

Ilsley 100 Project Team  
Minutes of Meeting  
April 28, 2022

Voting members:

Joe McVeigh - Ilsley Library Board (Present)  
Amy Mincher - Ilsley Library Board (Arrived via ZOOM later in meeting)  
Dan Brown - Middlebury Selectboard (Present)  
Farhad Khan - Middlebury Selectboard (Present)  
Jim Gish - Public Member (Present)  
Barbara Doyle-Wilch - Public Member (Present)  
Ken Perine - Public Member (Absent)

Non-voting Members:

Dana Hart - Ilsley Library Director (Present)  
Judith Harris – Consultant/Town Liaison from Harris & Harris Consulting (Present)

Others Present: Victoria DeWind via ZOOM

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. in the Ilsley Library Meeting Room.

The agenda was adopted as presented, and it was mentioned the date on the April 14<sup>th</sup> minutes would be corrected.

Design Example

Hart shared with the Team designs from an award-winning Cincinnati and Hamilton County Ohio public library, which included a renovation and addition. She said they tried to retain as many historic features as they could while bringing it up to code and making it more welcoming. She played a video showing the highlights of the project that highlighted accessibility and flexibility. This project was just under 14,000 s.f. at a cost of \$7 million. Brown pointed out that there was really nothing fancy in the design of the building, but the colors and minimalist approach really made it look beautiful, and Harris pointed out the open, industrial look, which Brown said probably kept the cost down. Hart said she thought as they looked at more design examples, they'd find that really successful libraries don't need grand architectural components, just basic design with right angles and open spaces. McVeigh said he heard "flexible" come up multiple times.

Communications Update

Hart said Gish had set up a meeting between herself and Gish's wife Peggy Burns, the Executive Director of Careers and Internships at Middlebury College, and they discussed some of the large projects the College has to keep students in Vermont longer if that's what they want to do, and they spoke about how to approach the College as potential partners and find ways they could work together. Gish said it's important to find the best ways to partner with the College.

Gish said he thought it would be good to put the word out to the community about what was happening, so he's suggesting doing a frequent update modeled after the weekly updates he did in his position as the Community Liaison for the Downtown Rail Bridge Project. He shared a draft of a storyline "The Future of Ilsley Public Library" starting out with the history of the Library

52 and the value of this facility. He said he wouldn't do weekly updates, but maybe a couple each  
53 month and maybe in the future they would increase, but these will give a level of transparency  
54 to what is happening. He said he didn't want to use the Town Constant Contact list but would  
55 send it through the Library email list. Hart said initially they would send it out through the Town  
56 email list and say if they were interested they can subscribe through the Library. Gish said he  
57 also had a blog that was separate from the Town list, so he could put out a note to his blog  
58 followers as well. McVeigh suggested the school system might be a good way to get the word  
59 out as well, since they send out notices to all the parents.

60  
61 Library Square Footage Program Update

62  
63 Hart said she and Harris would begin working on the square footage program next week in  
64 Harris's capacity as a consultant for the project.

65  
66 Harris outlined the process by looking at the current square footage of space used for different  
67 programs and then look at the desired space for the same program based on the interviews with  
68 staff. She said they will have weekly sessions and work on one space at a time and after  
69 they're all assembled they'll have the net square footage and then add the necessary square  
70 footage needed for circulation and mechanical equipment to come up with a number.

71  
72 There was discussion and questions regarding the process. Harris said they'll come to the  
73 Team throughout the process and said the square footage will be a moving target as the plans  
74 evolve.

75  
76 Gish asked about who would be vetting the space needs, since only two of the Team were  
77 librarians. Hart said the needs she's handed Harris to work with are all based on the staff  
78 interviews and she feels they're all very appropriate and warranted. She said that doesn't mean  
79 there are places that couldn't be eliminated if needed, but when it comes down to what things  
80 need to be cut, she feels herself and Doyle-Welch are in a position to make those decisions  
81 along with the Team. Harris said they'd be looking at space at a higher level of detail than the  
82 program analysis done by GBA (Gossens Bachman Architects) previously.

