

LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE

Thirteenth Meeting
January 15, 1997

Sakey Lecture Hall
Main Library

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Nancy B. Woods at 6:30 P.M. in the Joseph G. Sakey Lecture Hall of the Main Library, 449 Broadway.

Members in attendance:

Nancy B. Woods, Co-Chair
Richard Rossi, Co-Chair
William Barry
Ruth Butler
Karen Carmean
Ed DeAngelo
John Gintell
Karen Kosko
Andre Meyer
David Szlag
Emily West
Robert Winters
Roger Boothe
Susan Clippinger
Susan Flannery
Charles Sullivan

Co-Chair Woods introduced the committee members present to the audience and welcomed Patience Jackson; City Councillor Henrietta Davis; and John Good, Library Trustee.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Minutes: The Minutes of the two November meetings were approved with the addition of Roger Boothe to the members present at the November 20th meeting and the correction of Kathryn Carleton's name from Clarkson. Two typos were noted.

Co-Chair Woods reminded the members that having "cast a wide net" to gather information in Phase II of the committee's process, they would now move to Phase III, Refining the Opportunities...System Program, and examine the contents of the net.

The committee must keep its May 1997 deadline firmly in sight. Meetings will now be less frequent but of longer duration. The work of the Public Process Work Group will now be folded into the functions of the committee as a whole.

Tonight's meeting will be divided into three segments with separate time allocations which must be met if the goals for the evening are to be accomplished in three hours.

Segment I 45 minutes

"More Input"

- Cohen Report
- From the State's Vantage

Segment II 65 minutes

Work Group Highlights

Segment III 55 minutes

Issues: What We Need to Address by May 27 & How
Should We Proceed?

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 26, at the same location.

COHEN REPORT: Co-Chair Woods said that it was important to review the hard work that had been done previous to the formation of Library 21. One such component was the Aaron Cohen Report completed in 1995.

Susan Flannery, Library Director, presented a background for the report by Aaron Cohen, describing the various steps and activities leading up to the report, which is a building program for the Cambridge Public Library. Describing the overriding goal driving the program as "Good library service for the people of Cambridge", she listed the various roles identified for the library as parts of its mission toward reaching that goal and briefly reviewed the highlights of the report elements. Ms Flannery submitted a written summary of the Cohen Report which was read into the minutes.

FROM THE STATE VANTAGE: Patience Jackson, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Library Building Consultant for the State of Massachusetts, provided a background picture of library construction planning in the state..

Before coming to her present position which she has held for 8 years, Ms. Jackson had experience in both public and corporate libraries. Her position was created in conjunction with the state's Library Construction Program which made grant funds available to municipalities for library construction. While a round of such grant funding has just ended and no new funds are currently available, a new 200 million, 7 to 10 year round has been proposed. 200 libraries in the state are still in dire need of construction funding. The proposed target is to fund 38% of library building costs.

Beginning in the 1950's libraries recognized the need for long term planning. Programs for library services were written looking to a 20 year horizon. Long term planning soon became incumbent upon all libraries and the state now requires such plans from any libraries

applying for state financial grants. New library construction is designed by architects in accordance with building programs based upon a library's long term service plan.

Aaron Cohen's background in library planning began in the 1970's as he assisted libraries in plans for accommodating new technologies. His assistance gave libraries a forward looking view of the emerging technologies that would be affecting libraries. From technology planning he moved into assisting in the planning of the buildings needed to accommodate the new technologies and a changing pattern of library services and patron expectations.

How to translate a community vision into a library building program? Smaller libraries are encouraged to write their own programs. This requires a great deal of preparation and time, much best spent off site. A larger library/community/building usually requires some degree of expert assistance in the program development. A program must analyze the unique needs of a community and its existing library and then project these needs forward in time. A building designed only to meet the immediate needs of the present is likely to be a failure almost as soon as it opens. The building program is a letter to the architect telling him/her what is important to the community and what the community wants in its library.

Formulas have been developed which predicate space needs based on seating, collection size, etc. Having determined the net square footage, a multiplier of 30% to 35% is used to determine the gross square footage. A rule of thumb is that every 10 books requires 1 square foot of space in the plan. At present construction rates for libraries, that square foot will cost \$200.

The job is to get from vision to reality. All designs should allow for flexibility to meet changing needs. Most buildings now need internal reorganization after 5 years.

Ms Jackson distributed a hand-out listing recent library construction of interest to Cambridge and invited questions.

