

Ilsley 100 Project Team
Minutes of Meeting
September 1, 2022

Voting members:

- Joe McVeigh - Ilsley Library Board (Present)
- Amy Mincher - Ilsley Library Board (Present)
- Dan Brown - Middlebury Selectboard (Present – arrived later)
- Farhad Khan - Middlebury Selectboard (Present – arrived later)
- Jim Gish - Public Member (Present)
- Barbara Doyle-Wilch - Public Member (Present)
- Ken Perine - Public Member (Present)
- Ruth Hardy – Alternate Public Member (Present)

Non-voting Members:

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

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

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 11, 2022 meeting were approved as presented.

Agenda Planning

McVeigh said he wanted to review some items prepared by Harris that had been send in their packet, and he began with a map of the library parcel showing the adjacent properties, their sizes and who owns them, and also a map showing underground utilities that will need to be taken into consideration. Harris said she'd been working with Director Public Works Planning Dan Werner and he indicated this map didn't show all utilities. She said it is just a reminder that while the parking lot looks like a large space that could be developed, there are all these utilities underground that would need to be relocated and that cost will need to be considered.

The other item discussed was information regarding the former Ben Franklin building that's for sale and some of the problems with the condition of the structure.

They reviewed the schedule they set for the project in May, and Hart felt they were very close to being on-track at this point. McVeigh questioned Item #6 "RFP/Bond Vote Feasibility Study" they had scheduled to begin in December. Hart said this would be an RFP to hire a professional to do the feasibility study on whatever design they choose, it wasn't actually a bond vote, so perhaps the words "Bond Vote" should be removed.

Farhad Khan arrived at the meeting.

47 McVeigh said he had the feeling from speaking to some of the Team members individually, that
48 they're coming at this process from different perspectives and approaches. He said Harris is
49 coming at this from a construction approach where the end result is based on cost, where as
50 Doyle-Wilch and Hardy feel the project should be more visual and the community needs to have
51 a vision of the possibilities and that perhaps the possibilities will be limited if the project is based
52 solely on cost.

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54 He said today they would be having conversations with conceptual estimator Henry Erickson of
55 Erickson Consultants and with Stephanie Clark from the real estate advisory firm of White +
56 Burke

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58 Conversation with Stephanie Clarke, White + Burke

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60 Hart said Clarke has indicated that White + Burke have a great deal of experience guiding
61 municipalities with large developments, and if we want to develop the lower parking lot, then
62 White + Burke would be able to answer a lot of the big questions about doing that, such as doing
63 that with a private partnership. Harris said White + Burke have provided a fee schedule and
64 some ideas of what they think they can do for us, and while their hourly fee is quite high, they
65 might be able to help us with other ideas of developing beyond the current library site.

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67 The experience of White + Burke with municipalities was in question, and Hart said that Clarke
68 had indicated they had worked with NexBridge on their proposal for the EDI site several years
69 ago.

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71 Clarke was attending the meeting remotely, so Hart introduced her into the meeting.

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73 Clarke said she'd been doing this work for 16 years, and White + Burke have 30+ years of doing
74 consulting and brokerage work for developments. She said the firm are not developers. They
75 don't own any properties or do any investing, they're purely consultants giving municipalities,
76 institutions, and private entities advice through an objective lens. She said all but one of her
77 clients have been municipalities the last few years, doing public-private partnerships around the
78 state. She said the influx of infrastructure and planning money into the state has enabled
79 communities to play a more active role and municipalities are taking the drivers seat in making
80 projects happen in their downtowns, and she said that's where their firm comes in to help
81 municipalities who don't know how to do development projects on their own.

82

83 She said their firm offers ala cart services, so they can provide whatever services are needed.
84 She said in this case it sounds like the Team has strength in the design, functionality, and
85 community needs, so perhaps their firm can help with financing and marketing feasibility aspects
86 of the project.

