

MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE
July 24, 2002
Conference Room A, City Hall

Present: Dave Allen, John Bohenko, John O'Leary, Todd Hanson, Alex Hanson, Joanne Grasso, Phyllis Eldridge, Paul McEachern, Suzanne Ford, John Grossman, Carvel Tefft, Peter Bresciano, Claudia Morner, Dave Holden, Steve Parkinson, and Bob Sullivan.

Trustees present: Dana Levenson, Ed DeValle, Barbara Ward, and George Pierce

Absent: Lenore Bronson, Kate Leith and George Robinson

Meeting was called to order by John O'Leary at approximately 7:05 PM

O'Leary introduced Tom Amsler of Amsler, Woodhouse, and MacLean Architects. They are the firm selected to do the design work on the library. Amsler thanked the Committee for selecting his firm and said they were very excited to be working on the library project. He emphasized that his firm does not do "cookie cutter" architecture. He gave some background of the firm, describing the extensive work they have done on libraries, including Harvard Divinity Library, Westbrook College Library, Tewksbury library in Massachusetts, Brunswick library in Maine, and various private schools.

Amsler then showed the site layout panel that he presented at the interviews, explaining that this was a very preliminary layout and would be changed as the project progressed. He said he focused on a concept that would provide enough shared parking for the library, the nearby Middle School, and baseball field while preserving and expanding green space between the library and Richards Ave. residences. The layout shows a long green space running parallel with Richards Ave. and filling the corner at Parrott Ave. The library structure is a rectangle with two smaller wings extending towards Richards Ave. The shape and the size, Amsler pointed out, will change as the building program is refined.

Amsler then talked a little bit about the process and the fact that the site plan approval would be his major focus during the early stages of the process. Currently the soils are being investigated and studied. Reports will be coming in shortly. There will be a new traffic and parking study, which is now underway. Also, the building program is being reviewed and refined, working with the library staff and Amsler's firm. Outside consultants will be used as the project progresses.

O'Leary thanked Amsler for the presentation and explained that most of the activity for the immediate future will focus on the siting of the building.

Carvel Tefft stated that he had concerns that court action could occur if there was encroachment on the nearby Pierce Family Trust land. He asked if the Building Committee should move to study one or two alternative sites in case the Pierce Trust or something else prevented the site from being developed.

City Manager Bohenko answered that the contract the City has with Amsler limits the city's cost up to site approval. If site approval occurs the City would negotiate further with Amsler. Studying other sites now would increase cost.

Bob Sullivan, City attorney, said that the JFK site does not encroach on the Pierce Trust and the architect has made it pretty clear that the building will be designed to fit on the JFK site and not interfere with the Pierce property. If that were to happen, there would be other legal recourses that could be taken, including eminent domain.

A schedule was passed out by Pridham showing the sequence of events that will occur between now and the time the building is finished. It was suggested that the schedule be put on the City's website (see attached).

O'Leary passed out a letter from an area resident who expressed enthusiasm that a new library would serve as a catalyst to improve and beautify the whole area (see attached).

McEachern asked if the Building Committee would have input into the design before the schematics are completed, or at least the final design is completed. O'Leary said, yes, the Committee will have input once the plans are drawn up.

Alex Hanson asked about the possibility of foundation problems if soil is poor. Todd Hanson indicated, that by using a professional architect and techniques, that will not be a problem. It was indicated that the target date for going before the Planning Board would be sometime in September, or maybe October.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 8:15 PM.

Attachments:

Schedule of events

Letter from resident