

Mid Cambridge Library Study Group

Minutes of Meeting, Thursday November 21, 1996

To provide access to all the people of Cambridge and to insure that we manage our resources well, Library 21 is gathering information from as many groups as possible about what the people want.

What would you like in the library?

A. Community Activity Center

- Theater in Central Square
- Meetings in Central Square
- Performances in Central Square
- Neighborhood centers needed in each neighborhood
- Book Clubs- more on different subjects
- Book groups need space
- Great Books need more books and more copies
- Great Book clubs need library staff leader
- State Humanity program provides in-depth interest programs
- Programs for people of all ages are wonderful in library

B. Community Information Center

- Library can be resource for other programs for children
- Library can be source of information to city services and many programs

C. Formal Education Support Center

- Assistance to students is very important
- Reference room is very crowded after school
- Reference room is very important after school
- Reference room needs more space
- Reference room needs more staff
- Reference room needs more materials
- "Homey" library so kids feel comfortable
- Welcoming space
- Not "imposing"
- Programs to draw children into library
- Facilities to draw children into library
- young adults need programs to draw them
- High school should stay open longer
- Spaces available in high school
- Spaces available in schools
- Constraints for space in high school
- Opportunities for space in high school
- School educates students on how to use the library

- Children need own physical space
- Material objects needed by children
- Computers need by slightly older children

D. Independent Learning Center

- Widner Library access necessary to some doing independent study

E. Popular Materials Lending Library

- French books
- Quicker turnaround of popular books
- Computers need to be designed into the space in branches
- Keep books longer than three years
- Books are part of our heritage
- Off-site storage for slightly older or less used books
- Develop strategies for keeping some materials longer
- Private collections should be encouraged to donate
- Donations: is there a policy for accepting private collections
- Videos- broader range
- Documentaries on video
- Old movies on video needed
- Travel books- some of the latest ones available
- Core collection is generally agreed upon
- Strategy for access to information and books not often requested
- Internet gateway for citizens
- Internet opportunities for library
- Off-site storage for materials
- Need more space for storage of materials
- Marketing of books like book stores for browsing
- Marketing of music like music stores for browsing
- Substantial collection needed at main library
- New ways to serve the variety of clients

F. Preschoolers Door to Learning

- Should be Immigrants door to learning
- Low-level readers door to learning
- Tot lot is part of library experience for local kids
- Park is part of library experience for children

G. Reference Library

- Reference helpful to solving problems
- Variety of information available
- Books from 30s and 40s but no recent ones on Finland

- Reference is an important function
- High school students need reference service after school
- Shelter for the homeless is part of the function of the library
- Is there a technology to gather unusual materials for special interest
- On-time delivery of information
- Don't try to have everything for everyone
- Access for all types of research
- Internet research
- Goal is to get the information to you-
- Not necessary to have the materials on hand
- Electronically keeping books

H. Research Center

I. Other- important functions missing from list

- Belmont Public Library is closer to west Cambridge than other libraries
- Takes two buses and a walk to get to main branch
- Driving and parking not a problem during day
- Parking is tight
- Bicycle to Main Branch
- Need many more bathrooms
- Need simple bathrooms
- Showers needed for homeless
- Showers for those who didn't have them used to be provided by schools
- Area 4 needs a library in the center of area 4
- Used to be a Library on Windsor Street which was comfortable for kids of Area 4
- Properly introduce kids and adults to the library
- Kids and young adults may need their own entrance
- Storage site for books could be off-site
- Stacks could be off the main library site
- Computer access could be somewhere else
- Fire hazard- are the stacks a fire hazard
- Stacks should be on a level floor
- Stacks should be handicap accessible
- Graphical interfaces should be better
- Shelf access by computer; click on book and open it up for more info
- Browsing- look at new ways to browse
- Noise and children's activities preclude other activities
- Children's room needs more space
- Children's room needs more floor
- Children's room needs more chairs
- Children's room needs more tables
- School libraries are not all as capable to introduce kids to main library and branch libraries
- Positive influence of library important for kids who don't have a great relation to school

- Segregate activities of children
- Segregate ages of children so all can have appropriate space
- Function of branches- mostly for kids
- Special activities should occur at branches
- Need a library location in Area 4
- Park is part of the library experience for main branch
- Duplication of resources are troublesome
- Co-locate facilities to save money- library, school, youth centers, senior centers
- School libraries could provide library services to city
- Library have different roles
- Library functions can be combined
- GIS can be used to find where populations are and how close to the libraries

J. An Important Civic Building