

Library Facility Needs Assessment Committee, (LFNAC)
May 1, 2010, 9AM, Shutesbury Elementary School
Town Meeting
Minutes for LFNAC portion of Town Meeting

LFNAC Members Present: Karen Traub, Dale Houle, Weezie Houle, Lori Tuominen, Martha Field, Michele Regan-Ladd

LFNAC Members Absent: None

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

Article 6: To see if the Town of Shutesbury will vote to approve the library building project by accepting the preliminary design for the new Shutesbury Library building and authorize the Board of Selectmen and/or the Library Trustees to apply for any state funds which might be available to defray all or part of the cost of the design, construction and equipping of the library project and to authorize the Library Building Committee and/or Board of Selectmen and/or Library Trustees to accept and expend any such funds when received without further appropriation.

Selectboard and Finance Committee Recommends.

Amendment

Delete "all or part of" in line 4, seconded, amendment passed

Presentation

Karen, chair of Library Trustees and LFNAC, welcomed everyone and thanked many past and present supporters. Shutesbury is a town that loves its library. Karen introduced Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director, who presented library circulation statistics and the needs for a larger library and the benefits a new library would provide. 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, identified key functional issues, wetland considerations of Lot O32, and the preliminary, proposed library design. The goal of the building to be net-zero for energy use was stressed.

Mark Sullivan, of D.A. Sullivan & Sons, Inc. 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 approximately 60% of the construction costs or approximately \$2.95M (greater than 90%) of eligible costs for state funding, plus Green Building incentive of about \$53,093. Shutesbury's remaining cost obligation would be about \$1.37M.

Weezie Houle, LFNAC member, presented the impact on the town budget. For a \$200,000 house evaluation, the portion of the tax bill that would be for the library would be \$148. 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. If the town is awarded a construction grant, the planning for the final design would begin. (The state funding agency is the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)).

Comment: The reason the debt service goes down is because the SES debt service drops, but it is not necessary that the town replace old debt service with new debt service. I would not assume that the tax rate would go down. I would state it strongly that taxes may not go down. Realistically, the non-school debt service would continue because there will be trucks for the town, fire trucks & police cars, etc. that may need to be purchased in the future. I think the figures presented are a little optimistic.

Comment: Also, we cannot assume the solidity of the state.

Return to presentation and hold questions to the end.

OEA presented a project timeline to highlight that *community* feedback would be solicited over the next couple years for building design, *assuming that* the MBLC construction grant is received. If town meeting votes for support, then the grant application would be submitted in the next 6 months by January 2011. We would know about funding being approved in July 2011 and then the library design process and town acceptance of the grant would be done by January 2012. After that period, the library construction process would begin probably in February 2013. The construction process would then go to bid with a hopeful spring 2014 opening of a new library.

Karen formally requested support for Article 6.
Town Moderator opened the floor to questions.

Q: A neutral question and working with the open space plan and looking with the census data, what is the assumption in the financial analysis about the town's population?

A: The library program was designed for a town population of 2,490 people in the future. An evaluation of how that would impact taxes was not done. The building program was designed for that population.

Q: I have a question about total debt service. I am for the library and for the town, and I am a realist. There will be future projects that will require debt service for the town. Also there may be costs for soil contamination at the fire station, but we don't know total cost. There would be costs of other items, such as a new fire vehicle, (\$375,000 to \$425,000). Again, there are other ongoing costs to the town. Do we need more than what we have now?

A: Yes, it would be good to have a library with running water and a flush toilet. We need to be realistic about costs. This vote is for the grant application.

Q: What happens if the grant is not approved or if the grant is approved at lower than 60%?

A: If we get the grant we will get 60%. If the town does not get the grant, we will start again.

Q: Will we get the hard numbers to vote on?

A: Yes. The state has a bond for library construction now. Shutesbury qualifies for

60%; that amount would not change.

Comment: The Finance Committee is very mindful of the unknowns in the budget along with being mindful of the library floor plan. A Finance Committee/Capital Planning Committee member is a member of LFNAC.

Comment: Declining debt service was not realistically presented.

Comment: The big picture is that we are talking about a \$1.3M investment and getting a \$3.4M return. That's important. We have an opportunity for an investment in which the town would be getting a huge return.

Comment: Please keep in mind that I am a huge supporter of the library. We are okaying a preliminary plan. We are not looking at town money and we can come back and decide not to go forward even if we do get the grant.

