

Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, August 09, 2005 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 04:25 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, Faye Hill, Judith Wiseman, David Edelstein

Board Members Absent: Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Gayle Helgoe; Margaret Ziegler; Scott Blume; Gladys Fullford

Others: John Watts, City Council Liaison, Velma Wendt

Strategic Planning Work Session: Pam met with the R/UDAT Group to review the Program Statement. The updated version will be sent back to them. With the scope of work they thought they heard, their fee would be \$8,000 to \$12,000. Pam thought this was a grander scope than the Board intended. Jim Zervas suggested a volumetric form study which would reduce the quote to \$5,000 to \$6,000. An option would be chosen, and they would do further detail on it. David was not contemplating asking the architects to figure the costs at this point. Cost should not drive the concept. Find what works best, efficient, and makes most sense, and then price it.

R/UDAT has been asked to visualize whether a building could go on this site. The Board just wants a sketch at this point. The Board wants to know if we can make a building to be proud of with the current building on the same lot. Judith commented that she is not looking for a lot of detail. She would like to be able to look at a sketch, and see whether it could be a nice addition or if it would just be a compromise. David remarked that this is a perfect building for an architect. It is so plain that an architect can add a style to bring it forward to the modern era. Pam suggested that with the R/UDAT work we are determining if this is the right site. We want to be sure we are getting a product we can use in this pre-design phase.

Tim revealed a new candidate of property the city owns which currently houses Municipal Court and ITSD. There are two full parking lots on either side that could provide public open space. Municipal Court and ITSD could be relocated in the current library building. They would be closer to City Hall and the county court system. This potential could maintain the open space as is. Street access with a little alteration could be as good or better at the new site. It is within the edge of the civic center, but would be near a high school, middle school, and senior center.

Judith mentioned the Site Evaluation Committee had actually looked at this site, but felt it was just outside the core area. They had concerns about traffic load on streets and encroaching on the neighborhood. David said that planning could come up with a traffic plan to not impact the neighborhood and provide open space. Pam shared that she had met with Patricia Decker, who felt the library would be moving away from the Cultural and Civic Center, but Pam suggested that the library could be a northern anchor for that district. Pam also stated that Chapter Ten of the City Center Master Plan states that it is most desirable for the courts to return to the Civic Center, and when/if it does, the potential use of the site could be for a Community/Youth Center. The public may be more apt to favor using city-owned land.

Judith would like to give reconsideration to the Tube Time site if we are looking at other sites. The owner will be approached to see if it is a possibility.

Tim said we can provide open space on the current site. We could possibly ask the R/UDAT team to provide a sketch of interplay with open space. We should think of what might be possible and not be bound by what has been.

Judith suggested a need for more informed perceptions of accessibility of people who live at the north and south ends of town. John commented there are lots of reasons for people to come downtown for business and fun. Is there any value in a phone survey of people's perceptions of accessibility?

More information is wanted about the Municipal Court site. Pam will look at how much space Municipal Court and ITSD need. Pam suggested that she and Tim meet with Mayor Mark Asmundson, Malcolm Fleming, Dick McKinley, Marty Mulholland, Linda Storck, and Patricia Decker. Also, if the library was built on the parking lot, Municipal Court and ITSD could stay where they are until the current library would be renovated for their purposes.

The R/UDAT Group will be asked to proceed and consider indoor/outdoor space and maintain usable green space with either two separate buildings or a connection of the buildings. Details are not needed. They can provide a good exercise to look at "what if?"

Judith spoke about the engineer's answer to her question about the finished cost without a parking garage scenario. She said the difference of \$750,000 shows that parking is a good use of a lower level. It's the responsible thing to do.

The Patrick McKee letter was discussed and offers an opportunity for the Board to understand some of the issues related to siting and building a new facility. It also offers the opportunity for the Board to respond. Parking can be provided at a modest cost. It is responsible to recognize the need, and irresponsible not to provide parking. The Board wants to incorporate usable open space in whatever they plan. The Board has considered branches and the high costs to deliver goods and services. It is the Board's fiduciary responsibility to deliver efficient service.

Pam has worked on and added to Alan's list of Frequently Asked Questions. This may be a good format for responding to questions that are raised.

Tim and Pam will draft a road map of all the things needed towards a new building.

Tim would like to work on a long term plan for this site and Fairhaven, and look seriously at the elements of what could be. Judith mentioned that Washington State came out with a long range planning guide for all libraries. We could look at this to see what we have achieved and what we need to achieve. Pam mentioned that if the Board wished to engage in a formal long range planning process, she could contact Washington State Library staff to assist.

The current mission was submitted for the city budget. The Board can keep it or substitute a new one. This will be on the agenda for the regular board meeting next week.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – August 16, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Next Special Library Board Meeting – September 13, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees