

**Brooks Memorial Library
Building and Grounds Meeting Minutes, 2/16/24**

Present: Karen Tyler, Chair

Members: Christine deVallet

Elizabeth Tannenbaum

Matthew Wojcik

Lindsay Bellville

Joyce Sullivan

Starr Latronica

Gavin Watson

Guests: Monroe Whitaker, Robin Sweetapple

- **Call to Order** 9:05 a.m.
- **Agenda (Changes or Additions)**—no additions
- **Minutes of Meeting** 1/19/2024 –approved (1/19 and previous one)
- **New Committee Members** Introductions and welcome to new member Gavin Watson
Possible new member: Lin Taggard-not present at this meeting
- **Public:** Monroe Whitaker and Robin Sweetapple invited to meeting to comment on project. Monroe is a landscape architect who some time ago produced a plan for the area in front of the library. Robin is an architectural designer who has been the Director of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.
- **Old Business** (see below for brief discussion on status of book drop)
- **New (and Old) Business**

Process for **CONSTRUCTION GRANT**. Robin and Monroe were invited to share their suggestions and to get comments from Board members.

Background:

--Plans were discussed by B and G Committee last year for outdoor seating project to focus on accessibility

--ARPA funds available through Dept of Libraries (from Covid federal funds for libraries)

Focus: to increase accessibility to building **and** to internet.

Amount: \$300,000-\$1.5 million (there is \$16 mil in grants to give away)

Grant deadline: March 12, 2024.

– Robin and Monroe are working on writing the grant application; they took a tour to see what is there and what options may exist.

Discussion points from Monroe and Robin:

--Looking at ways to make current ‘short cut’ in back of library safer and accessible to all.

--Want to consider adding seating, stairs and additional space for outdoor zoom meetings without Main Street noise.

-- Public Works is excited because of grant possibilities

Monroe presented plan to town recently with focus on possibilities:

Key points of possible plan:

--Increase accessibility to front of building, especially for those with accessibility issues.

--Look at additional parking spaces in front, dedicated as fully accessible spots

--Expand existing ‘pocket park’ in front to make additional places to sit

--Relocate newel posts (which were part of original library), similar to original usage.

--(re) Place planters (with big trees in them) in front, in plaza area: raise area to be level in front of building in order to be more inviting.

--Increase number of internet access locations:

--At Southern end, a structure can be built and tables added in front for improved internet access. Note: Street noise will still be a problem in that location but it's a good location for individual usage with headphones.

--Look at another area on side of building for a quieter space for zoom meetings.

Note: Parking spots in front are now used by people to gain internet access at all times

--Look at this project with all 3 areas as a whole. Bistro café; café tables; internet access.

Discussion and questions from library staff about possible changes (Lindsay and Matt) and committee:

--With new configurations, will access to rear of library be open to groups to rent so that library staff do not need to be there at all times?

--If changes are made, Children's Library staff need a better view from Circulation desk; need to have kitchen access. Note: want to enhance not take away anything.

--Erosion problem in back path; and path now is too narrow to pass others

--Lindsay: In evening only one staff person; if sit at desk, can't see what is needed for security. How to make accessible if there is a new door for entry ; need easy access for families with children.

--Matt: if new entrance, need to look at spaces on the side of building; perhaps move circulation desk to where easier to observe people coming in/out; will teen room be changed? Will Staff lounge need to be moved?

Lindsay: already out of space in Children's Room

Matt: can't take away footage from Children's Room, but perhaps if move entrance may have more visibility.

Lindsay: when there are downstairs events, need to secure upstairs area.

Matt: we have opportunity to really rethink library layout and fix some long standing problems. e.g add roof over path to library

Robin: Want to keep library functions and also add more space.

Joyce: Can we borrow some of meeting room but Lindsay notes: the room is already too small as a meeting room.

Next Steps Discussion/Questions:

Karen: take a step back; looking at short turn around for grant; imagine we need drawing and estimates in less than 4 weeks.

Monroe: this is opportunity to look at project in more detail

Gavin: Dec. 31 2026 project needs to be finished

Starr: need plans as detailed as possible now, but can be adjusted

Monroe: 2 plans--one for side and one for front—these will be enough for the next meeting

Money for developing more details, but needs to include enough detail to be evaluated (construction plans but not too detailed)

Karen: excavation, relocation, ADA accessibility need to be considered.

Monroe has time now to do exterior design plans

Matt: more inviting way to get to library from back—is this feasible?

Robin: some flexibility in grants for changes; focused under internet expansion and accessibility

Monroe: need to consider challenges to meet grant requirement

Matt: switchback with stairs built in. Focus: create level in back of library;

Lindsay: if door on back—access to parking area?

Monroe: (new) door location?

Matt: path from front of municipal center? Parking??

Starr: More parking in front?

Christine and Eliz: need more details; drawings to present to Committee

Lindsay: need focus on needs of families.

Security cameras--confidentiality

Matt: security cameras should be outside (esp back alley), but not inside

Town wants to use key cards for access to town buildings; guest cards?

Next steps:

--Starr: make commitment for money to support Robin and Monroe to draw up designs: grant includes money which could come back to us if we pay them now. Starr: will need letters of support from Board

Robin and Monroe will come back with estimates/drawings next week in order to get grant application in.

--Need extra meetings on the next few Friday mornings, 9:00 a.m, before grant is due.

--Include DPW, town people whose input needed.

Karen: appreciate enthusiasm and expertise of Monroe and Robin—and Starr. Committee agrees!

OTHER OLD BUSINESS:

Karen: **Bookdrop shelter**. When will this be finished? Is there a need to wait until ground is no longer frozen or can this be finished now (since it is in the paved area)

Next Meeting: Next Friday Feb. 23 at 9 a.m. Starr will find space.

Adjourn: 10:15