

Library Committee

Minutes

August 12, 2008

Present: Grant, Hobart, James, Manning, Mossel, Randle, Rose, Rothstein, Ryan, Warba, Sobers, Gifford, Rorabaugh, and Hosking

Absent: None

Chair Luanne Rothstein called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. Rothstein reported that the School Board has appointed Sue Hosking and Lenore Weaver as ex-officio members of the committee.

Grant moved supported by Manning to accept the June 19th minutes, Grant moved supported by Rose to accept the minutes of July 17th, and Grant moved supported by Mossel to accept the minutes of July 31st. All minutes were accepted as presented.

Public Comments –

Mary Gallagher-Eustice introduced Randall Schroeder from the Ferris Library as a resource person. Mr. Schroeder has a good background in Library Boards, moving an existing library, and experience with district libraries. Marlies asked if Ferris had any extra space that the City Library would be able to utilize. The answer was no.

Library Director Rorabaugh gave a brief presentation on the Charlevoix Public Library, which was a middle school building that was converted to a Public Library. It is really not a good comparison to our building or needs.

Proceeded with a summary of the consultant's report. –

Building Option 1 – remodel current facility without an addition.

Grant – not cost effective and would be smaller than current space being utilized, does not want to support putting \$300,000 into current building.

Randle – current location is perfect, good suggestions on bringing up to code, can't afford anything else.

Mossel – hired consultant with over 100 years of experience, we should respect their recommendation.

Manning – it would be a minimum of \$300,000 to bring current building up to code and we still lose space.

Rothstein – not a fair statement that we can't afford, consultants talked to people who said they would be willing to pay \$10 a month (estimate) for a new library.

Ryan – only talked to about 5% of population, did not talk to enough people, wants to see current building stay.

Hobart – has experience with Flight Library building project, current building will not do, wants to be fiscally responsible.

James – it would not be fiscally sound to put more money into an older building such as the one we have, when it is all said and done, we still have an old building.

Building Option 2 – one story addition to the current building.

Grant – beautiful location but beauty will be gone once the addition is constructed.

Ryan – would support adding on to current location and renovating.

Rothstein – does not support putting more money into current building, we need to work together for the betterment of the community.

Manning – counted trees, would lose all trees to add on, would have to develop underground storm water detention, would have one story addition but three levels.

Rose – building should stay and be used for different use, and also asked everyone to be respectful and listen; she respected the consultants and their report.

Building Option 3 – new building on current site.

Rothstein – don't know if fraternity house is even for sale.

Hobart – still would have to remove trees and take out old existing building.

Manning – would change nature of residential neighborhood.

Randle – we are a Tree City USA, parks department replaces trees all of the time, would rather see expansion on Library.

Building Option 4 – a new facility at a new site.

Downtown site across from City Hall.

Randle – would rather have a taxed based business there than a public library which would not be on the tax roll.

Hobart – good site, City already owns, more parking, can put up library the size we need, good location, need to have courage to make it happen.

Rose – everything Hyatt Palma told us to do as downtown businesses and we have done with wonderful success, they told us that a Library downtown would be a great anchor for the downtown. It would be between two schools, have parking, DDA District, and business in immediate area would see an increase in downtown traffic. Community capable of getting what they want.

Mossel – if you come downtown from 10-2 on Fridays, it is something to be very proud of.

Manning – moved from Detroit (from traffic hell to traffic heaven), the current site is only walkable to people who live by Library, would give us increased foot traffic in our downtown area.

At this point Rothstein read the letter that was sent from the consultants, which again listed options and wished us success as we continue to proceed.

Financing

Rose – School District would make common sense because of where lines are, would like to see a vote, let community decide.

James – can only speak to City Millage – Act 345 millage will be less in 2009, school millage (7 mills) will be less in 2009, if Library is a District Library, City would not need to transfer \$240,000 which equates to approx 1.3 mills.

Hobart – has visited other community libraries, all want to provide as many resources of everything they can, 2/3 of our circulation is from people outside of the City of Big Rapids.

Ryan – millage is already too high, consultants said it would be a newly created board – who would be responsible for its new design and creation?

Manning – City residents pay more in operating expenses and use less of the total services, supports District Library.

Public Comments –

Delores (BR Township) – why do we only get 20 minutes and you (committee) had two hours?

Ginger – what will the District Library Board cost us. Rorabaugh replied that when formed the Board becomes the fiscal agent and can be elected or appointed. Can townships levy their own millage if they wanted to outside of a District Library – answer yes. What is cheaper to build a one story or a two story – answer generally cheaper to build and maintain a one story.

Wensloff (City) – why do we have to go from 27,000 square feet to 16,000. Consultants said 16,000 would be adequate.

Conrad (BR Township) – served on committee looking at District Library years ago. Would like the opportunity to help pay for the library, would like the opportunity to vote, give it to the people, give them facts and let them vote.

Mark (Green Charter Township) – would be in favor of District Library and believes the DL Board would be in favor of site across from City Hall.

Nancy (BR Township) – would be willing to pay more taxes in support of District Library.

Shirley (City of BR) – committee is doing a good job, Public Safety Building vote went through, why can't we do it again?

Schroeder – higher you go up with Library (floors), more expensive it is.

Kelly (City of Big Rapids) – has two young children, grew up in Green Township, uses the Library but doesn't like the Library – misses the GR Library, this would be an investment for younger people to have a ice Library.

Pat (City of Big Rapids) – children use to walk everywhere including walking to Library, it would be more cost effective to heat one story.

Hosking – volunteered to be on Library Committee, as a school board member has concern of District Library competing for school dollars, as a non-school board member believes tax millage for a District Library would be a good investment.

Grant moved supported by Manning that the City uses the site across from City Hall to build a new Library. No discussion. Motion supported by Grant, Hobart, James, Manning, Mossel, Rose, and Rothstein. Ryan and Randle opposed.

Hobart moved supported by Grant to recommend to attempt to form a District Library to include any governmental unit who might want to take part I in District Library. No discussion. Motion supported by Grant, Hobart, James, Manning, Mossel, Rose, and Rothstein. Ryan and Randle opposed.

Chair Rothstein asked Mary Ryan if she was going to take decisions back to Friends of Library and support the majority vote. No response.

Grant moved supported by Rose to ask if committee can prepare an RFP to secure an architect. The Committee needs to know what 16,000 square feet will look like. Motion supported by Grant, Hobart, James, Manning, Mossel, Rose, and Rothstein. Ryan and Randle opposed.

Meeting adjourned approximately around 9:00 p.m. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 26th at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall