

Capital Facilities Committee Meeting
October 5, 2009
4:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order: Alderperson Curt Konetzke called meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Membership:

Present:

Will Bloedow, Lynn Hagee, Karen Harkness, Don Hietpas, Alderperson Curt Konetzke, Lisa Remiker, Paula Vandehey, Jim Walsh, Dave Willems, Liz Witek

Excused:

Alderperson Ed Baranowski, Director Dean Gazza, Pat Schinabeck

Others Present:

Terry Dawson, Michael Kenney, Mike Kemmeter – WHBY, Vicki Lenz, Ed Lowe – Post Crescent, Alderperson Joe Martin, Alderperson Michael Meyer, Colleen Rortvedt, Maureen Ward, Tony Wiczorek

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 14, 2009 meeting were approved (motion by Vandehey/second by Bloedow 10-0).

4. Appearances

None

5. Action Items

None

6. Information Items

a. General Site Selection Discussion

Alderperson Konetzke said he was disappointed that not all committee members had responded to his request for site suggestions. Although he still wants suggestions from everyone, he wanted to discuss the important elements in a site. Why should it be built downtown and what does that mean? What does the committee perceive to be the downtown boundaries?

There was lengthy discussion with many contributions. “Downtown” can be defined by the central business district or a broader area. There was discussion of the reasons for the library being downtown. Director Harkness said the downtown is the heartbeat of any community. Communities want downtowns to be strong, vibrant and vital, and community oriented centers enhance that vibrancy and vitality. Several people detailed accessibility concerns for pedestrians, mass transit users, bicyclists, downtown workers and automobiles.

Konetzke asked the group if they would agree that downtown parameters are College Avenue from the east of the river to Badger Avenue and the south side of the river to Wisconsin Avenue. Vandehey thought the area was still too large. Many agreed on Packard Street as the northern boundary. Harkness commented she thought it is better to keep a broader scope rather than a narrower one at least for now.

Vandehey inquired about the possibility of a branch library. Dawson replied that branch libraries are great for neighborhood development, but not the most cost effective option, entailing a duplication of efforts: two buildings to maintain, two sets of subscriptions for magazines and newspapers; two collections, two sets of staff etc. Items have to be moved from one place to the other. The reason to have a branch library is mainly because the community has grown too large and it has become difficult for people to get to the central library, which is not currently the case. A population of about 70,000 -100,000 is a judgment call when it comes to building a branch library, which are seldom seen in cities under 100,000 and often seen in larger cities. We have good traffic flow in this city and it is probably in the best interest of the community to have a good central library that will serve us for the next 20 years.

Konetzke asked how the 100,000 population is defined, noting that people from outside Appleton also use the library. Dawson said that for purposes of planning branches, the population considered is the legal service area. The library receives compensation from Outagamie County of about \$700,000 per year. Counties are required to compensate municipalities for at least 70% of the cost of circulation to municipalities that do not have their own libraries. Konetzke asked if the APL is used by a large number of non-resident patrons are there are funds available from the county to construct a new library. Dawson said the county is not legally required to provide funding for capital projects for City-owned buildings, only reimbursement for operating costs, but we could ask. Private fundraising will not stop at city borders.

b. What should our new library be? Thoughts / Philosophy

- i. Major component**
- ii. Spatial requests**
- iii. Public use space**
- iv. Should this facility be more?**

Konetzke said he would like to move on to item b.iv because items b.i, b.ii, and b.iii have been discussed in previous meetings and may also be combined in this items discussion. He asked should the facility not only be more, should it be less? He expressed concern that the library was attempting to be all things to all people. There was general discussion about what this committee feels this library should be.

Witek said the auditorium is really more a lecture space with auditorium seating. She has been a frequent library meeting room user and the space is hard to come by. She believes meeting space is only a component of the library. She uses the library to regularly check books out with her children. The meeting room component won't take away from the other functions of the library. The library is a place where we not

only come to get our information but also a place where we come to exchange our ideas. She believes the public uses the library in both of those ways.

Konetzke clarified by saying if the recommendation from this committee is to go from 88,000 sq. ft to 140,000 sq ft. we need to justify the expansion. He said he is trying to elicit thoughts and comments from the committee members as to why if the recommendation is to build new, we are making that recommendation.

Dawson disagreed that the Library is trying to be all things to all people. The Library's goals in the community are well-defined and stated in the Library's published long range plan. This plan was not developed for the purpose of this project but has been evolving for many years in response to community needs and library usage. The current plan summary handed out for review was adopted in 2007. The mission statement of the City of Appleton says we are dedicated to meeting the needs of the community and enhancing the quality of life. Dawson believes that public meeting space and places where community organizations can come together, where people can hear lectures, share cultural experiences, meet their elected representatives and ask them questions meets the community needs and enhances the quality of life. He thinks it is organically related to the things that libraries have always done and it has been part of our mission for years.

Bloedow noted that staff in the library does not have enough room to do their jobs efficiently, which has a direct impact on the services provided. There is not adequate space for stacks, seating, and check-ins.

Harkness stated it was the committee's responsibility to build or remodel a facility to last the community for a few decades. Harkness and Dawson referenced the article from the *Planning Journal* about how libraries add to community's quality of life and sense of community. That is only going to continue. It is a balance between what our community needs are and what the City can afford. The difference can possibly be made up in philanthropic giving.

Walsh commented he was worried about what this committee is going to report. If the question is do we want meeting rooms and offices in the library, he believes the answer is clearly "yes". At some point we will be faced with the reality of how much money we have to spend and we have to figure in what we need and what we would like to have. Given what the library's role in the community is, we want to see meeting rooms as part of the space.

Hietpas said not only do we need meeting rooms in the library but it is important to have the rooms in a place where the community has access whether the library is open or not. It is a little bit of a separate function of the library but they need to be designed in away the community can maximize their use. There is a tremendous need for places to gather in a society becoming more fragmented. The library can be a central gathering place. Both studies the APL Board and Foundation have listened to have identified meeting space and a community center concept as extremely important not only to this community but to the development of libraries. If the

public knows the library has meeting room space they will use it. It is very, very important.

Konetzke said he is glad Dawson challenged his comment earlier because he was trying to gather what is positive and what is negative. He concluded public use space is vital to a new library (expansion or new), but the extent may be controlled by available dollars.

Witek pointed out according to the study the building is already undersized. Looking back at the history of the building, there had been things taken out of the final plan that were recommended. She would hate to see us save a relatively small amount of money only to have to come back in 15 years and have to build again. Two studies from two different sources have recommended building. It doesn't make sense to start second guessing. If we are in it for the long haul we shouldn't nickel and dime it.

Remiker stated there are many issues to consider from the City's financial perspective. There is a citywide facilities plan that needs to be considered in all of this. She likes this group's approach bringing many different facets to the decision making process.

Vandehey asked if being classified as undersized was based on the study. Dawson noted the library has less seating available per person that walks through our door than in 1981 when first built or 1996 when remodeled. In 1994 there was a study done that recommended remodeling to the size that recent studies say we should have currently. Rather than taking that recommendation, we elected to do what was immediately affordable and add one wing and space in the lower level; within ten years later we were again low on space. Another concern is ADA, there are places in the library it is too crowded to get a wheelchair through. Although much of the space added in 1996 was taken up with wider stack aisles, there are still some accessibility issues. There is contention between seating space, shelf space, technology space and accessibility.

Witek noted the program room space increased by 5,000 sq. ft in the final recommendation. Dawson said the space recommendation included two board rooms in addition to a lecture/auditorium space. Many community meetings and presentations use one of these two configurations; having spaces permanently configured would allow more meetings to be accommodated with lower labor costs.

c. Costs of remodeling or building new

Willems asked how we as a committee determine what we can feasibly afford. How does the process work?

Konetzke said he struggles trying to put the agenda together for every meeting because there are so many unknown factors right now. The Executive Budget will be presented to Council Wednesday night. The final decision is up to Council when they adopt the budget. Everyone on the committee is bringing a different perspective about this. The CFC was faced with similar challenges with the Police Department

project. There are place holders in the budget and funds for projected expenses. We may recommend a dollar amount cap and a square footage cap for the project. We cannot determine a cost without knowing what the Mayor has in his budget and the Council controls the City budget. Currently we are at a standstill but part of that is we need to do this right and it has to encompass the total City's requirement for space. Council has yet to see the City's Master Plan.

