

Town of Middlebury
Ilsley Library Renovation Expansion Working Group
Minutes of Meeting
November 4, 2021

Present:

Selectboard members Dan Brown and Lindsey Fuentes-George
Ilsley Library Board of Trustees Joe McVeigh
Library Director Dana Hart
Town Staff Working Group Liaison Judith Harris

Absent: Library Board of Trustees Amy Mincher

Also Present: Resident Victoria DeWind

The third meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Joe McVeigh and the agenda was adopted with a slight adjustment in the order of items to be discussed.

Discussion on 10/29/21 Library Walk-through

Brown said while he isn't a huge library user, after reading the background material he was aware of the structural and mechanical issues, yet despite those issues the Library looks great and is colorful and very welcoming. He said it's the things that people don't see when walking in the library that are the problems.

Fuentes-George said from an operational standpoint, there are a lot of very tight, dark spaces that the staff are making the best use of, but it's clear how outdated these spaces are for what they're being used for now. She feels it lacks the open spaces and areas for people working in groups.

Harris said she's been through the building before, and if you look at it from the user side, there is a lack of flow and organization, which is most likely caused by the way the building was created initially and added onto over time. She said architecturally that is the most challenging to address, along with the different levels causing ADA challenges.

Hart said working in the space you adapt to it and don't notice things after awhile, but this morning she was called down to the youth room where a crack in the wall had gotten larger, and then she realized she was so used to the crack she hadn't pointed it out to the group on their walk-through.

McVeigh said one concern heard from the public on the earlier design was removing the 1977 and 1988 additions, so he asked the group their thoughts on their removal now.

Harris felt the 1977 addition should be removed as it has ADA issues and it's dark and the layout is confusing and it doesn't make economic sense to refurbish it. She said it is conceivable that the front portion of the 1988 addition could be saved. Fuentes-George said she thought people were attached to the large windows in the front. Hart said she believed the 1988 addition was originally planned to be larger, but was pared down, so she would look into the history of that project.

1 McVeigh said they've been looking at all these problems with the building and trying to solve them, and
2 he's wondering if that isn't taking them away from being more forward thinking and considering the role
3 of the building and what the possibilities are, rather than just fixing problems. Fuentes-George said they
4 should also be considering how the Library can solve other problems in the community, such as meeting
5 space, if it's designed correctly. Brown said those issues really aren't on this group's Charge.
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7 Hart spoke on the library programming that goes on in the building, and said she finds that people use
8 the Library in very specific ways and forget that other people use the library for completely different
9 reasons. She said for example some may come to utilize the children's activities and books, whereas
10 someone else may use the library to pick up tax forms and get help with taxes, so the library means
11 different things to the community and different age groups. Harris said the term "library" is very
12 limiting, so it would be interesting to see what other places have done to change the image and to
13 incorporate the other resources. Hart said other libraries have explored this and some have added
14 "community center" to their name, but she isn't aware of any that have totally dropped "library" from
15 their name, but it is an interesting idea and the association with the term has not kept up with the
16 reality.
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18 McVeigh said that brings them back to the discussion of what could they do in the future, but are now
19 limited because of the building. He said that's one reason the Library Board included flexibility as one of
20 the goals for the new building. He thought programming and the work-flow and people-flow are
21 something the design team should look at. Harris said that is one of the early tests of the design team in
22 designing space.
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24 Approval of Minutes

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26 The minutes of the October 28, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.
27

28 Discuss the draft of Item B: Summary of Changes Since the Previous Design was Developed

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30 Hart said this is a rough draft and expects there will be additions and changes as they go along. She said
31 Beth Dow had already sent her one regarding how the Library will continue to be open to the public
32 during construction and renovations. She said that's a huge question that will need to be answered.
33 McVeigh said the South Burlington Library moved into a vacant space in the University Mall for a year or
34 two. Brown wasn't sure that was included in their Charge. Hart said it might not be, but someone
35 needs to be thinking of it because it wasn't looked at too closely the last time and needs to be included
36 somewhere.
37

38 There was discussion over the inflation in the cost-of-living since the last time the building was designed,
39 and the need to think about future trends in libraries and how they are changing.
40

41 They reviewed the list of changes that have occurred since the last design plan, and Harris wondered if
42 the changes in people's behavior since the COVID pandemic present the need for the space to be more
43 open, yet provide space to also offer privacy. Hart said it might be good to offer outdoor space in some
44 way too, for at least part of the year.
45

46 Hart said one thing she didn't include in the list was the possibility of offering more social services and
47 having staff to connect people with more support services. Fuentes-George also wondered about
48 providing a way for people to access the internet after hours without sitting outside in the freezing cold

1 and an area to drop off books without using the outside drop-box. Hart thought the Shelburne Library
2 had a 24-hour vestibule area where people could drop off books and access the internet, so she would
3 check with them.

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5 Discuss the draft of Item C: Recommended Changes or Refinements to the Draft Charge to the Design
6 Team

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8 Harris had worked on changes to Item C, and said one thing she did was to make it shorter since there
9 was some redundancy in the original. She said the other overall impression was you can always narrow
10 your focus, but if you start narrow you don't know what you're missing, so she tried to widen some of
11 the issues. She said for example to change it from working with an architect to working with design
12 professionals, and also the process and how things are done, and consider alternate service delivery.
13 She said the previous process was design-bid-build, and that puts you in a position of not knowing the
14 cost and then you don't get the money discussion going soon enough and it takes longer. She said the
15 other thing she included was the possibility of relocating the Library and re-purposing the existing.

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17 McVeigh asked about master planning, and Harris explained that master planning involves looking at the
18 potential future uses for the Library and design the project with those uses in mind, working toward the
19 Master Plan in phases.

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21 The design process was discussed. Brown thought that the way it was done before using the design-bid-
22 build process is how they arrived at the high price tag, where using a design/build or construction
23 management process might avoid that. Harris said an architect listens to the client and designs what
24 they want and then they get to what it might cost, whereas the design/build team has an estimator as
25 part of the team that works with them as they come up with the design. She said it's also possible the
26 owner could hire their own estimator to work during the design process.

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28 McVeigh said the last Building Committee spent a great deal of time educating themselves on libraries
29 and visited several in the area, and they gained a perspective on how libraries are different from other
30 types of buildings and wondered if the next design team need to be as informed. He wondered if we
31 want them to be more specific when giving direction to the professional design team on what they're
32 looking for. Hart said the next non-professional design team should have some knowledge of what's
33 going on in the world of library design. It was decided to add this into the draft.

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35 There was discussion on the location of the Library and what was the reason the last Building Committee
36 didn't consider other sites. Hart believes the decision was made to stay in its present location because
37 earlier studies had shown it would be more expensive to move to another location, however she
38 thought it was a decision that we might want to check on again. Brown thought it needed to stay
39 downtown, and Harris and Hart agreed, but it may not need to be this present site and Hart felt they
40 needed to show they looked at every option.

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42 Victoria DeWind encouraged them to get community input early and to keep the Library downtown, but
43 said her initial interest was in the building design and the importance that it work with the other
44 buildings around it, since she felt the first design that was proposed didn't fit into the neighborhood.

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46 Hart will work on scheduling former building committee members and the architect for future meetings,
47 and Harris suggested that Town Planning and Zoning Director Jennifer Murray be invited to an upcoming
48 meeting as well.

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The next meeting of the Working Group will be Thursday, November 11, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Dow