

## **Brooks Memorial Library Strategic Planning Minutes**

### **Tuesday, March 22, 2022**

**Called to order at 5:03** in library Community Meeting Room and on Zoom.

Present: Ann Varilly, Karen Tyler, Kate O'Connor, Greg Hessel, Sue Fillion, Starr LaTronica, Lindsay Bellville, Jeanne Walsh, Howard Burrows

- Agenda: added time for Greg to update us on survey. No other changes.
- Public comments: none
- Minutes of Feb. 28, 2022 approved

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

#### **Survey update with Greg Hessel**

##### **Process:**

We noted that Strategic Planning is a large committee that includes a majority of the Board. Would it be more efficient to establish a subset of the committee to oversee the editing and implementation of the survey? We decided to share questions and updates to the whole committee but set time limits for replies so that people can participate as time and interest allow. *Important:* do not reply-all, or we will violate the open meeting law. Instead, reply to Greg. Also, Greg can use his judgment and address specific people with straightforward questions when that's most efficient.

##### **Content:**

Greg took out a few demographic questions, notably the voting district question. As an alternative, we approved adding a question that asks how far the respondent lives from the library.

#### **Next steps in planning process**

We reviewed the draft list of organizations that might help us distribute the survey and engage community members. Sue Fillion offered comments:

- It's a useful list, pretty comprehensive and inclusive.
- We'll need paper copies of the survey as well as online access.

- Some organizations will be happy to share the survey through their enews.
- We'll want to post it on Front Porch Forum, iBrattleboro, and maybe the Windham Regional Commission.

Question: Within the survey distribution process, is it appropriate/helpful to ask community group leaders if they would be interested in participating in a community forum? Key points from discussion:

- That's a different commitment from simply distributing the survey.
- FYI, the Planning Department offered stipends for community members who participated on a steering committee.
- A community forum is different from a meeting with specific community leaders who might help us engage with the people they serve.
- We might consider a phone call rather than a meeting, because our contacts might be dealing with meeting fatigue and very busy schedules.

Where are we right now? Just engaging with the organizations to help with the survey distribution or organizing forums? We need to clarify that.

- A forum might not attract a lot of people. Experience from other town committees suggests a small group, maybe a dozen.
- We could try one community forum at the library and see what happens.
- It can also be interesting to have a focus group with a particular interest where we make personal invitations.
- A survey is likely to bring a couple hundred responses.
- Is it possible that survey responses would help us focus our forums?

Answer: yes.

- We can go places where there are people already, e.g., Rotary. Sue agrees that it's a good approach, but we have to be strategic about where to show up to find our various audiences.
- Tabling (conversation with Sue): A good place to table would be Gallery Walk. Gets local and regional folks. Is tabling for distributing the survey or for engaging with people? Sue: you're only going to get a certain amount of information that way, but personal engagement is important. But how do we capture the information? Ask a fun question, like "What's your favorite thing about the library?" And grab their contact information for later communication, if they're interested.

- Other creative ways to get folks engaged in the planning process:
  - Connect it to a program, i.e., bring people in for a program and ask them questions when they're assembled
  - Give incentives, e.g., gamify everything; enter people in a drawing if they return their survey; give a donation from library trustees to an organization that helps us out; give people a fun thing to take away from a library table display.

We'll fill in contact information on the draft list and will seek Sue's help as needed. April 15th will be our deadline.

### **Committee description update**

We looked at the description and agreed to postpone approval to our next meeting. We discussed a possible name change to *Long-Range Planning*, or simply *Planning*. We'll address that as well at the next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Community members to serve on committee?**

Key ideas from discussion:

Is it wise to put out a request for community members to join the committee when we're this far into the planning process? Maybe invite people with specific expertise or representing a specific constituency, which could be valuable to our work. However, it's a big committee as it is. There are really two questions: should we welcome a community member if they express interest, or do we want to actively recruit people? We need to clarify why we would be looking for new people: would they help us do legwork with our surveys, tabling, etc., or would they be helping guide the committee's decisions and priorities? Could there be Planning Volunteers to take on practical tasks to support the work of the committee? Should we have "Squad Leaders"? Last time we engaged high school students who were working on their community service hours.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, April 19, 5:00 p.m.

**Adjourned** at 6:35