

DRAFT

September 12, 2013

Library Planning Committee

Narrative Summary:

Pubic Outreach Evening August 29, 2013

At Cape Elizabeth High School Cafeteria

ACCESSIBILITY:

Accessibility (ADA issues) was a high priority item for all citizens. Comments included the concern that restrooms should be accessible, and elevators, if any, should be accessible and well functioning. Mention was made of a letter written by a physically challenged Cape Elizabeth High School student who has great difficulty using the library. A one- story building may provide maximum accessibility.

BUILDING EXTERIOR, GROUNDS AND PARKING:

The look of a new or renovated building should fit in well in Cape Elizabeth, have New England charm, and keep some historical elements, such as the cupola. There should be a welcoming entrance for school children. The building should be closer to Scott Dyer Road for increased visibility and presence within the town, and have beautiful landscaping.

The need for more parking space was mentioned several times though one participant did not want additional parking to decrease green space.

COST:

Little was said about cost. The only comments made were the following; 1) cost savings decisions should be available to the public and include past work review, 2) efforts should be made to combine resources with the schools, and 3) if school and town libraries were combined, the added security costs should be studied.

INTERIOR SPACE:

There were many comments concerning the various types of spaces desired in a new building. The need for more and better space for children and teens services and programming was the most frequent concern for interior space. People want more comfortable and inviting adult reading areas, and adult areas that are separate from children's areas.

There is interest in small tutorial workrooms, collaborative workspace, an arts and performance area, meeting space for smaller groups (8-10) and larger meeting space. It was noted that a large meeting space could be flexible, or multi-purpose. It was also noted that large meeting space in a new library is not necessary; large meeting space would be found elsewhere in town.

Keeping a poetry room, and a "Maine" room, space for book sales and for more staff office space were mentioned also.

A coffee and café-style area for quiet conversation is desired. Feng Shui design concepts should be considered, and that the interior space be "green", healthy, safe, and mold-free were also noted.

LOCATION OF THE TML IN CAPE ELIZABETH:

There was overwhelming sentiment that the current location of the library is ideal, and that it remain close and accessible to schools. Also noted was that it should remain in the Town center no matter how the physical building may change, and that pedestrian access to the library be enhanced.

NEW BUILDING:

There was overwhelming sentiment expressing no particular attachment to the current buildings. Mention was made of the desire for a local architect, and that any building design should reflect New England style. It should be an "iconic" building that is special and fits in Cape Elizabeth. The possibility of a "green" two-story building with minimal footprint was noted. A new or renovated Thomas Memorial Library will have a stronger presence in town and will make Cape Elizabeth more desirable to prospective homeowners.

People are interested in a new library that is beautiful, fun, has flexible space and can accommodate high use. The intimate feeling of the current library should be reflected in a new building. It will be important to keep the current square footage. The entrance should be inviting. It was noted that the Cape Elizabeth Historical Society wants to keep the old buildings.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Children's (including teen's) programming, space, and services were the top priorities among participants. There was interest in before school access to the library for K-12 students, and in increasing after school programming. There was also mention of the schools and town libraries coordinating and duplicating reading materials.

Access to state-of-the-art computers, technology services, as well as a technology and media center, were follow-up priorities. There is interest in expanding electronic access to information, help and services from home and other locations. The possibility of regional electronic library cards and newsletters was mentioned. Librarians should be able to assist patrons with traditional library services and with current digital technology. More computer docking stations, in chairs as well as on tables, are wanted.

Print media such as books and magazines are still important. Books should remain at the library and not be stored off-site. The desire for books was mentioned several times.

There was support for multi-generational programming and shared programming with the schools. There were divergent views concerning off-site programming. Participants wanting programming to remain at the TML only slightly outweighed those who were OK with off-site programming. Of those who support off-site programming, some would only attend programs within town, and some support off-site programming for large group events only. There were two different views on costs associated with off-site programming: one participant feared that off-site programming would increase staffing and equipment costs while another thought that it would save money.

Lastly, there were two opposing comments about staffing. One mentioned a need for more and friendly staff, another mentioned that current staffing is too high and that money could be saved by decreasing staff.

RE-PURPOSING EXISTING TOWN SPACE:

Little was mentioned on this topic, but the sentiments were consistent. Participants thought that both the Police Station and Community Services buildings be studied as a possible new library location, and other spaces in town should be considered for off-site library programming.

VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY:

Sentiments were generally consistent in this category. Participants feel that the library should be a focal point – a “magnet” in town for meeting people; it should promote a sense of community and literacy. It should be a place for multigenerational space and programming. The importance of the town library and of literacy advocacy increases as more children move into town. A beautiful library will demonstrate town priorities and this will attract new citizens.