Brooks Memorial Library  
Strategic Planning Committee  
November 5, 2015  

Present: Jane Southworth, Jerry Carbone, Susan Troy, Jennifer Lann, Howard Burrows, Jeanne Walsh, Elizabeth Tannenbaum, Pamela Becker (minutes keeper)  

Absent: Mary Ide  

1. Call to order: Jane called the meeting to order at 4:30.  

2. Changes to the agenda: None  

3. Public comment: None  

4. Minutes of Oct. 8th were approved.  

5. Old Business: None  

6. New Business: Our focusing question was: Why do we still need libraries? Jane suggested that we spend 30 minutes in discussion sharing thoughts about the Aspen Report and other documents that we've all read. (Including a recent article from the NY Times, "Reinventing the Library").  

Some of the ideas shared and discussed were:  

* The Aspen Report states that key principles of libraries are: Equity, Access, Opportunity and Openness.  
* Libraries will continue to do what they did in the past...still have books and still be places with resources to explore, with ancestral holding help us maintain connections to people and places, be relevant to current public needs.  
* As stated in an ALA report, "Libraries are centers for learning in the digital age."  
* The future of libraries means digital expansion and digital archives.  
* The role of librarians will continue to evolve in the future.  
* Deciding what "to get rid of" needs to be thoughtful. Shiny new objects are not necessarily the best.
Online data bases are changing.

We acknowledged that we are talking from the perspective of librarians and library lovers. Other voices are needed! We need to hear from people who only occasionally use the library and from those who do not use it at all.

The discussion turned to **DATA GATHERING**.

In writing the Strategic Plan 5 years ago, first there was a staff retreat and then there was an extended discussion among trustees. After that we invited citizens to attend two forums led by a facilitator to identify the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Finally, we designed a questionnaire and invited members of the public to give feedback. We used all of the gathered data to write our plan.

An idea of flipping the process was suggested. Maybe we should:
1. Go out into the community with questionnaires.
2. Hold forums.
3. Have retreats for the staff and also for the Board of Trustees and Friends Board.

The questionnaires will be taken out into public gatherings, supermarkets, schools, etc... to access a wider demographic. It's important to find out what the public wants and what barriers exist in getting people to use the library.

A time frame was discussed in light of our new director starting work in mid-January.
March, 2016 was the time that we’d said we hoped to hold forums and schedule a staff retreat. Jane hopes that we’ll have a first draft of our plan by fall of 2016.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Jane proposed that for our next meeting in December, each committee member should come with 10 possible survey questions and some suggestions of possible venues to distribute questionnaires.

Jerry read the 2012 Survey questions to us and will give us copies so that we become familiar with the Service Response model that we use.
Jeanne also shared information about an Impact Study Survey that involves civic engagement. We can all do research about other surveys to come up with ideas for possible questions that we'd like to use.

7 **Adjournment:** Jane adjourned the meeting at 6:00.

**NEXT MEETING:** In December, date TBA