

Library Facility Needs Assessment Committee, (LFNAC)
April 26, 2010, 7pm, Shutesbury Elementary School
Meeting Minutes
Community Forum

LFNAC Members Present: Karen Traub, Dale Houle, Weezie Houle, Lori Tuominen, Martha Field
LFNAC Members Absent: Michele Regan-Ladd
Guests: Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director; Mark Sullivan, D.A. Sullivan & Sons, Inc., Project Manager; Matthew Oudens and Conrad Ello, Oudens Ello Architecture; Becky Torres, Town Administrator
45 Townspeople attended

Meeting commenced 7:12 PM

Karen welcomed everyone and thanked many past and present supporters. Karen introduced Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director, who presented library circulation statistics. Karen gave an overview of the LFNAC process of the town receiving a library planning grant, visiting area libraries, writing a library building program, hiring an architectural firm (*Oudens Ello Architecture*), site selection and the preliminary building design. OEA presented an overview of the site selection process, the characteristics of Lot O32 and the preliminary, proposed library design. Mark Sullivan, of D.A. Sullivan and project manager, presented the procedure for developing the schematic design cost estimate (\$2.51M construction cost plus \$0.75M indirect cost to give \$3.27 M total project cost). The state grant could potentially support 60% of the *eligible* construction costs *which represent approximately \$2.9M (greater than 90%) of the total project cost*. Shutesbury's remaining cost obligation would be about \$1.37M. Weezie Houle, LFANC member, presented the impact on the town budget. For a \$300,000 house evaluation, the portion of the tax bill that would be for the library would be \$209 (*per year?*). A capital campaign would be undertaken to offset the town's cost obligation. To fund the town's obligation, the town would need a loan. The current debt on the Shutesbury Elementary School will be ending in fiscal year 2014 which is just about the time when the library debt would need to be incurred. Dale gave a summary, highlighting that having running water at the library would be an asset, and then opened discussion for questions. If the town is awarded a construction grant, the planning for the design would begin. (The state funding agency is the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)).

Questions and Answers:

Q: How would the operation costs be impacted by a new library? Cleaning? Staff?

A: The new library is designed to be staffed as it is currently staffed now which is with one person. We will also use volunteers to cover some of the hours. With a larger library we will have more room for more volunteers to work. Right now volunteers trip over each other.

Q: How will energy costs be impacted?

A: If we design a net-zero building, then energy costs will be minimal. Maintenance costs are expected to be about the same.

Q: \$600 per square foot? Do the other libraries come in at that?

A: \$350 to \$375 per square foot is in the ballpark *for similar projects*. In the case of this project, the site is large and unique and requires significant site development (grading, new septic, new well, storm water management, entry drive, parking, etc.) contributing to a higher cost per square foot for the full project. Given the early stage of the design, it is good practice to include in the cost estimate escalation two years in the future to account for changes in the market through the mid-point of construction, as well as factor in design and construction contingencies to account for unknown variables at this early stage. Further, the estimate includes the costs associated with sustainable systems aimed at a net-zero energy building. We want to be sure that the grant accounts for the full anticipated costs of the project.

Q: How many opportunities will we have to comment on the design?

A: The exterior design is still very preliminary. OEA spent most of their time resolving the complexities of the plan layout and arrangement in keeping with both the library program and the particular requirements of the grant application. The building plan, overall building massing, and site strategies are all sound but there will be ample opportunity for community input with respect to the design of the exterior in subsequent design phases. We maximized the possible use for photovoltaic arrays by way of two long south-facing roofs. The MBLC puts more weight on the planning part of the application than the exterior development, but we are required to submit a preliminary exterior design as part of the grant application.

Q: If there are exterior design changes, will the budget fit the design?

A: MBLC will grant a fixed dollar amount. The final design does not need to match the schematic design. Yes, changes to the design must be within the fixed amount of the grant.

Q: Are we obligating the town to pay more for the library if we change the design?

A: For a building this size, the \$3.27M is a good conservative estimate with appropriate safety factors for this stage of the design. The budget accommodates design and construction contingencies. There is room in this number to address changes.

Q: When we apply based on \$3.27M, is that the final grant number?

A: The MBLC has provided guidance to many towns for building libraries. MBLC makes sure that the proposal is in line with what would be expected and what a town needs.

Q: Has the property been perced?

A: Perc test is schedule for tomorrow (4/27/2010) at 8AM.

Q: What happens to the present library building?

A: That is up to our town and what the townspeople decide. There are many options. Suggestions to date have included use as a senior center or additional town meeting space.

Q: What are your concerns so that we could be prepared to answer questions at Town Meeting?

Q: What is the MBLC willing to give us? We haven't gotten details yet? So, are we really going for the high end in a cost figure so we don't cut ourselves short?

A: Yes, we want a realistic estimate that allows for contingencies, so it is on the high

side.

Comment: Remembering from the school building committee for SES, the town will need to work within the budget that is funded and the committee makes adjustments, but it does work. Over time you make adjustments and encourage people to dream. If we get a higher number and unforeseen issues arise, then we will adjust and the town will be somewhat covered. The figures look about \$20 to \$40 per month on our tax bills for the library.

Comment: As a library aid and story hour provider, the current library space is very limited for toddlers. It is very important for us to have a vision.

Comment: This is one of the big projects in the town for adults; it's not just for people with young children. Reflecting older people and more adults in the renderings would be good.

Q: Regarding the unstable economy, do we need more? Even though a library building loan for the town comes when the debt for the SES reduces, what are the maintenance costs for the SES going into the future as SES becomes an older building?

A: This summer many SES windows will be replaced at a low cost to the town and SES will be painted. Also, we will be doing some maintenance in other town buildings. In about 5 to 10 years SES will probably require a new roof.

Q: The LFNAC loan handout shows a worst-case scenario, with no money raised through donations. What can be done to increase donations?

A: The Friends of the Library plan to conduct a feasibility study regarding a capital campaign along with many people donating time for landscaping and repairing the stone wall, for example.

Comment: Regarding the cost, if we could invest \$1.37M and get \$3.3M, this would be considered a good investment. This is a good investment for the town with this state support. The state support may not be available again.

Comment: By the year 2020, the debt service to the town will be half what it is even with a new library.

Comment: With this facility, I would probably no longer go to Amherst and this would save in other ways. We would be in our town and save a lot on gas.

Q: As far as capital planning, has capital planning weighed in on this?

A: The Finance Committee has a vehicle replacement schedule and other schedules and LFNAC has been very mindful of capital planning issues. The vehicle replacement schedules are very liberal; our vehicles go much longer than in the plan, so we have been stretching our replacement schedule to be more economical and more realistic. Also, the town has already put away about \$10,000 towards a possible new library and the town will be putting away \$30,000 in a new stabilization fund.

Comment: Capital planning is now a line item in the town budget. The FY2011 budget amount is \$37,500 of which \$2,500 is designated for the library.

Comment: Also, the gas spill at the fire station needs to be cleaned-up and that will be

costly. The current town budget is trying to address this.

Q: With the padding in the design budget and based on contingencies, what % of the budget is contingency?

A: Probably about 10 to 12% is contingency.

Q: With LEED certification, the state will only give a certain percentage for LEED submission, so is LEED really worth it?

A: When we examined the numbers, the cost will be a few grand more and probably be a wash. The state would give approximately \$53,000 for LEED certification reimbursement. Grants for using PV technology are available. Having LEED certification could support grant applications to other funding agencies.

Comment: A request was made to look for a mechanism to post LFNAC minutes on the web. This will be investigated.

Meeting adjourned: 8:35PM

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Field