

Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, January 25, 2005 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 04:45 PM

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Board of Library Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as Authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

Board Members Present: Chairperson: Tim Douglas, Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble, Faye Hill, David Edelstein, and Judith Wiseman by Speaker Phone

Board Members Absent: None

Library Staff: Pam Kiesner; Gayle Helgoe; Gladys Fullford

Others: John Watts, City Council Liaison, Claude Hill, Jon Gambrell, Velma Wendt, and Michael Menard

Library Strategic Planning Work Session: Tim and Pam reviewed work that has been accomplished by Board and staff in recent weeks. Board Member's ideas and action steps have been compiled on a grid. Short and long term planning records and documents on work done since 1983 have been pulled together. In 2002 the City's capital planning process had looked at facility needs with the conclusion that expansion or replacement of the central library is needed. A group of architects had been commissioned to look at the space and evaluate the adequacies and inadequacies. Bellingham Public Library is consistently among the top five libraries in the United States in circulation. The conclusion in all past planning efforts is that we have to do something to meet the growing library needs of the community.

Pam Kiesner mentioned that anything requiring action from the City Council needs to be submitted by February 18th for their draft planning calendar and work session taking place on February 26th. Pam will invite someone from the Planning Department to speak to the board about the Growth Management Plan. A project manager will be a resource for information on project scope and costs. This will be developed when the project is defined. It will be the responsibility of the new Chief Administrative Officer to work with City Departments in planning major projects such as this. Greg Aucutt, Senior Planner, would have information regarding the Central Business District as well as the Growth Management Plan. Public Works is a key player in any project planning and management along with community-wide planning. The library needs to maintain a strong central presence and services to support the overall system-- a central collection with increased use of automated technologies that track materials and move them around while looking at efficiencies and cost effectiveness.

David Edelstein would like to explore the possibility of partnering a new building with another department or public service, perhaps a multi-purpose building with a parkade. Alan Kemble stated we have discussed joint programs and parking with the children's museum. However, that project is well under way, and the architects are doing their presentation on the new Whatcom Children's Museum Saturday.

Gayle Helgoe has been gathering information on the Fairhaven Library building that may be needed: the deed, requirements for National Historic Landmarks, nearby property owners.

Gayle geographically arranged information for a virtual tour of libraries and a day's group of visits. Each has something different such as types of buildings, services offered, arrangement of services. The Websites have photos of construction and interior design. Pam suggested it would be a good idea to offer a link to these websites to the public through our website. A physical tour for board members could be arranged.

Planning Grid: The Planning Grid activities were reviewed with discussion. Most need to be worked simultaneously; one step does not necessarily precede another:

2 – Formulate compelling written case statement, compose library story, including statement of BPL needs and rationale for a library project based on current site study, space justification, technology advances, and other factors.

Judith suggests:

3-5 very strong examples of what libraries are doing that we could do if we had a new facility, things that are “stunning, important”;

3-5 examples of what we can not do currently in our library because of restraints, “3-5 of our largest deficiencies”;

3-5 examples of what we are doing to work with/alleviate some of the deficiencies even as we exist in the current facility. Why is this a particularly urgent issue?

3 – Complete Geo-tech/engineering review

Department of Public Works staff will report on the study at Library Board’s February 22, 2005 meeting

Get the word out on the study results

Prepare to move into site selection once results are known

4 & 5 – Site selection; select and acquire a site

6 – Tour and Review other libraries to gather ideas for BPL in 21st century

Physical and Virtual tour lists are completed, and can be revised as more locations come to our attention.

Post these tours on our website

Include a public “survey” to find out what public likes/dislikes

In future, schedule group (library board/staff) and community tours to other locations

Organize physical and virtual “tours” of BPL

To show public the inadequacies and the possibilities

Arrange tour times for public

Post virtual tour on website

Include a public “survey” to get feedback

Tour for the media

7 – Develop Building Program Statement

Can be done with selected architect, but use as a basis the Bellingham Planning Group (Zervas Study) “Preliminary Building Program” from September, 2003

10 – Meet with Planning Staff

Will be done at next meeting

11 – Identify likely support and involvement of groups/individuals/general public for maximum community input

Library Board members will take responsibility for identifying groups and individuals, and providing contact information for same

Organize focus groups to obtain ideas on what the public wants in a library; John Watts pointed out the effectiveness of the museum process, including facilitated “talk tables” where public gave their ideas on what they wanted in a museum

Alan is very willing to attend neighborhood and other community meetings to represent the library

21 – **Research Bond Campaign**

Since Council has requested information needed for Council action, this should be done now.

24 – **Bond Campaign Committee**

Remove names from worksheet. Start with a clean slate.

28 – **Construction** (should follow #27 Furniture and Equipment)

29 – **Final Product**

Change “demolition” to “adaptive reuse of existing library building or demolition”

Staff activity:

Gayle:

Gather all relevant materials about the Fairhaven Branch, including details such as square footage

Pam:

Invite PW to attend next Board meeting

Determine city’s involvement/project management/staff assigned to help from PW or Community Development

Invite someone from planning department to speak about Community Growth Forum report – at next planning session

Work on #2, to include Judith’s ideas

Work on City Council action calendar, to include items that will require City Council action in 2005

Faye Hill asked why we didn’t go forward two years ago. Alan Kemble answered that at the time this site was thought not suitable because of prohibitive cost and restricted covenants. We were also caught up with the PFD process. John Watts offered there was too much competition with other projects, and the PFD attempt to gather cultural projects under one umbrella. David Edelstein commented the inadequacies of the current building must become common knowledge. This could be done through tours or virtual photo tours of the facilities.

Public Comment – Velma Wendt agreed the adaptive reuse of the building should be used in place of demolition. Michael Menard believes the Board is going ahead too fast, and suggested that the library needs to look at alternative ways of delivering library service, looking at the library as an information system. David Edelstein suggested asking the architect how we could make additions to the building, and how could it be contracted or used for another purpose if space is not needed.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – February 22, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees