was called to order. Bill C. requested a need for someone else to take minutes and Ann F. agreed.

Current Business:

Kathleen opened the meeting, providing an overview of the creation of the Steering Committee, the library vision and the need for new members since the resignation of both Richard Anderson and Bill Leone. While unfortunate to have to replace members, Kathleen welcomed Dave Jackson (in attendance) as well as Peter Allen and Staci Coomer. All three have indicated a willingness to participate as a steering committee member. Staci is the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, lives in Simonton corner and will bring a different perspective to the team.

Once introductions were completed, Ames offered a handout of an article of "The Brothers", reminding the group that it is important to stay focused on what our charge is and that it is vital that we remember to consider the community vision, rather than our own individual needs and wants.

Rick noted that Charleton Ames had presented a gift of the book, The Public Library, by Robert Dawson to the Rockport Library. Rick stated that much of the book really helps to focus in on the importance of the library over time, the library's ability to be so vital to our communities. Handouts were provided.

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Next Business:

Warren was then asked to cover the site selection criteria that had been discussed and updated at the last meeting, explaining the reasons for each ranking. What was then discussed was the best way to weight the ratings and did the group need to more work these rankings.

In light of the criteria of capacity and construction costs, the current form documents the sf requirements as 14,000 sf (which was originally calculated by Scot Simmons Architects when working with the RES site). Kathleen stated that a use calculation of the current site shows that the library of 3200 sf is really doing the job of a library that is about 6500 sf. Ann indicated that in doing calculation on the best practices for a new library that to use the minimum requirements for sf calculations (so higher stacks, less space for programs and people) that the calculation is around 9200 sf, but that if you move to use best practices sf, then the calculation increases to about 12,200 sf, so requirements run from 10,000 to 14,000 sf of space.

Discussion then moved to the Bok property. While there is some concern on what may happen to that property, if the library were to eventually move from the current site, it was determined that this is a separate issue and should not be used as criteria for the sites review.

Rick is working with the town attorney to see if an addendum to the will can be located, which may mention that the Bok property would remain as town property, even if the library were to move.

Paul Gibbons, who was a former town attorney, may have a copy of the addendum and could be contacted for clarification on the will.

Kathleen and other committee members are working on a meeting with a member of the Bok family to discuss further.

Use of Memorial Park as additional parking may have significant negative consequences-the town might be better served to leave that property intact.

Other uses for the current library building were generally discussed: Historical Society or Philanthropic Library, etc.

The committee then had questions for Bill N., who is the Planning and Community Development Director of the town.

1. Where is the highest population density?
 - a. This question is still being reviewed, but we may find that there is no one village that has a higher density than any other.
2. What are the general requirements outlined by parking ordinance?
 - a. Libraries are not typically listed separately, but the general recommendation is that there should be 1 parking space for every 300 to 400 sf of building.

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- b. A defensible parking proposal could be a combination of on-site parking, off-site same side of street, off-site parking in a town lot (walkable distance). It was suggested that a formal analysis should include a radius to offer a comparison of walkability for each site that is considered. This goes back to the weighting issue.
- c. The planning board would look at expected use of library parking vs. event parking-very differently.
- d. Important to remember that any parking discussion needs to include the costs of creating and maintaining that parking and would be different based on on-site vs. off-site.
- e. Additional layer: Parking analysis also changes based on the destination factor-is the library the end of the trip or part of other destinations? Example, a person may park in Camden, but then be able to walk to library, post office and other town shops.

Many comments and discussion on parking and parking analysis ensued. Can Limerock Street be closed and spaces added to Memorial Park? Should the town consider quick drop off parking spaces for the library? Should the idea of angled parking spaces be added to Central Street? Can people use the Rockport Properties parking? Safety, maintenance and access were also discussed.

The Town of Rockport does not have the same types of business as Camden and it needs to be part of the discussion that what is good for parking for village businesses (slower traffic pattern, on street parking) may not be good for library patrons and users.

The discussion then moved to the economic analysis part of the steering committee's charge. The need is to get a clear understanding of the economic impact on the village if the library were to stay vs. move? Again it was stated that the impact on the town goes beyond the library and that we do need to think of the library as a magnet and opportunity for new businesses, new people, more visits, etc.

In terms of downtown villages, it was stated that the library is considered to be an anchor for the activities that occur in the town center and part of the many spokes that connect people to the town. This also includes the roads, the architecture, etc.

The village dimensions were also discussed-isn't the village of Rockport larger than beginning with Salt Water Farms, moving past the library to the post office? One member stated that according to his taxes, West Street is definitely part of the village.

Other.....

Next Meeting:

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Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by: Ann Filley April 17, 2014