New Library Study Committee
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 3
October 26, 2022
Regular Meeting Minutes

Members Present: W. Barney, J. Bielot, E. Dillon, J. Leatherbee, M. Lehmacher, R. Parady
Alternates Present: M. Mazur, C. McCarthy
Also present: M. Gilroy, D. Tedford

Call to Order – Chairman Barney called the New Library Study Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of October 19, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes – Chairman Barney requested a change to the agenda to add an item to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 19th as this item was left off of the published agenda. There were no objections. There were no comments or changes to the published minutes. The minutes were accepted as presented.

Old Business –

A. Communication – Chairman Barney received a letter from D. Pechout indicating that she was going to be putting her property located on Rt. 149 which abuts the athletic field parcel which is part of the larger MOC property on the market. Chairman Barney responded to her that the committee would not be making a decision on a final site and that if she was considering putting her property on the market that she should do so as the town is likely not going to make a quick decision on the library issue.

   Chairman Barney received a second letter from Delores Tedford expressing concern over the proposal to locate a new library at Heritage Park. Mrs. Tedford was present at the meeting and Chairman Barney thanked her for writing. He reiterated that this committees charter was to investigate whether the existing libraries could be refurbished to be 21st Century Libraries or if a new single centrally located library should be constructed. It would be the up to a building committee to select the site should the town choose to move forward and that the site that they choose may or may not be one that this committee had recommended as we have no control over what a future committee may do.

   Chairman Barney received a third anonymous letter. Normally he would discard anonymous letters but chose to bring it up as it was no a hostile letter that discusses several issues that the committee has reviewed and considered. If it was in any way deemed to be hostile, then he would have contacted the authorities and not brought it up.

   First Selectwoman Haines passed along a layout concept for the basement of the MOC designed by Chris Wendel along with pictures of what the entrances may look like. Based on the committee's work using State of Connecticut's Library Space Planning Guide worksheet, the minimum library space should be greater than approx. 16,000sq feet and the MOC basement is only 9,325 sq feet. J. Bielot mentioned that this is smaller than the combined space of the existing two libraries (approx. 10,100sq ft). The space lacks natural lighting. There does not appear to be enough storage space for the book collection as it currently exists and therefore no room for growth. The space is very inflexible and flexibility is a highly desired trait. The building does not offer the ability to be expanded and why would the committee

recommend a space that is too small with no availability to be expanded. That's the issue we have today with the current libraries.

B. Results of Committee Community Survey – An additional 37 responses to the survey were received and added to the summary for a total to date of 236 responses. Discussion took place regarding several of the comments that residents wrote as part of the survey process.

C. Work on Final Report – The committee reviewed the current draft of the final report including a new/revised opening statement and made several changes which will be incorporated into the draft.

   Discussion occurred regarding the East Haddam News not publishing the news article that the committee submitted which was intended to be published the same week as the survey was distributed and the resulting news article that was published a couple of weeks later that contained a number or inaccuracies without verifying any of his facts with any member of the committee. J. Bielot asked whether the committee should write a letter to the editor to be published to correct the inaccuracies that were contained in the newsletter. Chairman Barney indicated that he would draft a letter and we would review it at the next meeting.

   Discussion occurred regarding the publishing and binding of the final report. Chairman Barney spoke with Linda Ziemienski and she indicated to him that it could be printed on their printer. Alternately, it could be done at Staples.

D. Other –

New Business –

A. Other –

Audience of Citizens – D. Tedford questioned the exact location of the building sites. Members explained to her that we are not a building committee, and the site chosen will depend upon the design of the building. The committee chose 3 town owned properties as our recommended sites as each could support a 1 or 2 story building; 1 story being much preferred due to it being the best option for accessibility, lower cost of construction, and lower staffing requirements. The committee believes that depending upon the building design, there are 2 potential locations at each property that we believe are possible building locations, whether that be at the Town Grange property, Heritage Park or the Municipal Office Complex.

The YouTube recording of the meeting is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7reyZvp2FO0.

Adjournment –

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Bielot, Secretary