87

88 She said their specialty is in creative brainstorming around strategy and feasibility analysis, and
89 they can do some architectural schematics to help with early viability decisions. She said she is a
90 realtor, so they can provide brokerage services if needed, as well as assessment services. She
91 said they contract out some work that is the more specific, such as detailed feasibility work with
92 architects, engineers, lawyers and cost estimators.

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94 Regarding the question of other municipal projects they've been involved with that might be
95 similar, Clarke mentioned:

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- Saint Albans – They've worked on many development projects with the City of St. Albans over the last 10 years, but the one most like the library project was the Congress and Main Building in their downtown that combines mixed uses of both retail and affordable and market housing.
- Burlington – White + Burke have helped with site selection and are the project managers for the new Burlington High School. She said this was a very public process that used a matrix system similar to what the Team has developed for the library project.
- Manchester – They did the site search, evaluation and feasibility analysis for a mixed-use project and the Town is now negotiating with developers to acquire this site.
- Windsor – They did the economic development strategic analysis on a municipally owned piece of land and an RFP is now out for a mixed-use building with affordable housing.
- Saint Johnsbury – White + Burke did the site search for a new public safety building and found the old armory that was a good fit but had a ton of environmental contamination issues. She said they are bringing in the architect and environmental remediation specialist, and as part of their financial feasibility they are helping the town find sources of funding. She said while they don't do the grant writing, they help put together the package and look at how all the funding sources work together.

She said the core to all these projects is the public process. She said White + Burke had been the leader in developing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts around the State of Vermont in municipalities that need the infrastructure to generate economic development, and part of that requires a robust public process to understand the community needs, what their concerns are, and how this tool would achieve the outcome they're looking for.

She said while she wasn't involved in the EDI project in Middlebury, their firm worked with NexBridge and together with Bread Loaf Corporation, White + Burke put together a proposal for the developers in response to the RFP for a mixed-use development. She said their involvement was mostly with the proforma development, but the Town chose not to proceed with that project.

Clarke said her specialty right now is working with and developing public-private partnerships and trying to create development agreements that cover each other's concerns and meet each other in terms of risk, so planning and economic development is primarily their core of work with municipalities but laying the groundwork for private investment.

Clarke said she had been asked to speak to the Ilsley project as a potential tenant in public-private project versus remaining a municipal owned entity, and these would all be very generic since she isn't that familiar with the project yet.

She said the pros of being a tenant is it reduces the demand for up-front capital and you're not managing the project so there is less risk, and you can leverage as a user the opportunity to generate both economic and community vitality. She said the cons are there is less control over

139 the design and co-tenants, you'd be sharing space and you would have the operational expense of
140 paying rent.

141
142 She said the pros of remaining a municipal owned entity include the independence of the site and
143 process with no private entity involved, and the possibility of a very successful capital campaign.
144 The cons include the planning money to develop the project is harder to come by, there is more
145 risk, and the need to hire experienced project and construction managers would impact the
146 capital campaign in a large way.

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148 Khan asked Clarke if she knew where they could find out information on NexBridge and what
149 happened at that time with the EDI site. She said she didn't know but suggested the Town
150 administration would have this information or a Board member who was on at that time.

151
152 Gish asked Clarke if she could imagine a successful public-private partnership in a library
153 setting. Clarke said what really strikes her with this project is the library could act as an anchor
154 tenant for a private development project. She said it could be an annex for the library or a
155 connector between the current library, but this would be appealing to a developer since the retail
156 trend is not expanding now. She said there is a need for housing, so if you have an anchor tenant
157 plus housing, it is the gold standard for a mixed-use development, and having the library serve as
158 the anchor/core tenant could be a real win-win and could put the library in the driver's seat, since
159 you would be driving the deal. She said there are some dollars out there that are available now
160 for interior fit-up since this is a community facility.

161
162 Hardy asked Clarke if White + Burke had ever done a library project, and Clarke said they had
163 not done a library before. Hardy said she understood we were looking at their firm for cost
164 estimating, but that doesn't seem to be a service offered. Clarke said they subcontract cost
165 estimating, and she had understood their firm was being considered to help with the feasibility
166 and how the various scenarios work together, and an estimator might be brought in to put a cost
167 to the different scenarios.

168
169 McVeigh asked how deeply do they have to explore different options and cost them out to make
170 an informed decision that isn't that detailed and lengthy, and how do you make that decision.
171 Clarke said some of the decisions are made by the Team, but some are just best practices. She
172 said if they look to lease a space for an annex of the library, she said they would be looking at
173 creating a list of questions, such as lease and fit-up costs, time frame, and how much more data is
174 needed. She said it's important that they're looking at apples to apples for each scenario.

175
176 McVeigh thanked Clarke for all the information, and Clarke left the meeting.

177
178 Hart said maybe she hadn't been clear on why White + Burke was invited to the meeting, but it
179 was more to hear of the services they could provide for the project and at what point it would
180 make sense to bring them into the project, so it was more just about getting information.

181
182 Perine said they're looking at doing a site selection and being able to defend that to the public, so
183 that sounds like something White + Burke could help with, but he's sensitive to the timeline. He
184 said part of him wants to just pick a solution and begin, but yet every time he mentions to

185 someone they're looking at improving the library everyone asks about the Ben Franklin space, so
186 they have to have an answer to that question and that's key for him.

187
188 Doyle-Wilch said the people she's talked to want to know why the community isn't being asked
189 to decide on the site and wondered about doing pros and cons on a site and then ask for input
190 from the community that feeds into the decision. She feels the Team should do the investigation
191 on each site and get it out to the community. She said she keeps thinking about the Town Hall
192 decision and how the people felt they didn't have a say on the location and all the backlash that
193 happened. Gish said a lot of the backlash with the Town Offices involved the sentiment around
194 tearing down the old high school and that would only become an issue here if the library is
195 abandoned.

196
197 Hart said she doesn't see how White + Burke would plug into their process right now, but the
198 matrix is really about finding out how much of the program can fit on any one of the sites, so she
199 thinks it may end up they'd be better off on the EDI site. In that case, what would we be up
200 against - she can see White + Burke helping with that aspect.

201
202 Hardy felt they could get the same services White + Burke offer from either of the design teams
203 who have expressed interest in this project and they can do it with more architectural detail, and
204 they can do the public engagement part of it as well. She agrees with Doyle-Wilch on giving the
205 community options, but feels they should narrow the options to maybe three sites. She said they
206 already have information on the existing site, the EDI site and the Ben Franklin site, so she
207 doesn't want to spend the time or money to do something that's already been done on these three
208 sites.

209
210 Dan Brown (who had joined the meeting late) said the involvement of the community was a part
211 of this project before the Team was even formed, so he's not sure why it's even being discussed.

212
213 Khan said he had heard that the Ben Franklin might have been sold, and as far as he's concerned
214 that's the least desirable site.

215
216 Conversation with Henry Erickson – Erickson Consulting

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218 Prior to Erickson joining the meeting, Harris told the Team that his cost estimating talents have
219 to do specifically with how much it costs to build x-square feet new or how much to rehabilitate
220 and the site development costs associated with each. She said the Team will have to figure out
221 all the other costs involved because Erickson is not going to be able to help compare cost of
222 building vs. leasing or with the fit-up costs or soft costs.

223
224 Erickson joined the Team and introductions were made.

225
226 McVeigh asked Erickson to clarify what a "conceptual" cost estimate was compared to an
227 estimate they would get further into the process.

