

Library Committee

Minutes

August 26, 2008

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

Absent: None

Chair Luanne Rothstein called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Grant moved supported by Rose to accept the August 12th minutes. Minutes were accepted as presented.

Hobart reported on the special Library Board Meeting that was held last week. The Library Board approved the location, RFQ, and the idea of a District Library as presented by the Library Committee. The Board did request an RFQ instead of an RFP.

Gaylynn is working on the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) that includes a conceptual design site. This will then go to City Hall and be mailed out middle of next week. City will advertise and hopefully proposals will be back by the first part of October. Firms are being invited to the actual site to ask any questions they might have.

Manning questioned the energy efficiency – will this be incorporated in the specs – would like LEED (Leadership Environmental Energy Design) in specs. Maybe there are some grant monies available to assist with cost to make building as “green” as possible.

James went over the financial report that outlined what would happen to millages if a District Library were voted in using the Big Rapids School District as boundaries.

Isabel Kempton (from Lakeview) and State Library Law Specialist Lance Werner would be available to come and met with us to help in the education process of forming a District Library. Hartzell-Mika will also come back for one or two days to help with the education (cost approx 1,000 – 1,500). Mossel asked if the sessions would be video taped so that the Committee would be able to show the session over and over. No one knew answer but someone will find out.

Grant moved support by Hobart to hire Hartzell-Mika to come to Big Rapids to hold up to two educational sessions. Motion supported by Grant, Hobart, James, Manning, Mossel, Randle, Rose, and Rothstein. Ryan opposed.

Carlleen Rose believes that there is some “stuff” out there that needs to be addressed. She has received some negative comments – downtown too busy and too small of a lot for a library. Maybe we should just close our library and be done with it. Just fix bathrooms and keep operating. She did state that many “friends” of the Library were involved and many were in the focus groups.

Everything Hyatt & Palma told us to do and we have done is working. She asked them again if they still believed that downtown was a good place for our Library. Answer was yes – libraries draw many people of all ages.

Rose continued to say we are a committee – the committee has no power – it gathers facts and makes recommendations. The committee needs to stay as close to facts as we can during this process.

The consultants that the committee hired have over 100 years of experience. When they come back, Rose encouraged everyone in the audience to come back and ask questions and listen.

Rothstein again said she would like to see the meetings go smooth, cooperative, and polite. She too has received some negative comments.

Manning offered to make a list of frequently asked questions with answers for the benefit of those wanting answers.

Ryan made a comment that she needed to be able to read reports prior to acting on them. She needs to have time to read and understand what is written. Rose replied that is one reason she is glad the consultants are coming back to Big Rapids.

Randle is still concerned about safety of children with traffic if Library is put across the street and still wonders if there will be enough parking. Rose as a downtown retailer believes that there is adequate parking downtown – most of the cars come and go. Employees park in designated areas.

Public Comments –

Community residents can go to Michigan web site and download the District Library Public Act 24 of 1989 and any amendments. www.michigan.gov

Everyone needs to take responsibility to educate themselves on District Libraries.

Why is committee picking location? Rothstein reported that the Committee believed they should address location and the location was one of the issues that Mayor Warba asked the Committee to address.

Hobart explained that many things will be addressed by District Library Board.

Sobers explained that there may be a package on the ballot. Do you want a District Library, operational millage, and construction millage?

Has the Big Rapids School Board committed to us? – No – we are in the educational process. Why are we not getting quotes to tear down current building and re-build on current site? Mossel – why should we destroy a building if it could be used for something else. Hobart believes that \$230 per square foot is a good estimate for construction of a new building.

Committee is not doing due diligence. Mossel believes we need to take a leap of faith.

Chair Rothstein took the floor back and firmly believes the Committee is doing due diligence and that the Committee has taken everything one-step at a time.

We need someone to partner with us before we go to vote of people, correct? Yes.

When something no longer works – it is necessary to do something else. The current building is not a beautiful setting if you stand there and do a 360.

Gaylynn report that the current building has 14,200 sq feet and only about 8,200 sq feet are being used operationally Consultants recommended between 15,000 – 20,000 sq feet based on peer libraries and available funding.

Confirmed meeting dates are – Sept 4th at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall with Werner and Kempton. Sept 18th from 4 – 5:30 aimed at Township partners and at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall aimed at School District partners with Hartzell-Mika.

Mary Ryan spoke about future book sale that will be going on this coming weekend.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.