

**Wayland Free Public Library
Library Planning Committee
Minutes of Meeting, Monday May 9, 2018
22 Wayland Hills Road, Wayland, MA 7:00 pm**

This was a joint meeting with the WFPL Board of Library Trustees. Minutes were taken by each board.

Trustees present: Aida Gennis (chair); Sally Cartwright, Leah Hart, Judy Dion, Maureen White, Library Director Sandy Raymond. Absent: Mark Hughes.

LPC present: Tom Fay (chair), Rachel Sideman-Kurtz, Neil Gordon, Tim Marsters Thom White, Ann Knight, Vicki LaFarge, Christine Cipriani, Kelly Lappin, Lynne Lipcon, Lynne Cavanaugh. Sandy Raymond, Director, and Judy Dion, Trustee, are members of LPC.

Public: Suzanne Woodruff, Alice Boelter, Margo Melnicove, Tom Gennis

There was no public comment

Tom Fay called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM

Meeting minutes of 02.07.2018 unanimously approved. Mr. Marsters moved to accept the minutes as written and Mr. White seconded the motion.

Ms. Gennis thanked the LPC for all of their dedication and work on the library project. Several weeks have passed since town meeting and the article to fund the proposed new library building did not meet the required margin to succeed. Ms. Gennis asked that LPC members share their reflections and lessons learned from the process. Ms. Gennis reminded all that the WFPL will continue to operate at 5 Concord Road for the foreseeable future. The Library is functioning well and will continue to serve the public as best it can in its limited space. The town hasn't yet received an opinion from the Attorney General on the town's petition about the Roby will.

Ms. LaFarge facilitated the meeting and asked for observations and reflections.

Comments are noted below and are from multiple people. Questions posed during this session are noted but remain unanswered as this was a meeting to receive input from the LPC. Thoughts of the LPC follow.

Communications

All the written communications were good, both in content and design and enough sent via mail to the entire town. The entire process was transparent, honest, well publicized and many efforts were made to include the public at every step. Communication with other town boards began early, was effective, with good back and forth. The process and rigor felt good. The site analysis was in depth, time consuming, and included working with other town departments.

Other town boards

The public did not seem to be aware of the role of the Public Municipal Building Committee (PMBC), and its control over the project. The PMBC does not take a political advocacy role. Yet, it would have been very helpful had they spoken as to their process and role. A presentation or statement from them on a topic such as the site selection process, the budget drivers that they managed – such as the materials selections and energy efficiencies, the escalations and contingencies required, the amount of detail that justified the size, would have helped educate the public on the reasons for the total cost of the project.

There was success working with Finance Committee, Selectmen, School Committee. FinCom support was late with little time to get the message out that all projects could be managed by the town. FinCom also revised (lowered) their cost recommendation for the library on TM floor – but were halted from presenting it – discussion time for the article had run. Could that information have changed minds?

Reflections on TM vote:

It was heartening that the article received a majority vote in favor of a new larger, better, library building and in a new location. However, a 2/3rds vote was required. LPC was passionate, but not enough time to educate the public about the complexity of the project and its benefits to the community.

Previous town meeting votes on each library article received large, over 2/3 majority, votes perhaps that gave a false sense of confidence? Perhaps finding others excited and passionate about the project could have helped? Had the project been waitlisted, there would have been time to raise private funds. The 5 Concord building has been maintained, should the cost to really “fix” the building been discussed? Sentiment that this project was not a failure. It was successful in every way except for the last vote.

MBLC attended a library staff meeting and assured staff that nothing done on behalf of the effort was done wrong. Not a day goes by without someone asking the staff: “When will construction start?”

How does a project become so polarized?

There remains a challenge of getting the attention of the public and getting information to be read and understood. Not many meetings were well attended by the public. It became apparent many believe the library is really online (electronic) and going to be more online. Some said the Minuteman Library Network as a resource sharing system was enough, yet it is not a space sharing resource. Surprise was expressed that the library was *not* considered a community center. There was support at TM for the separate and distinct community center article and represented that support must be for one or the other. TM didn’t understand both were important for the community and could be afforded.

Opponents may not have had all of the facts and did use selective slices of data in their messaging. Opposition was based on the project being too expensive, too large, and not in the geographic center. Could there have been an open debate? Probably not without emotional confrontation.

Town Meeting

There were issues that night with very bad weather (a very dark and stormy night), bad commuting conditions, bus shuttles travelling from remote parking lots and parking challenges all around which added to the delay of getting to TM. In spite of these difficulties, 1,300+ attended TM that evening.

Ideas of What to do at 5 Concord Road

Ms. Gennis kicked off the next item for discussion.

How can the current environment be improved without internal construction? How can the community’s needs be addressed, particularly staff spaces, Teen area, seniors, Children’s room?

Comments:

Remaining at 5 Concord Road was carefully considered when this process started years ago, many wanted to stay but realized that needed spaces, including necessary parking, would not fit on the small site.

Could existing public space inside be used differently? Should the round room be used for meetings or the Raytheon room be repurposed? Can the wall between Children’s and Raytheon be removed?

What could be done on site but outside – on the property itself? Is there an off-site storage option and would that be useful? What could and should be done about improved access in and out of building? If more space is given for staff, there will be less space for the public. Staff conditions are bad. Will staff want to continue to work under these conditions? Concern that there are no public restrooms on main floor and only one men’s, one woman’s and one family bathroom in the basement.

Can there be more glass and natural light in Children’s room and adult size furniture? Is an acoustical solution for the main floor possible– without constructing walls? Perhaps we can use furniture that is more flexible and mobile. We should evaluate how to serve more people in the community.

Moving Forward

There is no second chance to get the grant Wayland was awarded. Once the Town Meeting vote didn’t succeed, the funds would be awarded to other towns. There is no schedule for another state library grant

round. Should there be one, a new process, design and application would be needed. Should fundraising be started and a new building with private funds be proposed? Should a foundation be created? Without a purpose or clear goal for doing so it would be difficult to be successful. Ms. Gennis reminded everyone that the Trustees are stewards of the library– wherever it is sited. If a new building project is explored, it is obvious future use of 5 Concord needs to be addressed at the same time. Should the library move, the town would decide a future use of the building.

What other geographic options are there? Any future grant round would require a new site selection process. What happens to 195 Main Street since the conditions for transfer to the library were not met? Should a resolution be presented to selectmen to keep the 195 Main site available for any future new library? Should a property in the geographic center of town be considered? What about the Whole Foods location or the Town Center? What about the Town Building site if it is repurposed?

In the future, if a smaller building is proposed, it would have to be strongly defended. The other applications in this grant round had less square footage to population than Wayland's. Some of the increase in the size of the building was due to the MBLC experience with libraries located near schools and population centers. Could funds be raised privately and then design to a budget? If a new project is started, perhaps approach some architectural schools and propose an architectural charrette to create interesting ideas. If major changes to 5 Concord would be considered, focus should be to what would make it suitable for any future use. Perhaps an architectural charette would create interesting ideas, engaging local architectural programs? Do the Trustees want to stay at 5 Concord?

Ms. Gennis and Mr. Fay thanked all for their participation.

Adjourn: 9:18 p.m.

Documents for this Meeting:

Agenda for Meeting of May 9, 2018

Minutes of the LPC meeting of February 7, 2018

Next Meetings: None scheduled

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Woodruff