LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE

19th Meeting "PEER REVIEW" July 16, 1997

Joseph G. Sakey Lecture Hall Main Library 449 Broadway

Members in attendance:

Nancy Woods, Co-Chair
Richard Rossi, Co-Chair
William Barry
Ruth Butler
Karen Carmean
Ed DeAngelo
John Gintell
Andre Mayer
David Szlag
Emily West
Roger Boothe

Co-Chair Nancy Woods opened the meeting at 6:30 P.M., welcoming the special guests and audience. She announced a timed agenda which it would be necessary to follow strictly in order to cover all the desired elements with the guests consultants.

The guest consultants were introduced as:

Tom Jewell, Director of the Waltham Public Library Penelope Johnson, Director of the Worcester Public Library Paula Polk, Director of the Morse Institute, Natick

At the Chair's request, committee and audience members introduced themselves to the guests. For the evening's procedure, Co-Chair Woods referred to the agenda listing of the various program element documents previously submitted to the guests; asking that the guests give their reactions to an element, following which the committee members might interact. The audience was asked to hold its comments until the entire listing had been reviewed by the guests and committee.

VISION STATEMENT:

Johnson: -liked the statement, especially the "civic heart"

concept

-suggested reference to utilizing external resources $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$

through the new technology now available

Jewell: -these statements usually more succinct

-emphasize technology

-especially liked the last sentence

-liked the way points in vision statement are later picked up in the roles document -also liked the "civic heart" idea

Polk: -Natick also used something similar to the "civic heart" idea,

"building a bridge from the new back through the old to the city's heritage" -also liked the emphasis on the ability to grow

In response to a question as to the existence of branches in their library systems, the guests indicated that Natick has a bookmobile, Waltham closed two branches in the recession, and Worcester closed some branches, reopened part of these, and build some new ones in different locations.

Johnson: -also in the vision statement, liked the reference to "distinguished architecture", good to get that stated and out front

SYSTEM STRUCTURE:

Polk: -_____ important

- the changing needs and interests of users statement also animportant piece

Jewell: -agrees

-emphasize importance of goals and outreach

-one caution, sometimes outreach zeal can result in

shortchanging regular users of traditional

services

Johnson: -stress up front that changes will take place

-stress that in serving you will not try to displace

services already provided by other libraries

-say that branch services will change to meet the

needs of their communities

Jewell: -Does the branch location statement hide a hidden agenda?

[Co-Chair Rossi responded no, that short of financial strictures the city will build an expanded main library and then proceed on to upgrade the branch libraries,]

Polk: -need a sentence to tell what this section is about or

for - a sort of road map paragraph the section covers several issues and the

reader needs to know where you're going here and

why, perhaps an introductory paragraph

Jewell: -be more forthright

-if the present structure is good, say so

-if an improved main library is needed to strengthen

services at the branches, say so

ROLES:

Overview comments:

Jewell: -liked the structure very much

-most of the decisions are in line with his thinking

-maybe too much detail for the general audience

Polk: -extraordinarily clear, helpful , especially

meaningful to librarians and involved

personnel

-perhaps too much for general audience, overkill

Johnson: -perhaps a version for the general public which

cuts out the ALA material

Polk: -some of the funding and staffing information is

especially important to convey

Individual Roles:

Civic Heart:

Polk: -still likes this, might make it even stronger

"one of major cultural, social, [educational?]

centers of the city"

Jewell: -feels the same

Johnson: -would not limit the last sentence to "cultural"

activities, needs more breadth if to

be the

"civic heart"

Jewell: -catalyst - library can be one because it is a

neutral institution

Child's Door to Learning:

Johnson: -the change from preschooler's to all children is a

big improvement over ALA

-very happy with this section

Jewell: -would second that, no role more important

Polk: -ditto

Popular Materials:

Jewell: -very happy to see the YA segment

Polk: -same positive reaction as to "door to learning"

-well done

Johnson: -also had marked the YA section

-recommends seeing YA room in Leominster library, the best program in the state

Independent Learning:

Polk: -good to have as Primary

-definition excellent (role wording often fuzzy)

-the spaces statement is important

[the other guests expressed agreement]

Reference Library:

Johnson: -no comment, a good straight forward statement

Jewell: -would just add that the greatest increase in libraries

has been in use of reference libraries

with the

resulting creation of a lot of staff needs especially with the new technology accessed

through reference

Johnson: -the concept of one staff person guiding the user

through all stages of an inquiry is

very important

[Co-Chair Rossi asked for the guests' opinions on separating the call-in reference service.]

Johnson: -very important and successful, Worcester has done

for 20 years with 3 full time staff

Jewell: -Waltham had to cut a proposed separate telephone

reference service in order to get Financial

Committee

approval

- it's time for them to look at this again

Polk: -Natick lacks the staff for a separate service

-would like to stress the need for up-to-date

equipment for staff

-e-mail questions are also another new reference

development

Research Center:

Polk: -great, local history very important to community

-increasing growth of citizen need for

town information

-also a growing amount of town information

generated

-glad to see both history and current information in

the package

Jewell: -the archives report was great, he'll use it

-could have written this role himself, he's so

much in agreement

-a very important role and one the public

expects the library to fill

Polk: -it was this role that allowed Natick Library to

do outreach to other city

departments

Johnson: -agrees, the only primary level research role is

local history

-there is an incredible amount of school interest in

this

Formal Education Support:

Jewell: -right where he'd put it, secondary

[Co-Chair Rossi inquired as to the importance of the $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) =\left(1\right)$

library being located next to the high school]

Johnson: -it's not necessary, but it's nice

-YA's would still come if library wasn't next to school

Jewell: -very convenient for homework use

Polk: -good to admit that you can't be the school library, no

public library has the funds to be a

school library as well

Community Information Center:

Jewell: -curious about "can host and manage a website"

statement does "can" equal "should"?