83  
84 Gish asked if the Team's decision will be based on the needs or the costs. Harris said that is  
85 what the matrix is for and Hart said the matrix will help them look at needs vs. cost. Hart said  
86 once they get cost estimates as part of the matrix, she thinks it will become clear and they'll  
87 make decisions based on those options.

88  
89 McVeigh said he's not sure how the program and potential cost will play into the decision on  
90 whether to keep the library in its current location or does it need to move, and he thinks they will  
91 need some professional help to make that decision.

92  
93 Doyle-Wilch met with Town Planner Jennifer Murray to go over the Downtown Master Plan and  
94 said the process to develop that plan took two years and was hugely inclusive of the community.  
95 She said when you look at the library as having something for multi-generational families, you  
96 lose that when you talk about locating a children's library in another location. She said the Plan  
97 is very broad, but it gives a good foundation and they have a responsibility to connect to it in  
98 every way possible.

99  
100 McVeigh said there had been a posting on Front Porch Forum recently saying the Library  
101 should purchase the former Ben Franklin Store. He said he reached out to a local realtor and  
102 found out that they're asking around \$800,000 for the building and the building is in poor

103 condition. He said one thing to think about is the library operations will need to relocate in the  
104 event of a two-year renovation of the existing library.

105  
106 Timeline

107  
108 The draft timeline was handed out and McVeigh said he liked that it's looking at the big picture  
109 over the next 3 year and he likes how it's broken down into things like design, finance and  
110 reporting to the Selectboard.

111  
112 Harris said this is a framework of how we're trying to operate, with a significant event of some  
113 kind in 2024, that would most likely a bond vote either at Town Meeting in March or the General  
114 Election in November. She said Town Manager Ramsay thought the most likely date would be  
115 November of 2024 because people will be out to vote and would give proper time to develop  
116 plans. She went over the remainder of the timeline and said the Team can add or subtract as  
117 they see fit. She thinks some professional help might be needed to finalize the choices, illustrate  
118 it and show all options have been explored and bring it to the public.

119  
120 Doyle-Wilch asked about the "conceptual estimator" and what type of credentials are needed.  
121 Harris said some won't give you any general costs without seeing detailed drawings and there  
122 are some that will look at it in the conception phase and give a general idea of cost with a  
123 contingency cost, but that is less accurate. She said the College uses Naylor and Breen for this  
124 purpose, but they have the background and will advise the College from a strategic point of  
125 view. She said an RFP could go out to search for the right person. She said there is a cost  
126 involved, and the \$24,000 already in the budget to go towards this, and another \$15,000 will be  
127 available July 1<sup>st</sup>, and Hart is working with Christine Graham, a fundraising consultant.

128  
129 Brown said this Team had been given 18 months and he wondered at the end of that time would  
130 we have a feasibility study and is that study what is needed for a bond vote. Hart said she isn't  
131 sure about completing it in 18 months, but the feasibility study is what will be needed to go for a  
132 bond vote, and the timeline between the feasibility study and the bond vote will vary based on  
133 when the target date for the vote, and the time in between will be used to promote the project.  
134 Brown said this schedule puts a bond vote 2 ½ years out from now. Hart said at the time they  
135 said 18 months, they hadn't put together an actual timeline and layout the work to be done, but  
136 Harris and Ramsay have more experience with setting up a timeline for this type of project.

137  
138 McVeigh said clearly we need more than the GBA feasibility study to move ahead, and the last  
139 go around focused more on design than on fund raising and communications with the public.  
140 Doyle-Wilch said when Shelburne did their new library, she said they developed three options  
141 for locations and took it to the public for feedback, so she would allow at least a month or two to  
142 take design possibilities to the public.

143  
144 Gish said this timeline is as long as the \$100 million downtown rail project that just wrapped up,  
145 and people wear out over time and this Team will wear out over time. He said you're looking at  
146 2 meetings a month for 2 ½ years and is that realistic to keep this pace up. Also, he said, if it  
147 doesn't go to a bond vote until 2024, you're looking at construction lasting until 2027, so will this  
148 current library hold up that long. Doyle-Wilch agreed and thinks it could be shortened  
149 considerably.

150  
151 Harris said the timeline started by looking at the best possible bond vote, which was March  
152 2024, and then backing up from that. She said she isn't sure what other projects are in the  
153 Town pipeline coming up, and we need to be mindful of that and how will that fit into this.

