Brooks Memorial Library — Fine Arts Committee Meeting
April 6, 2017, 9:00 a.m.

Present: Judith Bellamy, Connie Bresnahan, Howard Burrows, Christine deVallet. Staff: Starr LaTronica.


Call to order: Howard called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.
Public comment: None

Minutes of December 20, 2016: The minutes were unanimously approved.

Building & Grounds Update: • Starr said the renovation is essentially done. Possible changes in the Staff Lounge and stairwell are in the concept stage. Any renovation of the second-floor entryway and floors will require a new initiative.
• Two of the Children’s Illustrators cases are now stored in the new FA room, taking up much needed space. Judith will research obtaining Plexiglas to replace the glass fronts so they may safely be installed lower on the wall for better viewing by children.
• The Ft. Dummer display cabinet has been relocated on the first floor near the glass room. The display case from the Local History room has been moved beside the north stairwell on the Mezzanine.
• With more available space on the main floor, the committee can decide on appropriate furniture for public art displays. Christine advised that it should be stationary in order to protect artwork from damage. Christine is waiting to hear from artist Terry Sylvester about again exhibiting her Downtown Brattleboro mural on the Mezzanine walls.
• The Snow Angel has been relocated to the Local History room temporarily, awaiting the cleaning of its original marble pedestal. It will then be moved to the Mezzanine elevator lobby and the marble plaque installed on the adjacent sturdy wall. The Three Schoolgirls sculpture now in that space will be relocated to the first-floor front window. [Ed. note: The Larkin Mead marble bust, relocated to the new Genealogy room, also needs cleaning.]
• Howard plans to place revision of the Walking Tour brochure on the agenda for the next FA meeting.

Inventory of Collection: Christine cannot safely begin work in the FA room until large items stored there during renovation are removed. She proposes to keep a representative sample of the Loud book collection, which can be stored behind other books on deep shelves, and deaccession the majority of the books, which are not valuable to the library’s collection. Starr will investigate the Loud bequest to determine if this plan is allowable under its terms.

Anna Dewdney Event: Connie presented highlights of Prudence’s written update in her absence. Their focus is now to base the event on the VT Humanities Council’s Read with Me program. They hope to engage the program’s Southern Vermont coordinator, Laura Lawson Tucker, to lead the event at the library. Connie briefly outlined the structure of the event she and Prudence devised. Children’s librarian Lindsay Bellville will need to be involved, and an explicit request will be made to the Friends to purchase books for distribution to children attending.

Display Schedule: The Children’s Illustrators exhibit for April/May is “Did Tiger Take the Rain” by Bellows Falls writer/illustrator Charles Norris-Brown. “Ralph Flies the Coop,” by writer Jamie Scanlon and artist Ellen Tumavicus, both of Brattleboro, will be the June/July exhibit. Prudence hopes to have Greenfield, MA, author/illustrator Astrid Sheckels’s “Hector Fox and the Giant Quest” for August/September.

Discussion of FA Committee scope and opportunities: Starr said the library’s soon-to-be-completed new Five-Year Plan includes a vision of the library as not just a “place” in the community but a “presence”; and also includes a specific mention of the FA collection, indicating its permanence and importance to the library. Following are the statements in the Strategic Plan draft of 2/23/17 relating to arts/culture in the library and the community:

Under Mission, [the library] • Convenes conversations and sparks collaborations and connections among leaders, organizations, and individuals. • Offers cultural and educational opportunities and experiences through programs, meetings, and exhibits within the library space and in other venues. Under Service Priorities, 1.e. Engage the arts community to create a vibrant art presence in the library. 2.b. Partner with agencies, organizations, and individuals to provide a broad spectrum of educational, recreational, and cultural programs for all ages. 6.a. • Construct and enhance physical space dedicated to preserving, cataloging, and displaying the library’s fine arts collection.

There followed lengthy discussion of Howard’s ideas to expand library participation and leadership in the regional arts community; extend the scope of such participation to performing arts; and enhance digital dissemination of the FA collection. Reservations and cautions were expressed regarding the committee’s and collection’s readiness, staff capacity, security, and other issues, including the appropriateness of such expansion of the library’s role. It was agreed that much more discussion needs to take place before proceeding, as well as physical preparation of the collection in the new storage room. Alex volunteered to help Christine move objects when she is able to begin the next phase.

New Committee Members: Alex will submit a letter of interest before the next meeting, with the intent to officially join the FA committee. Two other trustees were mentioned as possibly interested in joining the committee.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 9 a.m. Howard will circulate a Doodle online scheduling poll to determine whether absent members can attend a regular meeting time of the first Thursday each month at 9 a.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Notes by Judith Bellamy