Q: My question has to do with the wording of the warrant article. The vote is to approve the library building project. What does the initial phrase mean to "approve the library building project"? Should the wording be changed?

A: The language in the article comes from the MBLC. The wording is to approve the preliminary design.

Comment: We must authorize the grant application and approve the design project. These BOTH must be approved. We are not approving the money. We are approving the project in that it is a project that the town wants to do. We do not want to on-the-hook for the project if the funding does not come through.

Comment: The MBLC does not want to approve a grant for a town that is not serious about such a project. Our vote would give that support.

Comment: The numbers presented were the worst-case scenario. As we all know the Friends of the Library are really good at fundraising. I have a lot of confidence that the town will not be funding the full amount. Please keep this in mind.

Q: The phrasing of the article, "accept and expend any funds being ..." What does this mean when it appears to be expenditure of funds?

A: Authorizing the spending of grant funds and that other funds raised be applied to the library.

Comment: The need for a library is obvious, even to people who are not patrons of the library. To the good forethought of this town, the town is in good financial shape to handle this spending and will allow us to pay for a library building. The time to do this is now from a financial perspective. With low interest rates, now is the time to do this. The state being solvent is a reasonable concern. We need to take advantage of the library bond at the state level. The state may not have any support in the next 5 years. I do have questions about the maintenance of a new building; these costs will increase. This town is a green town and we want to be a green town. We want to have services in this town so we don't need to go to other towns. In 108 years from now, people will want a library in the town. Thank you to LFNAC for all the hard work they have done. I am in support.

Q: I'm impressed with the work of the designers; thank you. I know this is not the forum to design the library building. I would like to see some more traditional New England design elements in the outside of the building. As we proceed, what will be the public input to a design? I wouldn't want to end up with this outside design.

A: There will be a lot of time for community involvement for the design. The snapshot seen today looks a lot more developed than it really is.

Comment: This is about improving the quality of life for the town.

Comment: We are being asked to vote to apply for a grant. What I understand in the culture of libraries and communities and we are people who are passionate about taking advantage of opportunities. What would not make us go forward with this opportunity?

Q: I realize that we are not voting for a finished design. I am concerned about snow on a flat roof in the middle. I would think this would be a place for rotting and deteriorating of roof construction.

A: OEA responded to clarify that the area that links the two gabled roofs is not flat; it is pitched and sloped appropriately to shed snow. We even want to collect snow and rain water that could be reused in some way. We are confident that this structure can be designed well.

Q: From an informed basis, the passion behind this project is huge. The participation to raise money is huge and the climate is right. We must be realistic that western Massachusetts is not growing in population. I don't think the projections in the master plan will come about unless we have public transportation in Shutesbury. A big segment of the community is behind this, but let's be honest about the number side. I am confused about the line "without further appropriation". If we get the money for the grant, and this article go through, we are approving the sum without further discussion. Should we engage in changing the wording?

A: Town Counsel: Does not recommend amending this article. If we don't use the wording recommended by the funder (MBLC) in the application, we can be thrown out of the grant queue. We cannot spend a dime of town money without another warrant article. If we get the grant, we can spend the grant money only. It does not authorize the extra money of \$1.3M to be spent by the town.

Q: I am concerned about the site. LotO32 is really wet. Do all the townspeople know how wet that lot is? I think it may sit on an aquifer. Previous homeowners on that property have had drainage problems. There must be attention given to drainage and possible mold; a lot of site development may be needed.

A: A perc test determined that a 4 foot, raised septic system would be needed. These issues have been considered by town committees. The town has limited resources regarding land and this is the largest town lot with good frontage.

Comment: The town Conservation Commission required a 100 ft buffer for this project and the commission will work with any building on this lot. This is an important lesson in how we can utilize such land in a positive, environmental manner. Let's seize this opportunity.

Comment: I am against this library and this proposal. This design is impractical because they are mistaken about there being a need. The current SES is now overcapacity. The projections are just as likely to be wrong. The town population is

decreasing at the moment. Just to hurry because the state has the money now is not practical. I think the current school could be utilized in much better ways. A library could be placed here at SES. Why do we need to build a new building? Why can't we renovate our current Town Hall? We own it. Why can't we use SES? The pitch that a new building will be green is not appropriate.

Moderator declares a paper ballot because of the high interest in this vote.

Motion passed: 163 yes, 20 no

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Field