

Focus Group Meeting Minutes September 26, 2013.

The meeting was held in the Maine Room of the TML. Library Planning Committee Chair Martha MacAuslan led the discussion, notes taken by LPC member Kate Williams-Hewitt.

Attendees: Bollie Bollenbach, Trish Brigham, Joe Chalat, Anita Samuelson, Sara Lennon, Carrie Croft, MaryAlice Wallace

Participants introduced themselves and the Council's charge to the LPC was reviewed.

Ms. MacAuslan asked participants to write down to issues that they remembered being important at the August 29th community roundtable discussions, and two issues they found personally important for the library and the planning process.

Community Roundtable: The following themes emerged.

Existing Building.

Most attendees noted that there was not much demand for keeping the existing building except for the old schoolhouse. Greener building and grounds are needed.

Community Center.

- The Library itself is an important center of community though the building is not.
- Children want a place in the center of town that can be their gathering place and the library can and should be that. Schools are closed after school and during the summer.
- In addition to children's programs, the library hosts a number of different kinds of programs that need to be accommodated, including knitters, philosophers, poets, etc. The youngest and oldest members of the community want and need a town center location for the library.
- We have a broad spectrum of socio-economic diversity in Cape and the Library must serve all.

Civic Pride:

- The library needs to be warm and inviting
- Library should be a vibrant place, with an atmosphere that promotes learning and is social.
- Library should attract people in town who love books and culture and library should provide and promote cultural opportunities.

Location

- Town wants library resources here in town, not a regional library.

- People want a building that is beautiful and in the center of town, even though that's not convenient for people who live near South Portland or Scarborough.
- Library should be accessible on foot and by bicycle.

Space

Flexible space is most important, not the size of the building. Space needs to be flexible for future trends and technology. Space should not necessarily be designed specifically for programs but should be flexible.

Building needs to be safe for staff, and should make them more efficient at their jobs. Reading areas should be lovely, not sterile.

Programming

Six participants noted the importance of children's needs and three added teens by name.

Programs are important for cultural opportunities.

Coffee shop discussion indicated some in favor some opposed, however, the sense was that with the right programming and opportunities the community and coffee would flow.

Cost:

Last proposal was too expensive. \$8 mm was too much.

Recognition that some people want everything but we cant afford everything.

Use of space will changed over the upcoming years so build in flexibility.

We don't need a bigger library just a more efficient library.

Technology

Docking stations

Access to evolving technology over time.

Flexibility to use technology.

Shared Resources:

How can the library work with the schools? Safety is an issue.

Don't duplicate what we already have in town.

Use resources we already have in town for large meeting space.

Don't build a large meeting space that will sit vacant much of the time.

Process

Research other libraries and communities such as Falmouth, York, Kennebunk.

Don't reinvent the wheel

Look for other models where school and town work together successfully.

Keep track of library attendance.

Accessibility

Younger and elderly citizens must be able to access the library.

Different users need access at different times—elderly and younger folks during the day, working people after hours. Maybe Sundays?

Future Regional Opportunities

Minerva central storage for book storage might lessen local needs.

Don't build lots of stacks!

BUT we need stacks because users like to brose stacks and look for books.

The discussion turned to the existing building and the architects' suggestion that the greenest building is an existing building. One person agreed, two disagreed, and three wanted more information.

Other comments:

Employees need to give architects input about their needs and about how their work can be done most safely and efficiently.

The building is less important than the programs, and the library programs should drive the building program.

Focus Group Members Remembered These as Most Important Themes at Roundtable:

4 Programs and Services

1 Library as Focal Point of Community

1 Cost

1 New Building vs Renovation

Members Remembered these as Least Important Themes

2 Location

4 Building exterior, grounds, and parking

1 Interior space and layout

Focus Group Participants Listed These as Most Important to them Personally

1 Building exterior, grounds and parking

4 Programs and Serivces

2 Cost

Members Ranked These as Least Important

4 New vs Renovated building

1 Library as Focal Point of Community

2 Building Exterior, grounds and parking.