



Library Design Committee

Kickoff Meeting 5/10/05

Minutes

Present: Bill Aslett, Janice Burwash, Joe DeGloria, Helen Doyle, Larry Edwards, Ross Jamieson, Christine Perkins, Ben Schertzer, Jane Sneeringer, Sally Straathof

Submitted by: Christine Perkins

Meeting convened at the Burlington Public Library at 6:00 p.m. We toured our current facility and noted its strengths and limitations. We then walked across to the future site at Holly and Washington Streets, looking for potential views and getting a sense of the size of the lot. We noted the cedar tree on the site but were advised that its multiple crowns are often an indicator of rot. Ross will consult with a professional arborist to determine if the tree is healthy before designing any options that work around it. We discussed ways to strengthen the connection between the library entrance and Fairhaven, through signage, landscaping, and/or streetscaping (pavers, bulb-outs, etc.). We also considered the opportunity to bury unsightly power lines in the block and/or add custom light posts to match those on Fairhaven.

Back at the City Hall Conference Room, we had a Brainstorming Session to get input on the overall look and feel of the new library.

Adjectives used to describe a new library building were:

- Luminous, Homey, Open, Natural Light, Brick, Modern, Inviting, Airy.

Suggested Burlington themes were:

- Islands to mountains via the river, Burlington the Hub City, Agriculture.

Suggested overall design elements were:

- Northwest style, Natural materials, Wood and stone interior, Textured concrete, Energy conservation, Lots of glass, Interesting entryway, Courtyard before entrance with sculpture, Fill to increase elevation but no steps or ramps, Stem wall to act as flood barrier, Tie-in with "Commons" (park, existing library building), Sound absorption, Unique design - not boring or square, Work within downtown revitalization ideas, Revisit Fairhaven entrance, Vacate street – Holly between Fairhaven and Washington, LEED certification, Clerestory windows, Visual temptation from outside, 2nd floor pre-constructed – but does that compromise the design, Display area for local/public art, Multiuse room with divider, Unfinished attic for storage, Flexible for growth.

Suggested exterior design features were:

- Bike racks, Patio with picnic table and benches, Create landscape that screens and/or creates views.

Suggested interior features were:

- Coffee shop or vending machines, Quiet reading area with comfortable chairs, Window seats, Nook and corners for seating, Color and fun for kids, Interior colors that create sections, User-friendly, Good signage, New book area, Family restroom.

We discussed the overall scale of the building considering it is in a residential neighborhood. We talked about the possibility of adding a 2nd floor although Ross does not recommend this for libraries under 30,000 square feet due to staffing limitations and cost factors. There is an opportunity to add an unfinished 2nd story attic for storage (like the Public Safety building) that is not open to the public. This could add exterior visual appeal.

Ross mentioned that the site is approximately 1 foot above flood level (Ross please confirm this) and we would work with the grade to use the highest possible elevation without having to resort to stairs and ramps. He said there is a possibility of designing an attractive stem wall as a flood barrier around the entrance.

The committee will be considering what meeting room amenities are necessary: full kitchen, coffee bar, audiovisual equipment, folding room divider, etc.

We discussed leaving room for a security system even if we do not purchase one at this time. Our library has not experienced a high level of theft but committee members have seen the benefits of a system. We also want to address potential vandalism – a concrete, secure book drop room is one measure we can take.

There was some discussion about how we could make our library unique to Burlington. We don't have a deeply established identity, although agriculture (berries and dairies) play a role. We are also the "Hub City" and the hub between the mountains and the ocean. Perhaps there is a way to subtly work these ideas in to our design (through colors, public art, and a reading nook in the children's area).

We then viewed a slideshow of newer libraries across the state (and British Columbia) that library staff members have toured recently.

Several committee members expressed interest in attending group tours of library buildings: Ben Schertzer, Jane Sneeringer, Sally Straathof and Christine Perkins. We will try to arrange one or two tours on Tuesday evenings when the committee is not meeting.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, May 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned 8:07 p.m.