

LIBRARY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2014

Attendees:

Jan Rosenbaum (Jan), chair
Richard Anderson (RA)
Warren Erickson (WE)
Carol Gartley (CG)
Bill Leone (BL)
Judy Lindahl (JL)
Pat Messler (PM)

Ex officio attendees:

Charlton Ames (CA), Select Board
Bill Chapman (BC), Select Board
Ann Filley (Ann), Library Director
Kathleen Meil (KM), Library Committee

Also in attendance:

Rick Bates (Rick), Town Manager
Stephanie Kumble (SK), Library Committee

NOTE on notations:

The name or initials following the attendee list are the shorthand notation as to how attendees are identified in the following minutes though I have tried to spell out the name of the person the first time he/she is mentioned.

NOTE on follow-up assignments:

Where appropriate, I have highlighted assignments or volunteer commitments in **red**.

Meeting opened at 4 p.m. with Jan Rosenbaum (Jan) asking for a volunteer to take the notes of the minute. Ann Filley (Ann) indicated that she had found a person who, for a consideration, would agree to perform the requested service. In the end, it was decided that Bill Chapman (BC) would volunteer to take and transcript the notes of the full group meetings.

The first order of business was to pass around a sheet asking each of the members and ex-officio members to provide their telephone number which will then be shared within the group.

All were asked to provide Jan with the dates they will not be available in March and April.

Kathleen Meil (KM) then provided additional Library Committee (LC) guidance in regards to the "big picture:"

Mission Statement provided in the binders that were passed out at the previous meeting.

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Rockport Public Library Vision Statement:

On the eve of its centennial, the Rockport Public Library conducted a town-wide Listening Tour to discover what our community wants and needs from our library. Several themes emerged and helped us articulate this vision:

Rockport Public Library is a center for lifelong learning:

We celebrate independent and collaborative learning through books and digital resources, people and programs, hands-on exploration and traditional research. Though our collection will evolve (and may include fewer stacks and more of resources we can't yet imagine), our community's need to access, evaluate, and understand information will grow. We are committed to ensure freedom of access and providing materials and programs that educate, entertain, and inspire.

Rockport Public Library is a gathering place:

We embrace our diverse community and foster a sense of belonging and connectedness that bridges generations and socioeconomic backgrounds. Though the library will always be a refuge for quiet reading and contemplation, our community increasingly relies on it for social interaction, including informal conversations, small group meetings and workshops, and larger lectures and forums. We are committed to providing space that accommodates these needs and is comfortable, safe, and accessible for all.

Rockport Public Library is a community icon:

We epitomize the democratic ideals of inclusiveness and accessibility. Through this role is lofty, it is rooted in our concrete actions – including services that engage a diverse audience and partnerships that connect our community – and in our physical space – which reflects local architecture and is accessible to all. We are committed to serving as an archive for Rockport's rich history and as a leader in building Rockport's vibrant future.

As an aside, it should be noted at this point that Richard Anderson has passed around, electronically, a mission and vision statement he had been laboring over and is included here for the record. And, it should be noted that the mission statement is considerably different than the published one that the Library Committee uses.

Rockport Public Library Mission Statement:

To inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge and light the community

Rockport Public Library Vision Statement:

The Rockport public library will play a central role in the community's vision to make the Town of Rockport an exemplary place to live, learn, work and play in an increasingly digital world.

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The library will enhance its presence as the place where the young and old, the rich and poor (1) gather to share tools for learning, creating and expressing (2) convene to be guided in using these tools (3) assemble to interact and (4) converge to access a virtual world-wide library.

The Rockport Public Library will continue its current advancement from being a warehouse of information to being a gateway to knowledge. It will expand its programs and services in ways to aide people to race with the latest digital machines not against them.

The Rockport Public Library will be sensitive to its contribution to giving the town a sense of place with a vibrant campus-like common. It will be sensitive to the need for the town to use properties it owns for their highest and best use.

KM then gave direction that the Steering Committee (SC) should focus on the site and community (the 5 key objectives discussed at the last meeting that have subsequently been distilled down to 3 areas of responsibility noted here and on the 2nd and 3rd pages of the agenda):

Present Site Investigation

Design investigation, site non-specific

Economic Analysis

The LC will take the lead on identifying and documenting the Best Practices and Trends. Their focus will be on the results from the Listening Tour and stated community needs (which came from the Listening Tour).

The LC is looking for the SC to distill what has already been developed (both through the Listening Tour and the Scott Simon Architect (SSA) documentation) as well as take into consideration the Library Budget, on-going costs and Endowment.

At this point, KM asked for reactions and none were voiced.

Jan then turned the SC attention to the sub-committee structure and goals with the initial thought that there would be 2 subcommittees to work in parallel for about 6 weeks to deal with the first 2 goals (Present Site and Design Investigation) followed by the full SC working together for an additional 6 weeks on the third goal (Economic Analysis).

The question was raised about the lead-time necessary to have a non-binding referendum question placed on the November warrant/ballot. **BC promised to follow-up with Stacey Parra and Linda Greenlaw regarding lead-times and whatever else needed to be accomplished to get a question onto the ballot** (a draft of the timeline schedule was distributed under separate cover).

With the idea of there being a ballot question (either in November, which would be preferable, or next June) KM then added clarification about what the LC was hoping the SC would provide.

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The LC is hoping that 2 options would be presented along with the opinion of the SC as to what the positives and negatives are concerning both options.

Discussion clarified the clarification to the extent that there might be one that stands heads-and-shoulders about the other (or all the rest) and the SC should so state in their recommendation. However, even those that are ruled out must be listed and documented as to the reason each is ruled out. Eventually, this came down to the thought of creating a matrix so we are evaluating all options equally.

Judy Lindahl (JL) brought up the point of communication being critical in this endeavor. **She volunteered to draft a press release.** (NOTE: a draft was distributed Tuesday afternoon for review.)

Back to the matrix. Should be “must have” criteria and others treated as good to have or where the degree to which the criteria are met is the factor for comparison.

Things to do (alternatives):

Most of the following are from the thoughts presented by Bill Leone (BL).

1. Expand on the current site (modest expansion). “Modest” was questions which lead to the general agreement that we first must define the square foot (SF) requirements which means the need to go back to the SSA documentation and create a true statement of need based on what is now being offered and what the community wants.
2. Expand on the current site; make the ground space larger by purchasing the Scott property (immediately up Limerock St.).
3. Build new on the existing site (later in the meeting, Jan asked what we would do in the interim vis-à-vis the books, patrons, programs, etc.).
4. Build in Memorial Park. The impression I took away was that the current site would become the Memorial Park.
5. Build in Memorial Park and sell the existing site (building and all) with the proceeds going to offsetting some of the costs of building the new library.
6. Purchase the CMCA building and use it as an extension (branch?) of the existing building which would be kept (presumably with extensive renovations to correct the existing deficiencies.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Cape Elizabeth Library. **BL promised to distribute the study produced by Reed and Company regarding the possibility of renovating the existing library.** (NOTE: this was accomplished on Monday evening.) The discussion turned to cost to build with hard costs (building, permits, etc.) being in the neighborhood of \$210/SF; when the soft costs (amenities, shelving, desks, window treatments, etc.) are added in, the cost approaches about \$300+ (a finding in the SSA documentation.

KM assured all that “everything is on the table.” This lead to a discussion of what really is in and what has really been thrown out based on what the earlier group considered and ruled out.

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The consensus was that we don't need to reinvent the wheel and should accept that what was discarded by the earlier group shouldn't be revisited unless we uncover new information that truly reverses the thinking.

At this point, BC interjected the findings presented by the Town Attorney, William Plouffe, regarding the deed for the current site. The gifting deed listed both the "tavern lot" where the library now sits and the lot (or lots) at the corner of Union and Limerock where the Memorial Park is. While Plouffe found that it was very clear that Mary Louise Bok donated the land for a library, he didn't specifically address the issue of moving the library to what is now Memorial Park and turning the current library site into a Memorial Park. **(NOTE: this question should be sent to the Town Attorney for resolution – Rick, can you do this? AND the citizens of the town should be asked if they approve, in my humble opinion as a veteran, the desecration of Memorial Park and moving its memorials to a different site).**

Pat Messler (PM) asked if it was worth exploring the possibility of changing the deed/will or if we should just concentrate on a solution without worrying about what happens to the current site. It was agreed to not undertake the exploration at this time.

That led to a discussion of assessing the condition of the current building as the #1 priority given the current site options. To this end, BC has given Jan the contact information for Allen Mitchell who is the chair of the Capital Improvement Committee.

Discussion then turned to what is really needed. Carol Gartley (CG) asked if what SSA presented is really "optimal" and, if not, what are we really looking for in the "new" library ("new" meaning either an altered existing library, a replacement on site or a new library on a different site, possibly occupying an existing building)?

KM offered that the "new" library must look to future needs.

JL asked what in the conceptual design isn't needed, e.g., the café, large entry, etc.

To move forward, we will have to list the basis (reasoning, statement of need) for all the aspects of the conceptual design (need to look at the SSA documents and meeting minutes for this information). **Ann and KM will report back at the next meeting on this topic.**

Charlton Ames (CA) pointed out that everything must be "demand driven" otherwise we are just listing wishes without being able to justify.

PM: we must look at the American Library Association (ALA) best practices and trends (see earlier topic where KM said the LC was taking on the best practices and trends).

BL pointed out that in Cape Elizabeth, they created a design based on need and then realized the people who would be paying for it didn't have the stomach to pay that much, which led to a scaling back of the effort. The meaning is that we need to know what our taxpayers are willing to accept vs. how much will need to be raised through either fund raising or grants.

