

LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE

15th Meeting  
March 18, 1997

Sakey Lecture Hall  
Main Library  
449 Broadway

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Nancy B. Woods at 6:38 P.M. in the Joseph G Sakey Lecture Hall of the Main Library.

Members in attendance:

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

Co-Chair Woods welcomed the committee and audience. She reviewed the items on the evenings agenda, explaining that this would be a working session for committee members only and asking audience members to hold their comments for the end of the meeting or, if time should run out, to submit comments in written form.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

The Minutes of the February Meeting were approved.

Co-Chair Woods advised the committee that Steve Miller, a speaker at the Library 21 Seminar, had volunteered his help to the committee. A good facilitator, he might perhaps run the next meeting, building consensus. The committee should think about this and about what to do at the next meeting.

The April 15th meeting is still on target, but there may be a space conflict for the May 22 meeting.

Co-Chair Woods inquired as to how the remainder of the Agenda as outlined struck the committee and how much time should be allotted to the various elements. Although site selection was not a part of the charge to the committee from the City Council, members of the committee were talking about site criteria and she felt that this

might be touched on briefly tonight, at least as regards the pro's and con's of the present site.

#### VISION:

The committee revisited the various possible library roles as identified by the American Library Association, reviewing them again in light of what the committee had learned since they were first examined. Co-Chair Woods identified the roles and Library Director Susan Flannery read aloud the ALA definitions of the roles and identified the priority levels assigned to each on by the library staff and trustees. It was explained that role priorities varied from branch to branch, and from branches to main library, depending upon the audience served, how it is best reached, and the resources available. A library may play all of the roles, but prioritizing them in terms of the local community, assists in effective planning and the allocation of resources and effort. The existence and services of other agencies and institutions also affects the level of priority and resources a library may assign to a role. Initial discussion of roles sometimes also included audiences to be reached, but it was decided to postpone discussion of the library's audience (both whom the library is serving and whom the library also needs to serve) and add this as a later discussion topic.

#### Roles:

##### Community Activity Center:

The existence of other facilities and community services within Cambridge led the staff and trustees to assign this role a lesser priority.

Committee members expressed a wish to keep this role under consideration, at least for now.

##### Community Information Center:

The library director explained that this role designated for a library the responsibility of compiling listings of community agencies, their officials, hours, services, and programs. This role requires a great expenditure of staff time as the material must be continually and regularly updated. Branch libraries may gather such information at a community level not documented elsewhere (i.e. the name of the neighborhood Little League coach, etc.), but the Main Library works from a number of services directories compiled by others to provide such information on a larger city-wide level without expending the large share of resources that would be necessary to compile and update such directories in what would mainly a duplication of effort.

The committee felt that the library should keep at least

some low to moderate aspect of this role.

Formal Education Support Center:

The library gives medium weight to this role, stocking literary classics and nonfiction materials which may be used by elementary and high school students in relation to homework projects, but not the multiple copies of school assignment related items nor the teacher curriculum materials that would be found in a school library. The collection includes basic materials useable by commuting jr. college students and sometimes students at more advanced levels, but does not attempt to meet the specialized needs of college undergraduate and graduate students which will be met by their college libraries and the BPL research library.

The committee agreed with this lower priority assessment.

Independent Learning:

The library assigns this role high priority, gearing its collection to a breadth that enables individuals to pursue a wide range of self education and interests. Staff are available to assist individuals in locating appropriate materials, drawing upon interlibrary loan resources when the need extends beyond the scope of the local collection. Electronic and InterNet resources are also utilized in meeting these needs.

The committee also felt that this role should be a high priority.

Popular Materials Lending Library:

The library assigns this role a high priority and the committee concurred.

Child's Door to Learning:

The library assigned this role high priority while widening its scope to include both preschoolers and early school age children as well as materials for parents on developing reading skills in children.

The committee also accorded this role high priority.

Gateway to Learning:

This role is not one on the ALA list but was added in an attempt to meet a perceived need especially in the area

of new immigrants and English as a second language residents. In discussion it was suggested that this was a special audience to be served and could fit under many of the existing role services. It was decided to pass by this as a role, but to address these needs in the later discussion of audiences.

#### Research Center:

Research centers provide specialized collections of great depth to meet very specialized needs. Being in an area of many research and special library, the library gives this role a low priority, not attempting to duplicate such collections and concentrating its resources on other roles.

The committee agreed in general with this low priority level, but it was agreed in discussion that Cambridge History is an area where the library should have greater depth as no one else would specialize in this field and its greatest interest is to the citizens of Cambridge.

As this had come up for discussion, Co-Chair Woods asked Charles Sullivan to report for the Archives Work Group. Mr. Sullivan said that the groups report was in draft form and would be forth-coming soon. He briefly described the nature and needs of a city archives if one can be included in the program.

#### Reference Center:

Both the library and the committee assigned this role high priority.

#### Civic Heart Building:

This is not an ALA role but a response to committee expressions as to the nature of the building to be created and a role seen for it as a building. Responses to a request for input in this area included:

- a focal point for the city
- a neutral territory
- used by a broad cross section of the population
- not intimidating
- all should feel ownership
- equal access
- different things to different people by role
- multi-cultural
- spirit of c[Bambridge
- a warm place

Before taking a brief break, Co-Chair Woods called on Rita Richmond of the Friends of the Library who described the up-coming Friend's Author/Book Luncheon, Saturday, April 12, at the Inn at Harvard. Ms Richmond advised that seating is limited and people wishing to attend should get their reservations in early.

