

Capital Facilities Committee Meeting
February 1, 2010
4:30 p.m.
revised

1. Call meeting to order: Alderperson Curt Konetzke called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Membership:

Present:

Will Bloedow, Dean Gazza, Lynn Hagee, Karen Harkness, Alderperson Curt Konetzke, Lisa Remiker (left at 4:55 pm), Paula Vandehey (left at 5:45 pm), Dave Willems (arrived at 4:55 pm), Liz Witek

Excused:

Alderperson Ed Baranowski, Don Hietpas, Jim Walsh

Others Present:

Terry Dawson, Michael Kenney, Sara Kopesky, Alderperson Joe Martin, Alderperson Michael Meyer, Karen Probst, Colleen Rortvedt, Maureen Ward, Tony Wiczorek

3. Approval of Minutes

The committee approved the minutes of the November 16, 2009 meeting (motion Bloedow / second Hagee) (8-0).

4. Appearances

Konetzke announced Pat Schinabeck has resigned from the committee. She and her husband are moving away from the Fox Valley area. Konetzke will not appoint a new citizen representative to the committee at this time. In April, the new council president will have the authority to name new individuals to the committee if he/she chooses.

5. Action Items

a. Branch library vs. single library

Konetzke reminded the committee they would be making a motion for a recommendation to pass on to the Administrative Services Committee (February 10, 2010 meeting agenda). He asked for questions, comments and discussion of Dawson's presentation.

Vandehey said she supports a central library for all of the reasons Dawson cited in his presentation. She said she can attest to the difficulty of having to manage staff at three different locations. There are many issues that arise when you have your staff spread out.

Harkness said she also supports the idea of a single central library for all of the reasons stated. She believes it makes the most sense for both economic impact and efficiency.

Bloedow said he grew up in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area where they have an extensive branch library system. In the past couple years they have been closing many of the branches because they have become too costly to operate. He also feels it is very important to keep a central library close to the transit system.

Gazza lives in Brown County, and he looks at the quantity vs. the quality. Brown County has 13 branch libraries. Not all services or materials are available at the branch libraries, so it is necessary to use the central library especially for research etc. From an operational costs viewpoint, branches are expensive to operate.

Hagee said as a member of the ADI board, she feels a centrally located library is essential to the economic growth of the downtown area.

Konetzke asked if Outagamie County would provide any funding for a new or remodeled library. Dawson said there was not statutory provision for county contribution for capital expenses, only reimbursement for operating expenses. Konetzke asked if there were any state funding or grants for construction. Witek said she had heard there were grants available for “green building initiatives.” Harkness added there are grants for alternative energy sources but they rarely cover the costs of the implementation process.

Konetzke asked other library staff to share their thoughts. Rortvedt commented library staff initially thought a branch library would be nice purely for selfish reasons. Some of those reasons included working in a new building, new furniture, electronic outlets, and free parking. But she acknowledged that the studies had demonstrated that branches, though attractive, were not cost-effective.

Wieczorek pointed out the added responsibilities that come with maintaining a building of this age. We have upgraded the chiller system in the last couple of years, and have been working with Gazza on a boiler replacement project. The City will still need to contribute money for the upgrades. He is also concerned with the reputation of a central library. He believes when there is one central library people are more vested in it. He thinks a branch library or branches would detract from that. If a branch were to be built on the north side of town, people on the south side would likely want a branch on their side of town.

Ward expressed she agreed with Vandehey on the complexities of trying to administratively manage several locations.

Kenney noted he thought a branch library would take away from the vibrancy of a single central library.

Alderson Martin wondered what the future of libraries is with regard to available devices like the iBook and Amazon Kindle which he personally uses to download books. It is easier for him to use and he can download a book in 60 seconds. So what is the future of these devices with regard to libraries, schools and universities?

Alderson Meyer said he appreciated Dawson’s presentation and the opportunity to look at the studies together in a logical framework. Two things – one thing that is important for the future, is that every City is going to have to very strongly come to terms with the cost. When speaking of costs he is talking about operating cost not capital costs. One of the biggest parts of operating cost is salaries. What is the salary, what are the health care costs; all of these other things that go together to make up the big form that is the City Budget. Anything that impacts that without a serious cost benefit to the positive, he thinks is going to be looked at very carefully. The whole notion of a central focus with all of the efficiencies that can be built into that, he is sure the committee remembers when they had the tour of the library

building and saw all of the different departments from the loading dock to the check –in, all those little breaks throughout the entire structure that cause inefficiencies in staff time. When we think about all of those inefficiencies of staff time what does that mean? Does it take 10 minutes to do something that should only take 1 minute, is it picking up something and moving it so that staff can make room for other things coming in. The clock is running and that clock is very expensive when you multiply it by everyone that works at the library. That is why whether it is a remodel or built new, a central library in terms of being able to provide the maximum amount of service for the biggest efficiency of cost, is the critical fact.

This Wednesday coming up at Council is the presentation of the possibility of a convention center. This is one of several ideas that have been floating around that will impact the central city. He thinks that over the past 15 years Appleton has begun looking at their central city in a different way. It used to be the retail center and that died with the mall, so Appleton is reinventing itself downtown. Obviously the PAC had a lot to do with bringing more people into the downtown. There are different types of restaurants downtown, both the City and County government still remain downtown and the growth of Lawrence University. There is a nucleus of activity, not primarily retail, that is continuing to grow. Meyer thinks that having a single central Library where people can come to and then in addition do other things adds a powerful synergy to continuing development and evolution of the central City of Appleton. This is not a specifically budgetary reason but he thinks it is important. He believes there should be a recommendation for a single central library.

In response to discussion, Dawson noted that the impact of electronic books on space needs for shelving and the impact of a possible convention center on funding would need further discussion later.

MOTION: The staff recommendation to “continue to develop a single central library rather than developing branches” was approved (motion Harkness/second Vandehey) (8-0)

b. Establish future meeting dates and agendas

Committee members agreed they should not meet again until the Administrative Services Committee has acted on the recommendation of the Capital Facilities Committee and has made their recommendation whether or not to move the recommendation on to Council or refer it back.

MOTION: The proposed future meeting dates and agendas of March 1, 2010 and April 5, 2010, and additional meetings be scheduled per the new Council President appointment in April was approved (motion Bloedow/second Willems) (7-0)

6. Information Items

a. Status of Facilities Master Plan

Gazza and Remiker updated the committee on the status of the Facilities Master Plan. Gazza said he and Remiker would be meeting and working together in the next week or two on the final review of the plan. They hope to get feedback from department heads and meet with the Mayor.

b. Review of 2008 study

Dawson reviewed the 2008 and the 2009 library study processes, conclusions and recommendations on a single central library vs. branch libraries. He said that 2008 was essentially a needs study and it was very much a public process. Director Gazza, the Library Board and Library staff selected consultant via the RFP process and interviews. The study included a review of the current facility, a community survey, focus groups, interviews, discussions with Library Board trustees and public town hall meetings.

The 2008 study concluded the current facility has design problems relative to current and projected use of space, security, meeting room access, technology usability, accessibility, staff and user efficiency. Consultants made short term and long term recommendations. Short term recommendations included: RFID, automated materials handling system, increase in self-check machines, increase in bandwidth and better seating with power and data distribution. Long term recommendations included: new building on a single central downtown site - not branches, sustainable green design, adequate space (seating, materials, ADA accessibility, efficiency for staff and public), drive-up window, increased access to technology, increased meeting rooms and accessibility, and improved security for materials.

Konetzke asked for clarification on the function of a drive-up window. Dawson said it would be mainly for picking up items previously placed on hold or return of items. It would not provide the service of staff checking to see if an item is available and then hunting it down.

Dawson cited an "It's Your Call" from Phyllis Thatcher which appeared in the January 24, 2010 edition of the *Post Crescent*. Ms. Thatcher suggests moving excess library materials to empty buildings such as the former Conkeys or Winslow Hallmark store at the Northland Mall. She believes materials do not have to be housed in one location. Dawson said on the surface this does not seem like a bad idea, however once you begin to analyze the costs of remodeling, paying rent, the transport of materials and personnel expenses, the operating costs add up quickly.

Dawson reviewed branch library operating costs vs. single library operating costs. Features of a main library are duplicated at a branch library. There are costs incurred for staff, check-in / checkout equipment, collections, building envelope and associated upkeep (structure, maintenance, HVAC, janitorial services and supplies. Additional costs are associated with transport of materials and personnel as well as telecommunications. Dawson noted in 2004 the estimated annual operating cost of a possible Greenville branch library was \$348K.

Features of a new or remodeled single library include the opportunity to provide cost effective service increases. By remodeling or building new, we could plan to reduce service points, centralize check-in / checkout equipment and operations, and provide an enhanced community center with expanded and more accessible meeting rooms. Although there would be costs associated with the building envelope and upkeep we would have the opportunity for "green" construction demonstrating sustainability in the City's most public building.

The 2008 study looked at circulation records for the month of March. Consultants created a map showing the locations of all household which borrowed materials. Konetzke asked Dawson what the rule of thumb was in regard to population for consideration of a branch Library. Dawson replied the rule of thumb is generally a population exceeding 100,000 or a

substantial part of the service population being unable to reach the library in 15 minutes. There are libraries located in Kimberly, Little Chute, Kaukauna, and Hortonville that are within 15 minutes of drive time and share our same network. Many residents also find the Menasha library convenient. The many nearby libraries reduce to the need for Appleton to develop branches.

Dawson referred to the article distributed to committee members in August 2009 from the Planning Commissioners Journal. He said the article stated libraries generate increase business for local merchants and those visiting or working in the downtown area often use the library as part of their day. He also referred to a post by Alderperson Jirschele on *Fox Politics*, February 1, 2010 regarding his opinion on the economic development status of the Appleton downtown.

Added notes from the 2008 study include Town Hall meeting participants' discussion on the feasibility of branches and other locations for the APL as well as concern for diminished use of the central library and the quality of programming via two different locations.

c. Review of 2009 study

Dawson said the 2009 study was a program design study. Again, Director Gazza, the Library Board and Library staff were involved in selecting a consultant via RFP process and interviews. The study included a review of the current facility and 2008 study, discussions with Library Board Trustees and staff, and development and testing of alternative program design. There were four expansion scenarios and four new building scenarios presented to the Library Board and the Common Council.

The 2009 study conclusions and recommendations agreed with the conclusions of the 2008 study, validating a single building option rather than a branch and the need for RFID and AMHS. The recommendation was that a new library building would offer the best advantage for service improvements and operating efficiency.

Based on the costs of establishing and maintaining an additional city facility, costs of staffing, costs of duplication of services, and the impact on downtown, the staff recommendation to the Capital Facilities Committee is Appleton should continue to develop a single central library with a new or expanded facility rather than developing branches.

7. Adjourn

Harkness moved to adjourn, seconded by Bloedow. The meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m. (7-0)