

Library Facility Needs Assessment Committee (LFNAC)
Library Site Community Discussion

December 2, 2009, Discussion Meeting Notes

Ice cream and homemade sauces were delicious!

1. Meeting convened at 7:06pm, 54 people attending
Copies of a draft of the 125th Annual Report of the Trustees of MN Spear Memorial Library FY2009 were available.
2. Welcome by Mary Anne – Mary Anne gave an overview of LFNAC's progress to date and introduced Mark Sullivan of D.A. Sullivan & Sons, Inc., and Matthew Oudens and Conrad Ello of Oudens & Ello Architecture. People attending introduced themselves.
3. Presentation by Oudens Ello Architects -
Process for assessing each site was explained, including the assessment by the Civil Engineer and Landscape Architect. Two sites were discussed: behind Town Hall and Lot O32. Both sites have wetlands issues. Both sites are town-owned and a library is a suitable program for those sites.

Site Option 1 – behind Town Hall (10 acres, 160 feet frontage): narrow site, existing septic to consider, visibility from the road is limited; rear of site drops off about one floor level; will want to maintain a green space for the farmer's market to continue; many wood paths in back. A library on this site would be located along the axis with the Town Hall and the church and the steeples.

For behind Town Hall to be doable, some investment in the back of the Town Hall building is needed because the back façade would become more prominent with increased use. Investment will be needed in a new town green along with some peripheral projects around the sides of the current Town Hall. The town would need to make these investments for a library to be successful on this site.

About 40 parking stalls are needed to meet MBLC grant requirements and to meet the needs of town activities in Town Hall and on the property. A green would be developed in back of Town Hall between the back of Town Hall and a proposed new library

Q: What is the source for parking specifications?

A: Requirements are from MBLC.

Q: Is there consideration to place an addition on to the current Town Hall?

A: Current Town Hall is very old and would need a lot of refurbishment. There would be issues of continuity between the buildings.

Q/Statement: Pedestrian traffic would be difficult between the current Town Center Green and across the street and down to the back of Town Hall.

Site Option 2 - Lot O32 (22 acres, 400 foot frontage), an equidistant location between SES and Town Center; site is flat and a large which can be maintained for possible development for the town with a potential access road. The library would be placed on the front 3 acres to maintain the rear part of the acreage for possible future town development. Linking Lot O32 back to the Town Center was discussed with the Landscape Architect during a site visit; an episodic theme along the road such as trees or stone walls at specific moments along the road such as in front of Lot O32, in front of the fire station, in front of Town Hall could accomplish this link. The objective would be to create a common theme to link all together.

Site has a great abundance of native plant species which gives a natural richness to Lot O32. Two wetlands are a consideration; buildable area will be limited by the wetlands; discussed property boundary and wetland buffers. An east-west building orientation is a good starting point.

Possible parking and vehicular access alternatives were presented and discussed.

The importance of a new library to have a physical connection to the outdoor environment was discussed. The plan is to maintain the green space in the front of the lot. A summary of pros and cons of each site was presented.

4. Karen gave a summary of view of LFNAC and stated that LFNAC's preference is Lot O32

5. Questions & Answers

Q/Statement: Include bicycle path from the Town Hall to Lot O32 and have adequate bike racks.

Q: What is the moonscape?

A: The moonscape is a part of Lot O32 where the topsoil had been scraped off over a period of years. The Moonscape could be a con because it would need to be refurbished. Others thought that the Moonscape could be a pro because it offers a difference. The location of the Moonscape is well back from where the library would be built. For future presentations, perhaps use a different label than "Moonscape."

Q: Is it true that in order to get the funding, the library needs to be visible from the road?

A: Certain criteria are used by the MBLC to judge a grant and high on their list is that a new public library be accessible and visible. If it is not, then there is more burden on other grant categories to make the grant successful.

Q/Statement: Lot O32 has a stone wall in front; keep the stone wall and have as a feature. Do not destroy the stone wall.

Q/Statement: It is an historical site because an old hotel was on the site, so some historical issues may be there.

Q: What will happen to the garage?

A: It will be torn down; there are broken windows and cracks in the cement walls of the building.

Q: Has there been any work on the actual design of the building?

A: Not yet. There have been visits to some area libraries to start to get ideas.

Q: If the town center site is selected, will there be a building that fits the architecture of the current town building?

A: The new library needs to convey the spirit of Shutesbury; we will use stone and wood in ways that fit its place or like old barn structures. The spirit of the building will fit Shutesbury.

Q: Will there be control of light pollution?

A: Yes. We will try to make the most green and sustainable building we can; those will be a factor to achieve zero net energy.

Q: There is art work incorporated into the building in Leverett. Can we incorporate the work of local artists?

A: Art is very important. Also, there is a history room in the library and we will try to honor that place. This will be as much a community center as a library.

Q: In the context that Lot O32 is a valuable resource for the town, is there a competing project for the town? What happens in 10 years or 20 years? There is long term planning happening. Do we feel confident that other needs of the town can be met over the long term? Who makes that decision? What is that status of a new safety complex?

Second question immediately followed the question above.

Q/Statement: If we use Lot O32 then it is gone and that seems like a con.

A: (Dale Houle serves on the Town Building Committee and responded to this question.)

One goal is to get as much as possible from current town buildings as we can. There will hopefully be some improvement in curb appeal of the DPW site. The current town building committee sees the Town Hall as okay for now and the fire station will meet our needs for a while.

Q: How many more acres are on Lot O32?

A: 22 acres is the total acreage.

Q/Statement: We don't need to have public safety in visibility from the road but it does need to be accessible and this could happen with Lot O32. Such a place would be appropriate off the road.

Q/Statement: There would not be as much public traffic to a safety complex and it may be more reasonable to have safety people to fight off coyotes at the back of this site. Safety, in terms of coyotes and other wild animals, of a library at night in back of Town Hall is an issue. Mary Anne could only throw a book at them!

Q/Statement: We need to be responsible to all town needs.

Q/Statement: Thank you for the presentation and it's very informative and it's very important to seek input from the community. Thank you. About the parking lot areas thinking that the library will serve not only as a library but also as a community meeting place. Is there enough parking coming from MBLC if we are looking at the library as a community center?

A: Lot O32 could have supplemental non-paved parking for overflow for occasional events. There are 14 parking slots plus handicap needed as a minimum.

Q: There are cons listed that should be reminders. We need to improve access to Town Hall. Suggesting a development of a long run master plan strategy, there is a struggle for safety along the road and pedestrian access along a stretch of Leverett Road.

A: The scope of a pedestrian walkway is beyond the scope of this project.

Q: For Lot O32 is there enough flexibility to shift parking so that it is not as much of an impact on the Dohlman property?

A: A substantial buffer would be needed including plantings, a fence and some remediation along that boundary. We are trying to push the parking as far away from that property boundary as possible and to push the parking back from the street so there would be an increasingly wide buffer. There is some flexibility but we don't want to be too aggressive about moving driveway in the other direction.

Q: Please show where additional parking would go?

A: The proposed parking could be longer to put in more spaces. We would put more parking at the end of the drive and it would be unpaved with a woodchip drive. This is a big site and there is a lot of room for expansion.

Q: What are the advantages of proximity from SES, is there a way for kids to get from school to the library? Is there a trail?

A: They could take a bus. There are some east/west trails that may be able to work as pedestrian options in the future. They are on private property.

Q: About visibility, has there been any talk about having the farmers market in front of a new library? How much of the green space in the front is usable? Could the rectangle for Outdoor Program area be in the front so the farmer's market could be used there?

A: There could be some room and if that was a priority, then it could be looked at more seriously. Temporal use is negligible; concerns of a conservation commission are about a

paved area. Also, there may be other activities besides the farmer's market. It is an opportunity for the town. There could be an outdoor performance or outdoor programming for children.

Q/Statement: The crest of the hill at Town Hall is dangerous. Lot O32 does not have that crest and is more visible for safety for entering or exiting the driveway. Site distances for Lot O32 are much better than in front of Town hall.

Q: Pedestrian path along the road, how would that be?

A: Along the front it could work; there must be a variety of different ways to access it because it is a community building.

Q/Statement: Please have ice cream!! Thank you for coming tonight. We are working hard on this and we can only do this with community support. Please look at the Library Building Program because it details our commitment to community spirit, the sustainability aspects and the front porch.

Questions continue.

Q: Please identify the upcoming benchmarks. What needs to get done when and when will there be additional town input?

A: Before we start designing, we need to have a site selected. Then we start very basic building planning designs. There will be another opportunity for input when we have several building plan options. We are targeting for late January or February for more input from the community about the building design.

Q: What is the cost?

A: About 2 million for the grant with 60% of the building paid for by the MBLC grant. We will try to earn LEED certification (Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design) and there may be some other grants to support more costs.

Q: What does the committee need to know to move forward?

A: (Response from Karen Traub, LFNAC chairperson) LFNAC will go to the Library Trustees to get approval to have work done for Lot O32 and the town will vote at the May 1 site to support application to MBLC.

A straw vote was taken to have an indication of support for Lot O32. There were no votes for moving forward with the Town Hall site. Many hands went up in support of Lot O32.

Q/Statement: All LEED certified is commendable but the library must be designed to maintain minimal operating costs. This issue will be very important at Town Meeting. Building the library is one thing and operating it is another. It must be in everyone's thinking and must be a consideration to keep down operating costs.

A: LFNAC deliberated this specific point and we must keep reminding ourselves at every turn about keeping costs down and the point is included on our checklist and will continue to be included on our checklist. With visits to other libraries, we are talking about

operating costs; Leverett library is the most energy efficient one around. Super insulation, low staffing, energy efficiency are important, but selecting a site is step one.

Q/Statement: Anything that is worked up is a “you can pay me now or later” and no numbers should be worked up without looking for the long term. The more money spent up front, the more money that will be saved later on.

Karen: Thank you for coming!

Discussion ended at 8:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Field