

LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE

Eleventh Meeting  
November 6, 1996

Area 4 Youth Center

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Nancy B. Woods at 6:33 P.M. at the Area 4 Youth Center.

Members in attendance:

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

Co-Chair Woods stated that the main purpose of the evening was to talk to teens and also to talk to people from Area 4 in order to learn what they would be interested in seeing in a new library. Due to time considerations this will be moved to the first position on the agenda.

Co-Chair Rossi reported that he had visited the Harvard Square Business Association with John Gintell re getting the business community involved process and learning what businesses would be interested in as relates to the library. They were well received and a call the next day from Mr. Rossigol, the director, indicated that a letter will be forthcoming nominating several persons interested in becoming involved. On November 19th he and John will be attending a Central Square Business Association meeting.

Mr. Rossi advised the members of an upcoming public city meeting, tomorrow night, November 7, to help list city goals. From this meeting, agenda items will be established for City Council discussion with the City Manager.

Clarifying comments from the October meeting, he said he thought it necessary for the committee to keep an eye on its schedule and not over-burden members.

CONVERSATION WITH TEENS: ED DEANGELO & MO BARBOSA

Co-Chair Woods welcomed teenage participants from the Youth Center, reminding them that the library being planned is the one they will

inherit, and turned this part of the meeting over to Ed DeAngelo of the Youth Opinion Working Group.

Ed DeAngelo introduced Mo Barbosa, Director of the Youth Center, thanking him for his assistance in setting up the session and asking him to say a few words about the center's operations.

Mr. Barbosa said that the center serves kids ages 9 through 18 with recreational, educational and cultural programs. Much is done on a drop-in basis. Activities include trips, sports, a dance center, and video productions. They try to involve kids in as many activities as possible in a safe and friendly setting. The area is one that has been historically under-served. He introduced those teens present tonight to participate in the program: Mugo Manigo, Sanita Yabor, Patrick Francis, Kareem Marshall, and Alex Schriebler. .

Mr. DeAngelo said that the committee was looking for ideas and invited Mr. Barbosa and the teens to brainstorm with him, creating a listing of what they would like to be able to do or have available in the library.

Mr. Barbosa led off by saying that kids feel restricted - they need different levels of quiet space, a possibility of interacting with friends on projects, and access to the Internet.

Other ideas identified with the teen participants included:

- non-quiet space
- space to talk
- more computers
- easier to get Internet access
- space to build a community
- space for drama projects
- the right computer programs
- a wide variety of new books and magazines
- books for school projects
- up-to-date recordings, better selection
- bigger periodical section, with world wide selection of periodicals on computer
- a place frequented by familiar people
- convenience
- quality books
- open later hours at night
- college information
- SAT preparation classes
- sports information
- better organization of space so they can find things
- employees to help find materials
- tutoring (its more comfortable in library setting)
- better organized signs
- faster request service
- night classes for working kids
- streamlined, quicker access to information
- not having to look in stacks
- Sunday hours
- multiple copies of books

- separate rooms for projects
- area for homework
- resume help
- jobs information
- more "fun" stuff to read
- younger, youthful, workers on staff
- teens working with younger kids
- desks in stacks
- bookmobile to get little kids interested
- browsing areas
- the newest books
- Steven King books
- biography section
- teach computer research
- no cards

Two of the teen participants, in response to question, identified the ages at which the school showed them how to use the public library as 4th grade and 6th grade, respectively.

An opinion was expressed to the effect that it is difficult for kids, who haven't had future library potentialities explained to them, to respond effectively as to what is needed in libraries for the next century. Their experience is completely with the present.

Co-Chair Woods and Ed DeAngelo thanked Mo Barbosa and the teens who had participated. Mo Barbosa thanked the committee for thinking of the Area 4 community and especially for being interested in the Youth Center.

#### STRATEGIES FOR INVOLVING AREA 4 IN LIBRARY 21:

Co-Chair Woods introduced Julia Gregory and Gerald Bergman of Area 4 and asked them to suggest strategies to develop long term involvement of the neighborhood in the project.

MS Gregory's suggestions included:

- Making a commitment as a city to keep getting information out to the neighborhood as to resources available.
- Tapping areas of neighborhood enthusiasm, such as elementary schools, youth center, Margaret Fuller House, Fletcher School parenting program, and Windsor St. clinic.

She doesn't think the committee will get a lot of involvement from the community but should still try to get information into the community as to what's happening.