154  
155 McVeigh said in his opinion the first major decision they need to make is the location of the  
156 library and whether it stays here and is renovated/expanded, or do we build a new library  
157 somewhere else, and we need a way to make that decision. He said we need to be thinking of  
158 the criteria needed to make that decision.

159  
160 Doyle-Wilch said the Downtown Master Plan's goal is to revitalize the downtown, so she thinks it  
161 would be ridiculous to move out of the downtown. She said there was also emphasis on the  
162 historical significance of the building and the people care about this building, so to her that  
163 cemented that the library needs to stay here. Harris said the library building ideally wouldn't go  
164 away but could be adapted to another use.

165  
166 Brown said as far as the timeline, he felt they needed to wrap up whatever is needed for an RFP  
167 and get that to the Selectboard, and he thinks it needs to be accelerated and a decision made  
168 on location. Brown said the Town will be having a bond vote for the Wastewater Plant upgrade,  
169 so we might want to try and have this bond vote first. Hart said hopefully they can push this  
170 timeline up and then look at a bond date sooner than 2024.

171  
172 Matrix Discussion

173  
174 McVeigh shared with the group a decision matrix for the Team to start thinking about it before  
175 getting into the specifics.

176  
177 Harris went over the example of the matrix she had shared with the Team used by a  
178 corporation, and said while it doesn't apply to the library, the methodology was excellent and it  
179 lays out what needs to be considered when choosing a site and the levels of importance of the  
180 sites. She said it forces the Team to come up with the decision as a group and would arm us  
181 for involving the community more by saying why this decision was made.

182  
183 There was discussion on the process and the level of details. Gish said he wants to get the  
184 community excited about the project. Hart said it might be a good idea to get community input  
185 before completing the matrix. The public process was discussed and at what stage in the  
186 process do you take it to the community. Gish said public meetings go well when the people  
187 have something to react to, and not "what do you think we should do".

188  
189 Mincher said we need to be thinking about having online meetings as well, since some people  
190 are still uncomfortable in public settings, so thought having Zoom meetings that can break out  
191 into Zoom groups for smaller discussions would work well.

192  
193 McVeigh said he doesn't think the public is aware of all the problems and safety/health issues  
194 with the current library, and he thinks they need to find a way to convey all these issues to the  
195 community so they don't react negatively when they hear of possibly relocating somewhere  
196 else. Gish said he believes his blog can help relay all these issues space by space of all the  
197 behind the scene issues the library is dealing with.

198  
199 Hart said it looks like the next goal of the team is to setup a draft list of criteria and assign a  
200 weight to each one, and then go to the public and say the first item of the Team's Charge is to  
201 determine a location and ask the public if these were the criteria they felt would help to decide.  
202 She said if people really freaked out about changing location, then there is enough time to  
203 address that.

204

205 Gish said he feels the hardest group to reach are the parents of young children, and they're  
206 such an important group to reach. Hart said maybe having a Zoom meeting in the evening  
207 would help with attendance, and maybe create an opportunity for them to provide feedback via  
208 email. Mincher pointed out the importance of pictures and postings on social media.

209  
210 Doyle-Wilch said she's still uncertain about the existing funding. McVeigh and Hart said there  
211 was currently \$24,000 in Capital Funds that had been earmarked for paying Christine Graham  
212 for fundraising services, but she is billing on an hourly basis, and at the time this money was  
213 established they thought they'd be going into fund raising immediately. Hart said now they  
214 should consider this money as "startup" funds for the Project Team to use with Selectboard  
215 approval. McVeigh said an additional \$15,000 will be available on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and additional funds  
216 can be budgeted in future capital budgets. Doyle-Wilch asked if this isn't enough money, do we  
217 need to find additional funds, and Hart said yes through fund raising, until more capital funds  
218 can be approved.

219  
220 The Team was asked to think about the criteria to use on the direction and location of the  
221 project and as they thought of something to send it to Hart, and then she and Harris would put  
222 together a draft to discuss at the next meeting.

223  
224 The next meeting of the Ilsley 100 Project Team will be 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2022.

225  
226 Respectfully submitted,  
227 Beth Dow

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229  
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