Jan pointed out that whatever is the outcome, it must be expandable and flexible.

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Warren Erickson (WE) pointed out that while this is not an Historic District, we need to be cognizant of what will be acceptable to the neighbors as well as the visual impact on the district as a whole.

KM added that we need to keep in mind what our ordinances permit and require. Even though the zoning has changed to allow for 100% lot coverage, there are still many limitations imposed or are required to be met: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), parking, building height, parking, etc. For this we will have to turn to the Town Planner, Blill Najpauer, for guidance. Also, what are firm requirements and what are desirables or good-to-haves from the Planning Boards' perspective.

Rick Bates (RB) then posited about figuring out how much is being crammed into the current site. What is being done in 2,300SF (is that figure correct) what really equates to 6,000SF or greater space needs. Some of this can be seen by books being stacked on top of shelves, out of reach by children (in the Children's Room) and shorter adults (in the rest of the library); librarians and volunteers climbing over each other at the circulation desk; etc.

BL was then asked to present the remainder of his list:

Alternative Sites:

1. CMCA as a new standalone library (no thought to be given at this point about the existing site)
2. Joint effort with Lucadia re: the old Graffam houses beside Mary Lea Park
3. The lot in front of the Aldermere Farm barn on Russell Ave (approximately 135-137 Russell, across from Ann Kilham's)
4. A "joint" project focused on the CMCA building (not really sure where this was going)

CG interjected that we had to look at other sites outside of the immediate downtown harbor village area, e.g., RES.

JL indicated there are many empty buildings, e.g., Fuller Chevy, Rockport Roadhouse, The Haven, etc. It was pointed out that to use any of these would require removing them from the tax rolls, something that might not be acceptable to some (or many) taxpayers in town.

Jan – the 2nd committee should be looking outside the envelope.

PM – 3 criteria: (1) is it available, (2) at what cost and (3) is it adaptable. There is no reason to look to property that would require an existing building (presumably in good shape) to be torn down for a "good" library to be built.

If "we" start looking at sites that would require purchasing, only 1 person should do any necessary inquiries. That way we are getting a consistent "look."

We then went back to the idea of 2 or 3 committees and at what point are how many needed. The decision, again, came back to 2 committees initially and then reform as a single committee to do the Economic Analysis component.

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Existing Site Committee members:

July Lindahl
Pat Messler
Richard Anderson

Alternative Site Committee members:

Bill Leone
Carol Gartley
Warren Erickson

Jan will contact Nell Dailey (ND) about which subcommittee Nell would prefer and Jan will take the other. Follow-up resulted in finding the ND is unable to continue to serve.

The question came up about what the library staff (full-time, part-time, on-call, volunteers) think about the library building. KM mentioned a 2009 Assessment (mentioned in the background notes). **There is a full report available which KM and Ann will locate and send to the full committee.**

CA – should we, as a group, visit other libraries to see what they are doing (or have done)? See how functions are being handled?

Jan – we should assemble a list of what we want to know/find out before we start visiting other libraries.

KM – the list should be part of the matrix.

CG – the 2 committees should be operating off the same matrix of needs. Otherwise there will be no comparing apples-to-apples. **CG volunteered to create a 1st draft of such a matrix with help from Ann and KM; WE also volunteered to assist in this effort.** The matrix will be used for evaluating/assessing comparatives. Commonalities for evaluation.

Jan – we need to be cautious about holding meetings via e-mail. Better to meet in person and document, document, document. When we get to the end, we need to show what we considered and why we ruled anything out or in. In effect, take notes about everything. We can assemble the individual notes later.

JL reiterated she will draft a press release.

CG mentioned about “liking” the effort on Facebook. WE mentioned we need a point of contact (POC) where public comment/suggestions can be assembled and distributed.

The last item of business was to direct the subcommittees to organize and create their workplans and timelines for accomplishing their assigned tasks. **(NOTE: no deadline for creating of workplans and timelines was set, though in implication was to have them done ASAP, presumably forwarded to Jan for review.)**

Due to conflicting schedules next week, the next meeting of the full committee is TBD.

Motion to adjourn by Carol Gartley, 2nd by Pat Messler. Adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

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REMINDER: Get Your Availability to Jan ASAP

Respectfully submitted, hopefully without too many typographical errors,

Bill Chapman

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Addendum: from easel sheets

Absolute requirements:

- Parking
- ADA requirements for access
- Bathrooms

To do first:

- How much space do we need?
 - What does the present library/ROH do? – How much space should that take?
- What is the estimated cost per square foot, furnished?
- Interview current staff about the pro/con of the existing building, what they need

Present Site

- What is possible?
- Modest Expansion? (see * below)
- Purchase land next door/behind library
- Raze & build
- Build on park land / sell existing building and land
- What is the estate of the building

- Explore deed possibility
- Weight neighborhood concerns
- What ordinances apply? – Parking, Codes