

Capital Facilities Committee Meeting
September 14, 2009
4:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order: Alderperson Curt Konetzke called meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Membership:

Present:

Alderperson Ed Baranowski, Will Bloedow, Dean Gazza, Lynn Hagee, Don Hietpas, Alderperson Curt Konetzke, Pat Schinabeck, Paula Vandehey, Dave Willems, Liz Witek

Excused:

Director Karen Harkness, Director Lisa Remiker, Attorney Jim Walsh

Others Present:

Alderperson Jim Clemons, Terry Dawson, Michael Kenney, Alderperson Michael Meyer, Colleen Rortvedt, Dale Schaber, Maureen Ward, Tony Wiczorek

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 31, 2009 meeting were approved (motion by Vandehey/second by Schinabeck, 10-0)

4. Appearances

a. Engberg Anderson consultant review of 2009 Library Study

Alderperson Konetzke introduced Bill Robison of Engberg Anderson. Bill Robison presented a review of the 2009 Library Program Study.

Alderperson Konetzke asked committee members to email him suggestions for a new library site selection including pros and cons. Committee members may suggest as many sites as they would like. The suggestions will be reviewed at the next committee meeting in October.

A comparison of the library's existing space and recommended space was distributed for review.

Bill Robison gave background on the Engberg Anderson team, the study and the 2009 Program Design process. He discussed the differences between Durrant's community input and standards-based study versus Engberg Anderson's assessment of the current facility, current and projected use and development of a detailed building program statement. He noted that the program was tested against standards and used to develop stacking diagrams for eight preliminary designs. These were rated according to several criteria and used to develop two final designs: one for a remodeled facility and one for a new facility. Cost studies and value analysis were performed for these two designs

Robison cautioned the committee that the designs were not intended as plans for construction, but only to test the building program statement, demonstrate concepts and provide cost estimates. Public meeting spaces, public technology, ease of use for customers, efficiency in staffing and minimal service points were all factors. He noted the project team's recommendation that a new library be built in downtown Appleton.

Discussion:

Will Bloedow asked if there was flexibility in moving the interior walls. Robison said yes the building can be restructured and reconfigured.

Curt Konetzke asked about the specific need for an auditorium when there are other spaces in the area such as the high schools, PAC and Big Picture venue that can provide the type of space for use. Liz Witek commented the space would be more suitable for lectures, author presentations, classes. Fixed seating would reduce staff set-up time. Bloedow said this would be a great opportunity for a private donor. Konetzke questioned "Why should the library incorporate everything for everyone? Why should the taxpayers pay for this when other structures exist? Why did the library provide space for Penny Bernard Schaber's listening session?"

Aldersperson Michael Meyer said "I understand why the financial concerns. I want to address a couple of concerns you talked about. I think many people see the Library as a neutral location, it is not value rated. If you try to hold a political event in a church, then different things and values come up there. If you try to hold a political event at a bar or a large banquet hall even that has certain connotation that may upset people. The Public Library has a sense of neutrality about it I think because it is a safe place. The second comment, why does the Library have to provide this service, 30 or 50 years ago the library didn't. Because there were enough spaces available that did not charge sums higher than people/community groups could afford. Five bucks to rent a hall, ten bucks to do this. That is no longer the case and secondly those types of places are disappearing. Yes, you can rent the PAC, but at vast sums. But what if you don't have the sum? I think one of the things that is going to be developing in terms of public space in the United States in the coming years, as space becomes privatized, it becomes more expensive and it behooves the public center ... That is really what we are looking at: a public center to be able to provide space for things to happen. Now I think that is a readjustment in thinking actually goes back to the old idea of a public square. I think now it is going to be coming back and I am glad the staff has seen the demands of that coming on this building over the past several years. And I think that is going to be increasing. You have a sense of neutrality with this building; a sense of that it is everybody's building. I really think you can separate that it is a special structure. It really is an important city center which that is why it should be centrally located and that everyone has a sense that it is theirs."

Aldersperson Ed Baranowski has concerns about the layout and how it flows for the needs from 2010 to 2020 or 2025. He expressed concern that there might be adverse public reaction if shelves were mostly empty when a new building opened. Robison

said there is a public education component to the new building process, but that most people readily appreciated the need to build for future capacity. The building would not be filled to capacity on opening day. Dawson noted that it might be possible to save some money on furnishing if we were willing to let shelves be more crowded on opening day and buy other stacks later. Pat Schinabeck asked when this Library building opened and what the life span of this building was projected. Terry Dawson said the building opened in 1981 and was expected to not be outgrown for 20 years. However, we grew faster than anticipated and 15 years after the doors were opened the library was expanded.

Lynn Hagee commented Lawrence University could not begin to honor all of the requests they get for public meeting space. Don Hietpas said this was also true with the schools and the school district. Konetzke asked if the library charges for meeting room use. Dawson replied not currently, as it is not seen as a money maker; if we charge those who can afford to pay it would drive out the groups who cannot afford to pay. Bloedow said charging to use the meeting rooms would become more exclusive and would discourage the non-profit groups. Pat Schinabeck commented that groups using the meeting rooms should set up the space themselves. Hagee disagreed, noting liability concerns. Dawson noted that if there were more rooms available at more hours, especially if some had fixed seating, it would be easier to find some opportunities to charge for business use, etc.

Dave Willems expressed that building expandability will be critical for the long term. The current building cannot structurally take on another level without major renovations. The codes have changed, building up is not possible. What is the life expectancy of a building in the library world? Robison said they usually work with a 20 year horizon, because of many unknowns and changes difficult to anticipate, such as technology. Baranowski asked if there is an afterlife for the building. What else can the building be used for? Robison said that while it was difficult to adapt another building as a library, library buildings adapt very well for other uses. Schinabeck inquired about who owns the current library building should a new one be built. Dean Gazza said the City owns the structure. Could a new library be built at the old Water Filtration plant site? Dawson noted that this is a possible location, but that access would be a significant concern.

Baranowski said the committee should not lose the other aspect of their charge. The determination has not been made about whether or not to expand the existing structure.

Gazza commented everyone has their own approach. It would be great to do what is best for all of the city departments. He has submitted a City Master Plan to the Mayor which suggests stages of projects that would complement one another and is supportive of other department's projects. Gazza believes this is crucial and would like to see a City Campus develop. Hietpas remarked he thought collaborations were a great idea when possible. He expressed the hope that meeting rooms could be jointly used.

Aldersperson Clemons stated the Committee had some tough decisions to make; he commended the Committee's ability to discuss, ask tough questions and brainstorm. He believes the exchange of ideas is important to achieve a global perspective on the final recommendation.

5. Action Items

None

6. Information Items

a. Re-cap of Library Tour

None

b. Review of 2008 Library Study

Dawson stated the 2008 Library Study was reviewed in Bill Robison's presentation and he did not have any information to add.

7. Adjourn

Aldersperson Curt Konetzke moved to adjourn, seconded by the Committee at 6:10 p.m. (Unanimous)