Question: Doesn't height affect the shelving ratio given?

Answer: No. The Americans with Disabilities Act regulations limits shelving heights to 7 or 3 foot heights and requires 3 foot wide aisles. This is calculated into the ratio.

Question: A suburban library. An urban library. What is the difference?

Answer: The parking element is different. More parking is necessary on rural areas. The security element is the same. What the libraries do is the same.

Question: Does proximity to public transport elements affect the parking requirements?

Answer: No. It is a part of the picture, but you can't say no parking is required simply because the library is on a bus route.

You have to think also of the ability to carry library materials, the weather factor, young children, the elderly, and the disabled. There is also the need to stop at the library to drop off or pick up books while traveling by car on other errands such as shopping.

Question: Are branch libraries taken into consideration?

Answer: Yes, but branches are only a part of the picture. A branch brings some services closer, is smaller, friendlier, more recreational.

Question: Can you comment on the approval process. Will it be changed?

Answer: In some ways. Peer review will continue, but it's more a cooperative than competitive process.

Question: Will there be state money available?

Answer: We hope so. The proposal needs support.

Question: What is the role of large universities and their population?

Answer: These people use the public libraries for recreational reading, etc. - materials and services the university libraries don't supply. Their families use the libraries as any other families.

Co-Chair Woods announced that time had expired for this segment of the meeting and thanked Ms. Jackson for talking with the committee. She asked members to write down any other questions for either Ms. Flannery or Ms. Jackson.

Co-Chair Rossi welcomed Olive Johnson, Library Trustee, and City Councillor Michael Sullivan who had joined the audience.

WORK GROUP REPORTS:

YOUNG ADULTS WORK GROUP: Ed DeAngelo said that for the purpose of the work group "young adults" are defined as high school age. He reported that various themes are emerging from the various meetings and visits, including:

- a need for young adult oriented services and programs
- a staff person attuned to their needs and interests
- research services
- a place to study after 4:30 when the high school library closes
- a separate space (widely voiced)
- a friendly space where they can talk if necessary
- coordination between school and library to enhance programs
- non school-related materials

Asked if the group had addressed youth centers in the neighborhoods, Mr. DeAngelo replied affirmatively.

A comment was made that money spent on training or programs that could be provided by the schools would cut into the funding for bibliographic resources that only the library can provide.

Another suggestion was that lives will be even more hard pressed in the future and that the library's job should be to enable access to books, resources, etc.

Co-Chair Woods inquired if there were any questions still unanswered by the group. The reply was: -space, -resources, -size, -school overlap.

CHILDREN WORK GROUP: Karen Kosko reported that the group has brought children together for discussions and also done a survey to determine what the children want. 235 surveys have been returned and the raw results will be pulled together by Karen Carmean into a data base. The group will finish analyzing the data and will share the results with the librarians.

The children contacted have been very enthusiastic and concerned about the new library. Ms. Kosko suggested that after the committee has a clearer idea of what the new library will be like, that picture should be presented to the children for their reaction.

She noted that a high school junior has indicated an interest in working with the committee.

ARCHIVES WORK GROUP: Charles Sullivan described the present local history room as nearly nonfunctional, too small to house the collection, hard to access, not climate controlled - all factors inhibiting its use. Almost every new library built recently has included a room for local history materials and the committee needs to examine what others have done or are doing. The Cambridge Historical Commission has tried to help fill the Cambridge gap by accommodating materials beyond its mission and giving assistance where it can. Much of the Commission collection belongs in a secure but accessible space such as a library local history room.

There is no proper archives for Cambridge. The city has a long history with many public records, some dating back to the 1600's, all scattered among the various city departments in varying degrees of unsatisfactory storage. They are inadequately listed and there is no central accessible listing. Accessibility varies and conditions for preservation are generally unacceptable. The state mandates that the city retain all records dating prior to 1870. The city needs a staffed and managed record facility. A good argument can be made for expanding the local history room function in the new library to include an accessible archive for the city. Two questions to address are How much space? and How to staff? This might be a chance for an effective cross departmental/cross

organizational function.

Mr. Sullivan will try to gather materials together for at least a quick survey report by the deadline for work group reports.

A suggestion was made that this was a function that might be housed elsewhere.

Another comment expressed was that visits to other libraries have seen elegant history rooms with a community function - expressing pride in the community's history and providing a civic unifying factor.