228
229 Erickson said he felt the estimate for the library would most likely be an Order-of-Magnitude
230 estimate, and then gave a breakdown of the various types of estimates:

231
232 Conceptual Estimate- based on a very basic plan of what the building would be.
233 Order-of-Magnitude Estimate – based on square footage, location and building type
234 Schematic Design Estimate – this is done after there is a program and Floor Plan
235 Design Development Estimate – uses Schematic Design Estimate but with systems
236 Construction Document Estimate – done when construction documents are 90% complete
237

238 Erickson said he'd been doing construction management consulting for 20 years and began his
239 career originally as a carpenter and worked his way up to superintendent, then construction
240 manager and then general manager of the company, plus he's worked for different sized building
241 firms, so he has a broad depth of knowledge of the construction business.
242

243 Harris asked how his talents matched up with where the Team is currently in this project.
244 Erickson said he can make an estimate based off a floor plan and building elevation and come
245 within 5% of the final cost of an early schematic design and he has an intuitive way of looking at
246 the project he hopes will help the Team.
247

248 He said there are cost indexes based on various industries that he uses and then he adds an
249 inflation rate.
250

251 He said he'd worked on the Middletown Springs library and town office project in 2017 that was
252 around \$2 million that at today's prices would be around \$3.1 to \$3.2 million. The Shelburne
253 library was in 2016 that cost \$6 million but today would cost over \$8.5 million. He said the
254 Pember library that was done quite a while ago was a combination of additions and renovations
255 that cost \$3 million, and in today's market would be \$5 or \$6 million.
256

257 Harris said the Team had visited the Shelburne library, and asked Erickson at what point in that
258 process was he brought into the process. He said he was brought in early at the schematic design
259 phase and design development budget, and in this project he was working for Vermont
260 Integrated Architects (VIA) and not the Town of Shelburne.
261

262 Erickson said he has helped with site options as well, and in order to look at sites you need a
263 building with a conceptual estimate so you can compare sites, and then you add all the estimates
264 for utilities, parking, earth work, etc. to each proposed site to the base building estimate to get an
265 apples-to-apples comparison for each site.
266

267 McVeigh said one of the things the Team is considering is a renovation and expansion as
268 opposed to building new, so wondered how they would be able to have an apple-to-apple
269 comparison in that situation. Erickson said he would use a different cost program for estimating
270 an existing building to compare with new.
271

272 Perine asked what the timeframe would be if they asked him for order-of-magnitude estimates on
273 the options they were considering, and Erickson thought it would take 3 or 4 weeks.
274

275 McVeigh asked if it was different to estimate for a library vs. another type of building. Erickson
276 said every building is a building, and while each have unique aspects and a different level of
277 finish, they're all built the same.

278
279 Hardy said Erickson had submitted an estimate of 75 hours of work at a total cost of \$8,750.
280 Erickson said that his proposal is an hourly "not-to-exceed" estimate, so it might be less, but it
281 wouldn't cost more than that.

282

283 Next Steps for Hiring Professionals

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285 Harris said that the Hart, Doyle-Wilch and Harris team had completed a series of adjacency
286 diagrams in addition to the square footage program. She said the Gossens-Bachman design from
287 a few years ago was a schematic design with enough design development on the mechanical and
288 electrical systems to make it a bit more accurate, so someone could update that estimate to
289 current figures. Hart said the new square footage program is pretty close to the Gossens-
290 Bachman design, however Harris pointed out that what goes in which part of the building has
291 changed and the original building would still need to be renovated and if you demolish the two
292 current additions there would need to be a new addition.

293

294 They discussed the information they already had from the earlier Gossens-Bachman design and
295 what was needed for estimates for the different options to go to the public. Doyle-Wilch was
296 concerned about the community getting focused on the cost and not looking at the vision and the
297 positive aspects of the project. Hardy felt they also needed a visual of the building to go along
298 with the estimates and felt that's where a design firm could help.

299

300 Hardy stated she felt the best option at this time was to stay in the existing library and renovate
301 and expand. Perine said one of the problems with the EDI site is the amount of time it would
302 take to develop the plan and get it approved.

303

304 McVeigh said he's getting a sense that the Team feels that White + Burke might be of help down
305 the road if the decision is to go with an annex or new-build on the EDI site, but it doesn't appear
306 they're ready to move forward with that at this time, and the Team agreed. McVeigh said he's
307 also hearing that it might be a good idea to get numbers, and Erickson might be a good person to
308 perform that task as he has provided a quote, so asked if the Team was comfortable going ahead
309 with Erickson. Hardy said she would want to check his references and want to simultaneously
310 work on visuals, so wondered how to get the visuals so they don't focus on dollars.

