

Manchester Public Library Board Meeting Minutes January 25, 2021

Members Present: Miriam Byroade, Heather Doucette, Grace Cedrone, Joyce Hood, Karl Hasel, Ashley Odell*, Jessica Scorso*, Mary Fischer*

Also present: Doug McDonough, Norma Nevers, Steve Stephanou* (Assistant General Manager), Steven Ristau* (Manchester Resident), Jeff Gutsfeld* (Manchester Resident)

* indicates attendance via Zoom videoconference

Not present: Melissa Pattacini

Call to order at 6:37 pm

Public Comments:

- Stephen Ristau – Looking forward to engaging with the board and others to begin the work of planning for 21st century library
- Jeff Gutsfield - interested in seeing how any future library project might take shape

Discussion ensued as to identifying an Information Gathering Committee, including residents and Board Members, to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on a 21st Century Public Library, as requested by the BOD.

- Need to determine the appropriate set of requirements to have a 21st Century Library
- Stephen Ristau, Thomas Scheinblum, Marjory Clox are among the several residents that have indicated interest in serving on a committee
- Nothing in the BOD charge to the library would prevent the committee's expansion to beyond 3 residents to represent the demographic composition of the town
- Board members will continue to reach out to residents, including Latino affairs council, etc over the next few weeks to find residents interested in serving
- History of need to update/upgrade library: In early 2000's Aaron Cohen Associates conducted needs assessment, including focus groups, but BoD decided not to move forward with purchasing the first suggested site. All of the information gathered from 2002-2015 is still available to review and share with BoD.
- One focus of the working group will be to go through this historical data to present to the BoD.
- The expansion referendum failed in 2012 & the Research Report produced after, looking for the primary reasons for voting yes/no, found that not enough parking was an important issue, but impact on Center Park was an issue as well.
- There are nearly 2 decades of research and homework on this topic which can be reviewed and re-presented to the board.
- State Library has a planning process and spreadsheet that will let us know how much square footage is needed given certain parameters and what our town should have in a

public library. The responsibility of this working group will be to look at this information and present a coherent report to the BoD.

- In previous years, there was strong public opposition to expanding the present location and not wanting to impact the building or surrounding area. Expansion at the current site is problematic as 60,000-70,000 sf. is likely to be the amount needed; Current building is 26,000 sf, so much more space will be needed to reach minimum standards.
- The design proposed previously was based on the earliest defined assumptions around sf for the collections, seating, common areas, check-out areas, future population of the town, etc... nothing specific to newer 21st Century needs, requirements, requests.
- Location pros and cons to consider as well, such as main street vs. not; multi-story building vs not; equity; and accessibility to different neighborhoods via public transportation.
- Anticipate that by summer 2021 there will likely be public in-person meetings for input
- All current library board members are willing to serve on this committee
- Committee meetings will occur as part of the agenda of regularly scheduled upcoming Library Board meetings, but in addition will meet more often, as needed.
- BOD resolution calls for specific activities of this committee and should guide the division of labor. Small groups can be organized around common tasks and then report back at periodic meetings.
- If needed, there is money in a small Library trust fund (Levi Drake); BoD approved an expenditure from that fund for the survey of 2012 referendum voters and for the retention of an architect to explore the potential of the Forest Street parking lot. Doug believes it likely that the BoD would approve the use of the unspent balance of that appropriation (about \$15,000) if this group needs to hire professional services.
- Prior to presenting to BoD, their resolution requires that the Library Board meet with the school buildings repurposing committee and that might also require consulting with an architect to understand structural requirements for any buildings that might be proposed as candidates for a public library.
- Martin School is one of the schools yet to to be studied by the school repurposing committee.
- Library Board members should come to the next meeting with an idea of what aspects of the research/exploratory work do we want to engage in to form sub-committees.
- Committee Meetings: Will continue with Mondays. February 22nd will be the first meeting @ 6:30. Will figure out the committee composition by February 1st.

7:25 pm Move to adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Doucette