Remiker said when the budget is adopted, the operating budget is adopted and the first year of the five-year capital plan; the next four years are subject to change. Currently, \$10,000,000 of debt completely funded by tax levy dollars adds \$900,000 per year over 20 years making the total cost of the project \$18,000,000.

Konetzke said even in the best case scenario there are no guarantees for future funding. Going back to the charge of the committee, we can make a recommendation for site selection, Council may endorse that, but we have to work together with the Library Board. Ultimately the Library Board has jurisdiction by the state statutes. Hopefully we will all be able to work together. Committee has the charge to recommend the amount to be spent on the project.

Hagee suggested doing programming over an extended period of time to shape the building to what it has to be based on the funding available. They worked on the LU student center for 18 years. Konetzke reminded everyone of the space comparison summary. Hagee suggested the committee take a closer look at the summary and determine if the numbers are as they should be.

Remiker noted the City has to comply with state imposed restraints and city ordinances. She told us the current budget to be released is within \$16 of the state's restraints and it does not include any additional capital. Borrowing \$10 million over 20 years would cost the general fund \$900,000 per year or \$18 million. Konetzke took it one step further and added how we could work in an additional \$900,000 payment into the budget, that being, looking at making cuts or delaying other projects. Where do the funds come from? Remiker answered that some capital borrowings fall off the debt service, which is always a work in progress. This will also depend on the economy.

Dawson commented there have been a wide variety of capital projects and anytime you do a building project it tends to become part of the City's indebtedness. Lisa can probably determine what amount of debt we can afford to take on and then what amount can we fundraise. We have to determine what the City can afford and what we can raise in private dollars and what that will buy in terms of square feet.

Vandehey suggested Dawson make a wish list for a library and then prioritize it and maybe fundraise for the cost of the lower priorities. Hagee said it is the committee's job to determine the priorities and costs not Dawson's. Dawson said he could make some approximations about space, but he is neither an architect nor a construction estimator; he suggested that if the committee wants incremental costs for individual spaces, we could ask the consultants if there are funds left in the budget. Witek does

not want the committee to make recommendation half measure. She does not want to start hacking away at space. She would like to see how much money we are going to have to work with. If we are spending the money it needs to be done right.

Bloedow asked how the Master Plan will play into the committee's decision to remodel or build new. Remiker said the plan has been a work in progress for the last year and a half. She has reviewed two versions of it. They are getting close in releasing it but it is not there yet. The 2010 budget has taken priority at this time. She hopes to see it released by the end of the year.

Harkness said she understood Witek's concern about not "cheaping out" on the project. She said the City is not going to be able to fund what the community needs, but the City and the private sector are going to have to work together. This includes the greater community, not just Appleton. This committee's recommendation is just one piece of the puzzle in making this project a reality. Hietpas added the timing of the public fundraising will be critical. Harkness noted the project could possibly be done in phases, based on available funding.

Alderson Michael Meyers expressed appreciation for all of the good discussion. There are so many things that have to come together. The committee is not privy to the Master Plan and the plan may have an important bearing on the decisions made with regard to the Library structure. Keeping in mind the consultant's presentation and the slide showing the capital costs and the operating costs, we should not be afraid of the capital cost, we need to look at what the consultant pointed out and that is the long term operating costs of this facility or whatever replaces it. The consultant stressed efficiencies and not all of this current structure is operating efficiently

Walsh noted that any private funds raised will have to be in hand prior to construction; contracts cannot be signed without funds available. Witek asked when we would know what the City's contribution will be. Remiker said Wednesday, October 5, 2009 at 7:00 pm when the Mayor's budget is released.

Witek inquired whether it was beneficial for the committee to continue to meet if they will not have all the information they need to make a recommendation for at least 3 months. Walsh believes the committee should move forward and continue to meet. Modifications may need to be made once more information is made available. Witek reminded committee members that much of the information the committee needs has been provided in the consultants' studies and recommendations. Willems feels it is important to continue to meet and maintain the momentum.

Konetzke would like committee members to feel free to email him with topics for discussion.

7. Adjourn

Bloedow moved to adjourn, seconded by Witek. The meeting adjourned at 6: 04 p.m. (10-0)