

Manchester Public Library Board Special Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2021

Call to order at 6:32 pm with all participants on Zoom videoconference

Members Present: Miriam Byroade, Heather Doucette, Grace Cedrone, Joyce Hood, Karl Hasel, Ashley Odell, Jessica Scorso, Melissa Pattacini

Also present: Doug McDonough, Norma Nevers, Steve Stephanou (Assistant General Manager), Steven Ristau (Manchester Resident), Thomas Scheinblum (Manchester Resident), Liliana Polley (Manchester Resident)

Not Present: Mary Fisher

- Public Comments: None
- 21st Century Public Library Committee
 - Introductions. Welcome new committee members Thomas and Liliana!
 - Presentation from Steven Ristau on the Manchester 21st Century Public Library Committee and what he believes are the tasks to be performed.
 - Consensus was to officially name the committee the Manchester 21st Century Public Library Task Force
 - Stephen Ristau has outlined focus areas with specific tasks for the Task Force; some assignments of members to different focus areas have been made and others will reach out to Stephen to identify areas they want to work on
 - Focus areas: Assets and needs analysis; Features and Benefits of a 21st Century Public Library; Community outreach and engagement; analysis of past MPL studies; feasibility of site locations
 - Survey of 2012 Voters
 - Many no voters didn't want to impact the park with an expansion program, and others thought the plan didn't solve the parking situation, or they were afraid of tax increases
 - Surveyed people who actually voted in November 2012
 - Between the Yes and No voters, over 50% said they would support new building
 - Most Yes voters wanted to see a new library stay on Main street
 - 33% were not library users, might not support spending on a new library
 - More than half interested in new library and felt it was important, want to stay downtown or on Main street
 - But also large group that is indifferent to a location for a new building.
 - #1 reason for "no" vote was because "town should have other priorities" though the survey company did say "schools" as the other priority anecdotally
- Other thoughts on the survey data?
 - Maybe the schools plan took precedent over the library expansion/update.

- Library question on ballot in 2012 was \$12 million and it was on the same ballot as a school referendum question which did pass
- Survey company asked numerous questions about locations for new library; we may want to take a closer look at where people wanted the new library if possible.
- Voter opinion study will be forwarded to everyone
- Viewing of video of renovation of Roxbury Branch at the Boston Public Library
- Discussion of vision for a 21st library
 - Downtown Architecture style should not be an issue, don't think about specific time period/look for at building
 - Needs to be Accessible (nearby) Parking
 - Expansion/Land Trust/Park Space considerations at current site
 - Consider merging the vision/plans with Senior center
 - Broad-based use, community and civic hub
 - Be pragmatic, reasonable about what makes sense for Manchester
 - Think about other towns and what we might borrow, adapt, build on
- Next steps
 - Next library board meeting in 2 weeks, March 8, and this committee will be reporting out at that time as to progress to date
 - Stephen Ristau will update the separate workgroups and help with the discussion points at the next meeting

Move to adjourn 7:53 pm