SENIORS WORK GROUP: Emily West reported that the work group had talked to several senior groups and individuals in a relatively short time. Among the opinions expressed were:

- much concern with adequate parking
- a need for more service for those with impaired vision, including expansion of the large type book collection
- concerns with ability to use the computer catalog
- programming for seniors appreciated and more would be welcome
- branches are convenient but their collections too limited
- internet services
- Main Library has great staffing but needs more seating, stacks are hard to use
- often plan borrowing trips to coincide with programming

Access (including parking) and ease of use were the main themes. There is still one more group to meet with.

OTHER LIBRARIES: Bill Barry defined the work group's charge as "getting the hindsight vision of others who have built new libraries". The group had three general questions to ask of other libraries: What were the missed opportunities? How did you plan for the future? and What advice can you give us?

Highlights of the responses include:

- Beware of the adequate, pursue the excellent.
- If only we had built it bigger
- What was thought to be 20 years worth of growth space is filling up fast
- Ease of access encourages use
- Remember you are the client
- Flexibility
- Raceways for new technology
- Listen to community
- Books are not being replaced by technology which mandates its own space needs.
- Community center role reigns
- AV - Talking Book space unequal to demand
- Extra meeting space needed

The groups report will elaborate upon the responses.

TECHNOLOGY WORK GROUP: John Gintell distributed an outline listing the key points of his report as follows.

OBJECTIVES:

- Augment content and service of the library
- Enable library access from home and city organizations
- Provide computer and internet access in the library
- As a high tech capital, Cambridge should have state-of-the-art technology in its library

TECHNOLOGY BASED SERVICES:

Include technology for:

- multi-cultural support
- support to disabled
- special children-oriented services

Traditional library services

- Broad range on-line catalog services
- Reference service (e-mail and more)
- Access to electronic information
- Extensive access to multimedia

Extended services

- Job/resume
- Literacy teaching support
- Publisher of Cambridge information
- Internet & e-mail for patrons
- Computers for homework, etc.
- Software to borrow
- Discussion groups on-line
- Access to Mass. Ed. Satellite broadcasts

IMPORTANT POINTS OF TECHNOLOGY:

- Supports variety of main/branch library configurations
- Collaboration with other organizations
- Trained staff needed
- Appropriate building and furniture design

NEIGHBORHOODS WORK GROUP: Fran Wirta reported that two meetings have taken place in each of 5 branch neighborhoods. Results will be divided between what are emergency/immediate needs and what are less urgent needs for later development.

PUBLIC PROCESS WORK GROUP: Karen Carmean reported that she has been collecting the ideas coming in from the various sources/groups/organizations talked to and will be listing specific wishes on a data base utilizing "Access" software..

Purpose of the data base:

- make recommendations as to what library should look like
- let participants know their ideas are listened to

- useful to library staff and other city departments in the future
- a model for other cities to use

It is hard to decide which of the many suggestions to list as the top ones.

Ms. Carmean distributed a hand-out listing some of the groups that were met with and samples of three different type groups to give an idea of the data being collected.

Co-Chair Woods thanked the work group members for their hard work. She noted that the work groups included a number of people who are not committee members and expressed a special thank you to them.

A questioner asked why the committee wasn't looking at what is wanted in the library instead of what could go elsewhere.

Co-Chair Woods indicated that would be a good question for Part 3 of the meeting where a wish list for the Cambridge Public Library in the 21st Century will be created.

WHAT TO ADDRESS AND HOW TO PROCEED:

Co-Chair Rossi opened the third segment of the meeting by posing a question to the committee for feedback:

"What questions does the committee need to resolve as a group in order to issue a report?" (by consensus)

Among the responses were:

How to take into consideration the need for collaboration with other city departments?

What programs belong in the library system and what ones belong elsewhere?

How closely the library works with other agencies?

What is the reality of money and time?

Do we have a scheme for assigning relative weights to the various desiderata?

What needs could be met by a distributive system?

How to avoid duplication of services provided by other agencies?

What are the components everyone agrees are essential?

How do we boil down the extensive amount of input?

To what extent should the committee address system configuration as a whole on its way to the main library program.

How far-ranging should the system analysis be?

Should we decide size first and then see how much we can fit in?

Or do we need to assign space to each need and proceed from there?

What type of report to the City Council do we need to do?

Who is us? (users)

How high should the building be and what set-back?

How much money is available:

Note: a complete list of issues was recorded and will be mailed separately to the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M.

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