

Meeting Minutes, 21st Century Manchester Public Library Task Force, March 29, 2021

Library Board Members present: Joyce Hood, Grace Cedrone, Miriam Byroade, Karl Hasel, Ashley Odell, Jessica Scorso, Heather Doucette

Also Present: Stephen Ristau, Liliana Polley, Thomas Sheinblum, (21st Century Public Library Task Force Members) and Stephen Stephanou (Town), Doug McDonough (Library), Norma Nevers (Library)

Not Present: Melissa Pattacini, Mary Fischer

Meeting Called to order at 6:32 pm

Old Business Updates

- Already did some imagining of a 21st century public library
- Update on projects
- Update on federal legislation
- Subcommittee activity

The tours of the Mary Cheney and Whiton buildings on 3/26 were very eye opening. General consensus: library in current state and size cannot meet the needs of community and is not in a physical condition that will support use and access in the long-term.

Staff survey Draft was reviewed

- Ask little bit about staff experience; questions about how the physical space impacts their work and how they perceive the space might limit the public experience; ask about what we might consider based on their observations of other libraries and in general. Will add a question about parking and reference to technology access for public
- Ashley will send a link to everyone on the committee; staff will receive survey this week

Assets and Needs Analysis

- Thomas and Mary will meet; Thomas has been looking at the CSL reports

Features and Benefits of a 21st Century Library

- Tour of comparable libraries: Wallingford, West Hartford (Bishops Corner Branch and Main); will likely plan on Fridays
- Doug will call ahead, we will work within restrictions of COVID
- Jessica will report back at a later date about joint senior citizen/library endeavors in other towns. Steve S. said Senior Center conversations are in the preliminary stages right now, but Steve S. will try to connect Stephen R. with Eileen and Joel from Social Services; Building that houses the branch library in West Hartford also encompasses a separate Senior center so we should prioritize for visit

Community Outreach and engagement

- Looking at community survey instruments
- Brianna Smith (Town of Manchester Director of Communications) will attend a future meeting to explain methods of communication used by the town, including Your Voice Matters platform which was recently used as part of the master planing for the parks dept. Nico Arias can also attend to talk about the Recreation Department's experience with this.
- Will make sure that community can offer opinions/thoughts/feedback multiple ways. Electronic survey, surveys included in checked-out items, translation of surveys (Your Voice Matters offers Spanish and Bengali and can contract with vendor for others)
- Have to weigh the pros and cons of a secure survey platform (Your Voice Matters) vs. a widely broadcast freely available survey (google form) without knowing where respondents are from
- Better Manchester email communication also helps to get the word out
- Following broad stakeholder surveys, will start to explore focus groups
- Sub-committee will meet to further discuss community survey design and communication strategy
- Community Engagement Sub-committee will meet via Zoom on April 12th 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Build America's Libraries Act

- Current proposed federal legislation
- Several board members have written to congressional delegation urging them to support this bill
 - May end up being part of larger infrastructure bill
- Someone from John Larson's office contacted Doug indicating that Congressman would reach out if needs more information
 - Doug sees 3 libraries in the CT's 1st Congressional district that could especially benefit from this, including Manchester, since all three have crowded older buildings
- Stephen R. will send out more information
- Formal letter of support from Task Force but the BoD would need to endorse and sign off

New Business – None

Next task force meeting will be on April 19, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Doucette