Mr. Bergman said that MS. Gregory had already covered most of the ground. He felt that there was not much hope of making much of a connection between the committee and the neighborhood long term. The committee might succeed with something short term if it involved a area of community interest. Possibly doing something concerning the Central Sq. Branch Library would be a start. If the community could see a visible response to its input, then maybe the

committee could move on later, greater involvement. It's hard to get people to believe that their opinions really matter, especially if their experience has been otherwise. It's important to keep getting the word out as to what's available.

#### NEW WORK GROUP

Co-Chair Woods announced the formation of a new City Archives Work Group consisting initially of Charles Sullivan and Joan Krizack. Mr Sullivan said that there is a broad interest across the city in [Alocal history and genealogy. The library situation at present only accommodates a limited collection in a remote, unstaffed, locked room or various storage areas. The group will study the needs and potential, reporting back to the committee at a future meeting. Related to this is the desperate need for an over all archive for city records which are widely dispersed in a variety of unsatisfactory storage conditions.

#### THE THREE LIBRARY BUS TRIP - WHAT WAS LEARNED

Co-Chair Woods asked committee members to briefly identify what they had learned or what had impressed them about the three libraries visited. The following responses have been grouped by library or as general:

Everett:

The Everett Library was a fabulous achievement. A poor city with little money or space, doubled the size of its library with excellent, distinguished architecture complementing the original building. It used park land, but some was retained.

It's unfortunate that the windows are so small in the new portion of the Everett building, but understandable in terms of matching previous building.

The amount of natural light at Waltham and Everett was impressive.

Staff areas at Everett were too small.

Newton:

Archival storage - safe and comprehensive in Waltham Newton.

Newton was jazzy and new. The seating in the stacks was well done. The art gallery, cafe, and concert room were all dazzling - an example of possibilities.

Newton has a continuing customer outreach program and a good customer focus which among other things has led to the setting up of the cafe which wasn't in the original plans.

The Newton Children's Room was appalling - crowded and not

user friendly.

Newton sight-lines weren't great.

Rental collections have been used to meet the need for multiple copies of books.

Very heavy usage was seen in Waltham and Newton.

#### Waltham:

Archival storage - safe and comprehensive in Waltham Newton.

Waltham did a good restoration of the old building. The Youth Room was admired, the AV Room was the best of any seen, and the Children's Room well planned. All-in-all, very successful.

The auditorium in the Waltham old building basement, which their Director regretted, was acceptable and usable if not the best.

The Waltham Young Adults Room was very impressive and well located for teen use.

The Waltham Children's Room was very effectively arranged with the various areas graded by age level of expected use.

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The amount of natural light at Waltham and Everett was impressive.

Very heavy usage was seen in Waltham and Newton.

#### General:

Seeing these buildings and the space used for services, 90,000 square feet may be inadequate for what needs to be included.

Flexibility of building design is important in order to be able to adjust to future needs and changing conditions.

Lighting is critical.

Raised flooring with space for running cables below, or some other such arrangement, is important for enabling flexibility to adjust to future technology changes.

All of the libraries visited felt that small group study areas were essential.

All had comfortable places to sit and enjoy a book.

All were easily handicapped accessible.

Plans should include the capacity for users to plug in power books.

Separate story hour rooms are important, eliminating distractions.

Plymouth, not on tour, has an effective cubical design with stacks in the center and seating around the perimeter.

Good AV storage is important.

The libraries had beautiful furniture, comfortable and attractive.

#### LESSONS FROM THE SYMPOSIUM

Co-chair Woods asked members to identify what to them were the biggest lessons learned from the symposium, eliciting the following responses:

M.I.T.'s Athena system for computer networks.

Steve Miller's remarks on libraries and the country.

Vision of the Lawrence Librarian of the library as a community center, as well as his work with the community college. His commitment to outreach and willingness to try new programs and spin them off if successful were impressive.

A point was made that the symposium and its audience was a case of preaching to the converted and that the committee should promote video tapes of the event to the unconverted in the community. MS Flannery noted that the library has 10 copies of the 2 1/2 hour video. John Gintell is working with Ted Burton to produce an abridged 1 to 1 1/2 hour version.

A copy of the Anthony Tappe book is available for circulation among the committee members.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The next meeting will be at the Morse School on November 20th. The focus will be on the space issue in other city buildings. John Gintell will provide a report from the Technology Working Group.

There will be no public December meetings. Focus of the month will be on completing work group projects.

Co-Chair Woods adjourned the meeting at 8:

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