#### DATABASE:

Following the break, Co-Chair Woods called upon John Gintell to present a report on the database developed to reflect community input. Copies of the report were distributed and John described the database which pulls together the comments of the many people and groups talked with by various members and work groups of the committee. These comments are grouped into related categories and sub-categories.

Much discussion followed on the best approach for incorporating the better ideas reflected in the data base into the program. It was finally resolved that members would each go through the report, highlighting for consideration relevant suggestions not already included in the program. Results should be sent to Lisa Peterson by March 28.

#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS:

Co-Chair Woods asked members to consider the present site, which is the charge of the commBittee, and develop a listing of the pro's and con's of this site for a main library. For this exercise it is a given that the park will not be built upon.

Suggestions thrown out by members for consideration included:

#### PRO'S:

- City owns land and building
- Attractive park grounds
- Adjacent to high school
- Existing building designed as library
- Central location
- Tradition (over 100 years on this site)
- Character of building
- Densest neighborhood, more people can walk
- Perception of safety on site
- Site lends itself well to civic presence
- Family friendly setting, some can use park while others are getting books

#### CON'S:

- Ability to solve parking problem
- Historic preservation restrictions on building
- Re-adaptive design challenges
- Construction staging difficulties
- Public transportation facilities
- Impact of building size on park space

Few adjacent commercial facilities  
May cause compromises in program  
Limited space for future expansion  
Limited for any expansion

The general sense of the group was to make no decisions on the topic at this time but move it to PHASE IV.

NEXT: (Things to be do.)

- Need to develop list of site constraints for architect
- identify boundaries limiting expansion
  - identify legal obligations
  - other constraints (neighborhood values)

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LIBRARY ROLES FOR MARCH 97 MINUTES

Developed at March 18, 1997 Meeting of the Library 21 Committee

Summary of Roles for the Main Library and level of effort that should be expended:

ROLE	LEVEL OF EFFORT
COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER	Moderate
-Other resources provide this function	
COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTER	Moderate
- Need a centralized resource center, but the library should be the vehicle for it, not the driver; requires an enormous effort for full implementation	
- branches may provide this service more so than main	

- there is much publicized information and the reference desk has access to all of it
- library can provide space for information, but not staff support; should be culled, organized by others
- can provide copies of city planning studies, reports, etc. and other public documents
- for Internet web sites, library can manage the hardware but not the updating of sites

#### FORMAL EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTER

Low/Moderate

- elementary, high school and college curricula are supported elsewhere
- there may, however, be an overlap between the general collections and the needs of students who are attending educational institutions

#### INDEPEDENT LEARNING

High

- the public will need a wide range of knowledge in future
- this area provides an opportunity for volunteer tutors for one-on-one assistance to help individuals locate appropriate materials
- includes help for people who are taking examinations for work-related requirements
- need to be aware of changing needs and demands
- supports community based literacy for adults where the library is the institution of higher learning
- local collections supplemented by interlibrary loan

#### POPULAR MATERIALS LENDING

High

- no other agency or institution provides this service
- collections are built based on a focus on literary goals (rather than competing with video stores) and will carry, for example, videos of "important" films
- should include a young adult focus
- draws in readers in the first place; especially programs like "speed read" for popular titles
- need flexibility to adjust to changing needs
- over 1/2 of the circulation is provided under this role

- makes use of latest merchandising techniques

#### CHILD'S DOOR TO LEARNING

High-critical

- includes all children, regardless of where and how they are schooled
- provides materials for parents to help them develop children's skills

#### GATEWAY TO LEARNING

We decided that this role was distributed across the other roles and audiences and that we would not establish it as separate role

#### RESEARCH CENTER FOR CAMBRIDGE HISTORY

High

- the only in-depth research role the library will play will be for Cambridge materials
- the library can provide access to city and library archives, but these archives must be catalogued and stored properly; this is a separately funded, 2 to 3 year task that should be carried out prior to the library taking on this research role
- there will be overlap between City documents and library documents
- library should have space for displays of historical materials
- genealogical research opportunities could be included
- if this role is taken on, the use of the resources will increase

#### REFERENCE CENTER

High

- reference materials are increasing as more information comes on line and is available electronically
- library should provide increase phone and E-mail access

#### THE MAIN LIBRARY AS "CIVIC HEART"

High

This is a somewhat intangible role, but it generated a spirited discussion. When asked what 'civic heart' meant, the following concepts were raised:

- the building is open to everyone and provides equal access and knowledge for every single person
- it becomes a destination for tourists and residents alike
- provides a range of recreation, learning and teaching for wide range of audiences and interests: ethnic, multi-generational, etc.

- seems safe (but we are aware that that is an illusion)
- neutral territory; not owned by any neighborhood or group
- could and should be owned by everyone
- We felt that today, there is no single building or place in Cambridge that offers the concept of "heart" - with the possible exception of the Charles River and the annual river festival