

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FAIRPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE AD HOC COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008.

PRESENT

Greg Vogt  
Suzanne Stockman  
Beth Puckett  
Beth White

OTHERS

Betsy Gilbert  
Tori Reilly  
Lin Macholz  
Pat Rapp

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. Greg Vogt, President, welcomed the visitors and thanked them for coming. He stated that the Board here to listen to their concerns and answer their questions. He also said that the goal has been and continues to be to keep the library in the village. A forty-thousand square foot facility is needed to meet current and future needs.

Mrs. Stockman stated that the Trustees all volunteer their time because they love the library and it is an important part of the community.

Ms. Puckett stated that she is a village resident and would like for the library to remain in the village, if possible.

Margaret Kerr asked if the current building is fixable.

Dr. Vogt stated that the physical location is a problem. It is in the basement of the landing where there is no natural light except for the windows on the north wall. The fact that it is a leased facility means that in order to renovate this building, taxpayer money would benefit a private owner.

Ms. White stated that a building condition report was conducted and the building is not viable for long term library use.

Dick Sillick stated that there would be a major impact on the landlord and tenants if the library were to leave the Landing. Can the library buy the property? The community is generous and could probably find a way to buy the former Tops space.

Dr. Vogt said the Board has tried negotiating with the owner, but there appears to be no interest in responding. The owner is in Elmira, New York.

Kathy Porter asked about the deadline for making decisions.

Dr. Vogt said February 2013 is the opportune time for the library to leave the current facility, and would need to give notice in February 2012. This is the only time the library can opt out of the lease without financial penalty.

Ms. White stated that in order for that to happen, the library would need to find an appropriate site, make the case to the public, and have a successful vote.

Diane Chichelli asked if the library is currently pursuing an option.  
Ms. White said the library is currently pursuing a site in the village.

Kathy Porter stated that it's important to start dialog with the community now through a series of articles and communications explaining the ongoing problems and frustration, so that it does not come as a surprise.

Dr. Vogt said that he has drafted a letter to the editor and the Board is working on a marketing campaign. Information will be posted on the library website, frequency of the newsletter will be increased and a new survey will be coming.

Ms. Porter suggested highlighting the timeline so people understand there is a sense of urgency. She also suggested fact sheets to leave out for the public that they can pick up at the check-out desk.

Dr. Vogt stated that the Board cannot spend taxpayer money to fund a vote. A separate foundation can be formed which could raise funds and spend how they want.

Ms. Kerr asked if the foundation would be set up with a location in mind.

Mrs. Stockman said the Board will be as transparent as possible with regard to the town/village issue.

Pat Costigan asked about the exact footprint that the village owns in the Village Landing parcel.

Dr. Vogt said the village owns all the land and parking lot up to the bank lot where the farmer's market is held. The landlord has a land lease with the village and has to approve any changes to the parking lot configuration. He also stated that in a meeting with the landlord's agent on January 4 there was no change since their early meetings three years ago.

Ms. White added that he would be willing to grant the library the Karen's Crafts space with conditions that are an unreasonable use of taxpayer money.

Steve Hopkins asked if the Board has a ballpark figure on how much it will cost to construct a forty-thousand square foot facility.

Ms. White said that analysis was done to compare costs to renovate the Vix space vs. a new build, and costs were roughly equivalent over the course of forty years, at which point cost of ownership vs. leasing is significantly lower. The Board does not have exact cost estimates at this point, as this is dependent on the specific site that is found. Factors include property acquisition, site remediation, environmental concerns, demolition vs. raw land and utilities, etc.

Mrs. Stockman stated the library is looking to build a 100-year building. The current facility was built as a 30-year building.

Mr. Hopkins added that the public will want to know the cost comparison up front. He also stated that there are a large number of residents within a mile and a half radius of the current location. He doesn't know of any property in the town that would have the same number of residents within that radius. Also, there are no sidewalks in the town, so walking to a library would present a safety issue.

Ms. White pointed out that some residents have expressed interest in a town site.

Dr. Vogt took the opportunity to point out that Jim Smith is not buying land for the library or offering to build a library. These are some unfounded rumors that have been circulating.

Mike Ross asked why so much space will be needed in 25 years, given the digital transition.

Ms. Gilbert said collection planning is for 138,000 volumes, which is not much growth over the current collection. There are accessibility issues that limit use of the collection as well as reduced seating. The number one thing the library is hoping for is flexible space. The trend in libraries is moving toward being a community spot rather than a warehouse for books. Flexible space will accommodate changing needs.

Ms. Puckett pointed out that handicap accessibility is a problem in the current location.

Ms. Porter asked how large the Pittsford library is as a reference point.

Ms. Gilbert did not have that number but said that Webster is forty-two thousand square feet.

Dr. Vogt stated that the Board does not have “Pittsford envy.”

Mr. Ross asked about the possibility of developing the north bank of the canal.

Ms. White stated that the Board looked at that option but there were access and parking issues.

Ms. Kerr asked if there could be more openness with regard to the library. She does not want there to be a “town vs. village” problem. It’s nice for the residents to be informed.

Mr. Conrad asked if the library would be on one floor.

Dr. Vogt said it would be a two-story structure.

Mr. Conrad asked if there was any data regarding usage of various parts of the library and if it’s possible to put computers or reading rooms upstairs at the landing to alleviate floor loading issues.

Ms. White said the library needs to ensure flexibility of space, and also needs to consider what it would take to make the space suitable, investment-wise, especially in light of the lack of communication from the landlord. The Board has considered five different configurations of the current building. It is not viable or fiscally responsible to put millions of dollars into the current building.


Mr. Sillick asked who is working to help the library Board.

Dr. Vogt stated that the Board is working closely with the Village Board and the OCED (Office of Community and Economic Development.)

Ms. Puckett stated that the Board will continue reaching out to the community through focus groups, public forums, and email contact. The Board appreciates input from the community.

Dr. Vogt stated that there will also be committees and that the Board is working on enhancing communication through the library newsletter and the library website. He thanked everyone for their ideas and comments.

The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.



---

Pat Rapp, Clerk to the Board