



Project: Belmont Public Library

Meeting Date: April 25th, 2023

Time: 7:30 PM

Meeting Location: Zoom

Meeting: Library Building Project
Community Update

Report By: Laura Jolly

Attending: * Building Committee Members

* Robert McLaughlin
* Clair Colburn
* Christina Marsh
* Marty Bitner
* Kathleen Keohane
* Sally Martin
* Peter Struzziero (Library Director)
Noel Murphy (Architect)

Laura Jolly /CHA

Item

1. **Introductions:**

Clair Colburn, Chair of the Library Building Committee opened the meeting.

2. **Schedule:**

We're halfway through design development and next is the construction document phase. There will be community updates and cost updates along the way. We are currently on track. There have been big changes to the energy code that we were not aware of during Schematic Design and there will be a financial impact from this but we do have a contingency. The demolition will start in the winter of 2024. Opening to be Fall of 2025. There will be temporary services for children and adults.

3. **Project Cost:**

Project cost is at \$39.5 million and has not changed and \$5 million has been raised in private funds. We are looking at additional sources of funding such as grants.

4. **Design:**

The Schematic Design was done in 2019. We had 3 community meetings at that time. The design has been developed further over the last four months refining the plans. Feedback has been provided over the last few years including the lessons learned from COVID. We will continue to meet with focus groups.

Feedback that was heard was on entrance at street level, making the brook part of site, taking advantage of views, focus on sustainability, trying to achieve net zero with all electric.

The common stair was refined and right sized for the space. Quiet study space was added. The outdoor reading porch was decreased in size. Storage space was increased. Siting of library incorporates all four sides of the building. Along Concord Ave is more civic, along the brook relates to landscape. Constraints on the site are the brook and parking, and this shifts the building to the northeast of the site. Parking is consolidated on the west side of the site. Parking gains one space from the current parking.

Entrance to the building is from Concord Ave or the parking lot. There will be a book drop there and a Veteran's memorial. The central space is the library commons. There are views in and out through this central area and it provides a lot of services. The info desk and circulation desk are here as well as soft seating. The common stair is also located here. It was an auditorium style seating and now it's primarily a stair with a smaller area for some seating. The children's wing is the first place you come to from the library commons. The teen space is on the upper floor. The children's wing emphasizes flexibility. On the back side of the building facing the brook are the main meeting spaces of the building with a large community room and a smaller meeting room. They create a wing of the building accessible after hours. The staff and support spaces are behind the circulation desk which includes work rooms for staff and returns for processing.

On the upper floor is the adult wing, a reference desk and at the far end facing the Underwood Lawn is the outdoor reading porch. There are study rooms for small groups to do work in a quiet environment. The history space is on the other side of the building which includes the Clafin Room and the Underwood History Room. Both are not just for storing

and collecting items but also as meeting rooms that can be reserved. The community classroom is flexible and can be a meeting room, a teaching space, or a computer class. There is a media study and we're working with Belmont Media. The Teens wing is over the entrance. There is another staff support space on the second floor. There is a mechanical penthouse for all of the mechanical equipment. The rest of the middle of the space is a double high space. The building is all electric. The solar panels provide about 40% of the operating needs of the building. The focus is on brick for materials. There is glass for views and daylight. The top volume is a manufactured panel material that looks like wood. Sustainability has been a focus of the building. There will be a high-performance building envelope from new energy code. There will be a welcoming environment, native species landscape, stormwater management strategy. At one point more than 50% of the enclosure was glass and now it's under 40% glass. The energy model with the engineers will also adjust this a little more. The landscape includes the Wellington Brook, and is situated well along the community path. The landscape is zoned with the civic plaza, green terrace, Woodland Garden, Wellington Brook. The Woodland Garden will be maintained. Spaces to the parking lot side of the building treat stormwater. Current site plan revisions include a shift in the library terrace which is close to the community room now and also access to the brook amphitheater

5. **Public Questions/Comments:**

Question: Is there a drive through book drop off?