Johnson: -it's smart to say "can" and not "will", a very

staff dependent operation

Polk: -it ties to current civic information needs

Community Activities Center:

Johnson: -for people who haven't been through the process

this could be confusing

-a certain amount of meeting and exhibit function

draws people into the library

Jewell: -need a very good meeting room use policy not to

the road

COLLABORATION:

Polk: -new Natick building represents the Town Manager's

vision, a strong factor in interagency

collaborations

-collaborations have been developing rapidly in

the few months since the new building

opened

-a very time consuming piece, pulling staff from $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) +\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left(1\right) +\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left($

basic services

Jewell -agree

-important when getting involved in a collaboration not

to be taking over someone else's responsibility

-finalize a "library piece" of what you can do to help

Johnson: -a point she also [underlined?]

-agrees fully

Polk: -still grappling with this role and believe in it

passionately, but need

to define better and set parameters

BUILDING PROGRAM:

Co-Chair Rossi: Do you think over all this is a good, basic

package? Is anything more needed?

Johnson: -need to keep stressing flexibility throughout

-maybe a little too detailed

Jewell: -ignore furniture specifics

-keep to types of seating needs, etc.

-the over all space assignments and proximities $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1\right) +\left($

are the key

Co-Chair Rossi: What is professional staff role?

Jewell: -Cohen worked from staff recommendations of needs

Johnson: -liked the proximity statements

-would like some instances of what goes on which

floor levels

-couldn't judge staff spaces

-would like to see something showing allowance for

space growth

DeAngelo: What about formulas, etc., are there alternative

quides?

Jewell: -these are pretty basic

Polk: -rules and guides very basic, but local needs the

final guide

-local growth patterns a key
-would look maybe at more YA

-fight any cuts in children's space

Question: How does existence of branches affect space

allotments?

[?] -local use patterns, population sub to use

Polk: -all these are only a beginning

FUNCTIONS AND SPACE NEEDS:

Jewel: -self service functions - where did these come from?

Flannery: -projections of increased demand and limited staff

Jewell: -feels a separate children's circulation function

important

Johnson: -feels the opposite, that a single circulation point is

best - frees children's staff to get

out from behind a desk and

help children

-2 circulation points waste staff and limit services

to children

Polk: -this was one of hottest debates in Natick where

children's circulation is 50% of total

-went to one circulation desk and it worked, no

complaints, issue never raised in suggestion

box entries

-built into the design the capacity to go back to a

second, children's circulation later if

necessary

Jewell: -Waltham experience may serve as a bad example

due to building constraints with two entrances

on different levels

Eating Area:

Polk: -in 3 months Natick's original objectors have come

full circle to approval

Jewell: -likes what Newton did - this space had been

eliminated from their plans due to

space problems

- public very unhappy with this

Johnson: -Worcester has such an area designed into its

plans, already hasa gift shop

-people very excited with the idea, no objections

-younger people just expect this now, can do it in

college and other libraries

Polk: -its a nice middle ground between taking food

anywhere in building and a complete ban

Circulating Collection Space:

Jewell: -in reference technology is resulting in shrinkage of

shelving needs

Polk: -but terminals/work screens are eating up space

much faster

CLOSING STATEMENTS:

Johnson: -things not seen: "friends" space

volunteer and volunteer managers space

Jewell: -reaction to all the documents extremely positive

-show a real grappling with the issues and an

understanding

[?] Parking?

Jewell: -parking a real problem - how much more disruption

can cities take to accommodate parking?

would be reluctant to change

landscape to accommodate recommended parking needs

Polk: -parking complaints are constant

Polk: -documents excellent

-much mirrors what Natick has just done -reflect state-of-the-art library services

-superb documents

Jewell: -might restructure for general audience - a

capsule form

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Re Natick's 1988 Cohen Plan, why has new building only just been built now?

Polk: -Not for any reasons resulting from the plan, but land acquisition delays, etc.

General public version may need some standard cliché statements - "democracy" - "informed public" etc., maybe in preamble - reemphasize that books are not obsolete, although technology important.

Penelope Johnson was asked to comment on the Worcester "process".

Johnson: -a less public process

-documents written by Board of Trustees and staff

-meetings for input - wanted everything

-program written in six months, 1995, final drawings

will take about a year after funding is assured

What about funding? Fund raising?

Johnson -Worcester 20 million - 8 million state, 9.6 million

city,

2.4 million private fund raising

Jewell: -Waltham raised about \$100,000 for finishing

touches, this process revitalized the "Friends" for

on-going fund raising

Polk: -Natick had very little funding from the state, majority

of funding from municipality - about 8 million,

fund raising most of the rest

-fund raising very time consuming

Guests asked to comment on the impact of new buildings on staff needs and operational budgets.

Jewell: -it's a political necessity to define this as a part of

getting building funding

-may not need to cover this in the your report, but

need to have the answers for the community when

impact questions are raised

Polk: -this is very important, would include but not

emphasize

-a community having spent millions on a new

building, resents unexpected subsequent

requests

for higher operational costs and staff

What is the time table to start fund raising?

Johnson: -you need to define what you're fund raising for

-Worcester now asking for pledges not actual dollars

as the project is not yet approved

Jewell: -"Friends" may be a part of fund raising, but are not

necessarily the best choice to head over-all

fund raising

campaign

Polk: "Friends" are a pivotal group for publicizing a fund

raising campaign, but the funds raised from $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$

them are often

smaller segment

Did you hire a fund raiser?

Johnson: -Worcester did, a local person

The meeting having run overtime, Co-Chair Woods adjourned the meeting, thanking the guests for their valuable and generous participation.