

Joint Meeting:
Town Center Plan Committee and Library Planning Committee
Thomas Jordan Conference Room
August 19, 2013

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Town Center Plan Committee Acting Chair Peter Curry.

Present from the Town Center Plan Committee (TCPC):

Peter Curry
Skip Murray
Steve Parkhurst
David Sherman
Mary Townsend
Jamie Wagner
Maureen O'Meara (staff)

Present from the Library Planning Committee (LPC):

Molly MacAuslan, Chair
Frank Governali
Kathy Ray
Jessica Sullivan
Kate Williams-Hewitt
Jay Scherma (ex officio/staff)

Michael McGovern, Town Manager in audience

Peter and Molly will co-chair today's joint meeting.

Public Comment: One member of the public, an architect, had no comment at this time.

Molly reviewed the charge and reminded everyone of the upcoming Public Outreach Roundtable discussion on August 29 in the High School cafeteria. She also listed points for discussion:

- 1) What is the TCPC's sense of location for the library – how important is it to remain in the town center ?
- 2) Are there strong feelings towards keeping the existing buildings ?
- 3) If the library stays on the current site, how important is a pedestrian link to Route 77, and where would green space be situated ?

Discussion point # 1. There was strong consensus that the library stay in the Town Center District and near the schools. People should be able to easily walk to the library, and pedestrian connectivity to the library, schools and local businesses should be enhanced.

Discussion point # 2. There were no comments.

Discussion point # 3. Using aerial maps, Maureen showed the committee the potential connectivity with library land and abutting properties. The TCPC members have been recently discussing a village green concept, and would want to enhance pedestrian access.

The TCPC has placed green space on a list of priorities and will be asking the public for input at its October public hearing/workshop. Various vacant lots have the potential for green space. Jamie mentioned the potential for cohesive landscape designing.

Skip said that a town center concept could envision the town as its own “entity”, with welcoming green space where people could, for example, sit somewhere and enjoy a sandwich. Additionally, a re-designed town center with pedestrian enhancement and all elements accessible, could also slow traffic in the town center.

There has been no discussion in the TCPC meetings about re-purposing other space or facilities in town for a library location.

Molly and Frank reported that the LPC members think that remaining close to schools (not across Rte. 77) is optimal for the library, and that enhanced connectivity will be brought up at the August 29 public forum.

KW: re tax issues – school board budgets =- trying not to increase our expense

Kathy wanted the TCPC to remember that lack of adequate parking space has been an issue for the library; the green area behind the dentist office is used regularly.

PC: on that point : what is your sense of square footage going forward - re programs, concerts

In response to Peter’s question about potential square footage and space design of new library, Molly explained that the architects would be assisting in answering those questions. Frank explained that we (LCP) are studying current and possible future library services, and will be getting community input. Jay added that it will be important for the library facility to be as open/flexible as possible, and that our current library is undersized for our community.

On August 29 the LPC is holding a public round table discussion of the library, and the guest moderator will be Portland's Director, Steve Pogagdny. We will also conduct an online survey in another effort to gather public input.

Mary asked if the LPC had communicated with the Superintendent of Schools. Kate responded that she has met with her, and will again in order to explore coordination with the schools and parent associations. She will also be asking other local libraries about any resources and programs they share.

TCPC has its own job to do. We should not wag the library dog.

Peter expressed concern that people want to know what the costs will be. Skip asked how the library overlaps with the school libraries. More housing will bring more library patrons, and the library should remain in the town center.

Steve wants a new library to remain within walking distance of the schools, and in the same location.

The TCPC members expressed consensus that the library enhances the town.

There was also concensus that both committees can review each other's minutes online.

Public Comment:

Will Gatchell, Portsmouth, NH (formerly of Cape Elizabeth), expressed concern about the library's lack of street presence., and the lack of a sense of town center.

Motion to adjourn was made and passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Jessica Sullivan, Secretary