311

312 There was a discussion over the type of visual they wanted for the public. Brown thought they
313 were pushing way too fast to get visuals now and thinks they have enough now to get the public
314 involved and let them know what the Team is doing, but he doesn't feel they're ready to discuss
315 site options or visuals.

316

317 McVeigh asked again if they were ready to engage Erickson doing some estimating at a cost not
318 to exceed \$8,750. Hardy said again she didn't think they were ready for that until there was a
319 plan for visuals. Doyle-Wilch said if Erickson has already done several library projects with
320 VIA, so why would we not just hire VIA since they'll turn around and hire Erickson.

321
322 Harris said if they're talking design, then you're talking about putting out an RFP for a design
323 firm and that will really add to the timeline when you look at all the steps involved in developing
324 an RFP. She doesn't see how you can just hire a specific design firm without it being
325 competitive.

326
327 Hardy again said we can't ask him to develop a cost without a visual to go with it and the only
328 way to do that is to hire a design team so they can work simultaneously. Perine disagreed and
329 thought they could move ahead with the order-of-magnitude cost estimate and at the time he's
330 doing his work we can work on the visuals, so perhaps in 6-weeks we can go to the public. Hart
331 said perhaps this is a good option for working with a College student to prepare conceptual
332 visions of what the library might look like without having to do an RFP process.

333
334 Harris suggested taking it back so you just show the public the site options with a block showing
335 the massing and not a building elevation, and Mincher thought that was something the public
336 could see without getting hung-up on a visual of what the building might look like. Hardy
337 agreed with this idea and thought the idea of showing examples of spaces in other libraries as an
338 example of what ours could look like.

339
340 Brown moved that pending the reference check by Hart, that we hire Erickson at a cost not to
341 exceed \$8,750. Khan seconded the motion.

342
343 Gish said what's crucial in his decision is what is Erickson going to use to base his cost estimates
344 for renovating and expanding the existing building. Hart said she will give him all the
345 information she has, including the cost to upgrade the heating system and the elevator and share
346 the feasibility study. He just wonders how accurate the estimate will be when the vision for the
347 renovation of this building doesn't exist yet. Harris said he will have to take the costs of a
348 renovation of an existing historic library somewhere else and apply them to this project. Hart
349 said she thinks to get a cost to renovate per square foot is about as close as they can get right now
350 since we don't have a plan.

351
352 McVeigh called the motion. The motion carried with 7 in favor, none opposed. **MOTION**
353 **PASSED.**

354
355 Review Updated Matrix Proposal

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357 Doyle-Wilch suggested adding the pros and cons of each option in the matrix, and Hart said she
358 liked that idea.

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360 Hart asked about looking into the graphic design of each site showing the building blocks on
361 each. Harris said she could do it, but she wasn't sure if they would want her to. Gish said
362 Lincoln Brown Illustration out of Burlington worked with VHB on the renderings of the bridge
363 project in Middlebury and he thought it would be a simple thing to do because they weren't
364 asking for that much detail.

365

366 Doyle-Wilch said the display needs to be portable, because she wants to bring it into homes and
367 have neighbors over to see it. Perine said whatever is presented it has to be complete with every
368 detail of what needs to be done and tell the whole story. Hart said she feels this is all coming
369 together. She said they need to complete the matrix, get the cost estimates, work on illustrating
370 the data with both a visual and the verbal high-level pros and cons. Hardy said they have all the
371 information so they need to put together a presentation that explains the urgency of the problems
372 and the possibilities of how to solve them. McVeigh said he'd be happy to work on this with
373 Hart, and Gish said he would be happy to create the "backbone" for them to work with.

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375 The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 15th.

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377 The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

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379 Respectfully submitted,

380 Beth Dow

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