Answer: Yes, there is a drop off area for people or books.

Question: Is there a reference desk on the first floor?

Answer: There is a circulation desk that could handle reference questions.

Question: Glass at 40% still seems like a lot for the climate. Community stair being smaller is a positive adjustment. There is a concern for the flat roof and the snow.

Answer: Flat roofs are common in New England despite the snow. Mechanical equipment requires special attention.

Question: There is a lot of concern about parking on Concord Ave and side streets and it was suggested as a temporary measure there would be filling of the Underwood lawn and vehicles could park there. The idea that the lawn would be used for any type of machinery is disappointing.

Answer: We have discussed this, but it wouldn't be filled in entirely, it would only be materials to prevent the area from being turned to mud. It could be used for material laydown space. It could also be used for parking. The project will take the concern under advisement.

Question: How much space is there for bookstacks compared to current library?

Answer: The design will match that with new library.

Question: Are the book collections and purchasing of books coordinated with the minuteman network?

Answer: There is reciprocal lending so the library can buy fewer copies if needed.

Question: What's the ceiling height?

Answer: On the ground floor it's 12' from floor to ceiling and on the upper floor it's 10'.

Question: Are there other staircases besides staff spaces and the library common stair?

Answer: There are two other stairs besides the common stair.

Question: Where are the elevators?

Answer: The elevator is at the corner of the Commons space.

Question: Where is the back of house trash?

Answer: It's located on the ground floor, with a door directly to the outside.

Question: Will there be any place to get a cup of coffee in the building?

Answer: There is a room allocated for vending machines.

Question: In the children's area will there be an area for stroller parking?

Answer: Yes, around the corner as you enter the space.

Question: Can you address the timing of the new building opening?

Answer: We will move out at the end of 2023 and move into temporary space to be finalized. The new building will open Fall of 2025.

Question: In the Community meeting room and study spaces will there be shades?

Answer: Yes, there will be shades for privacy and to control light. These will be motorized and will work in unison.

Question: Will the automated book check in machine be visible to customers to see the process?

Answer: It will be.

Question: Is the funding for the photovoltaic array still included in the project? Will they be obscured by the trees?

Answer: The photovoltaic array is in the budget. The tree canopy on the south side of the site does not appear to have any meaningful impact on the performance of the photovoltaic. Similar to the high school, the same sort of funding will be available to the library.

Question: Is there any thought of using the Chenery school when the grade reconfiguration has not taken place?

Answer: There will be a reliance on town owned buildings. We are looking at all town owned buildings.

Question: What is the projected R value of the exterior walls?

Answer: The R value is being worked on now with the energy model. It is very likely we will have triple glazing by definition help with sound and acoustics from the street.

Question: Regarding the landscape connection to the Underwood lawn - will the trees remain?

Answer: The fence and trees will be removed so that end of the building is opened up.

Question: My family and I are against the use of the Underwood lawn as it's used for the winter activities and games.

Question: When do you expect to break ground?

Answer: Winter of 2024.

Comment: There is a concern about using the temporary use of the Underwood Lawn.

Question: Is there a staff room or private room for the staff?

Answer: Yes.

Comment: All the glass is concerning and can't be energy efficient. We don't need so much glass. Clerestories will need to be washed regularly. You can't put artwork on the glass.

Question: Where is the Staff Breakroom located?

Answer: There's something for citizens as well as staff.

Question: Are the floors carpeted?

Answer: There will be some carpet.

Comment: Regarding the outdoor amphitheater - be cautious of planning anything on the side of the brook because it floods.

Comment: There was appreciation expressed for the glass also.

Comment: The Underwood Lawn is used for volleyball in the summer and is a wonderful extension of the pool area.

Answer: It will be restored to its current condition.

Next Steps:

We will reach out to the public as often as we can including the next town meeting, selectboard meetings, a presence at town day, and taking every opportunity to let people know how we're moving forward. The library website has materials available. We're making them more readily accessible. The team is always available for questions and comments. Building Committee meetings are also held monthly.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.