

**Library Facility Needs Assessment Committee  
(LFNAC)  
Jan. 14, 2008  
7:00 PM  
Shutesbury Town Hall  
Minutes**

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

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** Clif Read, Michael Broad, Jane Urban, Judith Selig, George Avantis,  
Mary Anne Antonellis

Meeting called to order at 7:13PM

1. Minutes – approved Dec 10, 2007 minutes
2. Introductions
  - Karen Traub – LFNAC member
  - Clif Read – Spear Library Trustee
  - Michael Broad – previous Library Facility Committee member
  - Dale Houle – LFNAC member, Town Buildings Committee
  - Weezie Houle – LFNAC member, Friends of Spear Library Secretary
  - Michelle – LFNAC member, Spear Library Trustee
  - Lori Tuominen – LFNCA member, Town Finance Committee member
  - Jane Urban – Spear Library Trustee, Spear Library employee
  - George Avantis– previous Library Facility Committee member
  - Judith Selig – previous Director of Spear Library
3. Welcome Mary Anne Antonellis – our new Spear Library Director!
4. Thank you and discussion with previous committee members

Karen thanked everyone for attending and for the effort and work of the previous Library Facility Committee. The group discussed the events and timeline of the previous committee and issues that lead to the previous proposal being withdrawn at Town Meeting.

- A. Town voter support of previous committee:  
Previous committee had tremendous support from town voters for the original grant. However, previous committee members felt it did not do enough to keep the positive voter support through the final approval process.

The process was long so that membership on all town committees changed and attitudes of those committees changed. Support for LFNAC now may not continue; LFNAC must keep the doors open

throughout the process and keep voters continually educated and informed about the process and project.

Surveys of the previous committee indicated a tremendous amount of support for the library project. The former committee didn't capitalize enough on the support even though the committee held forums and gave updates in the Roadtown News. It was not enough. There needed to be more active participation and involvement. Many people initially supportive of the project, but the town fractured over the project as time went on and the proposed design was discussed. There was enough dissention among townspeople, so there was a question as to whether the project should move forward without the full support of the town. It was decided not to move forward.

At some point, 100% consensus may not be reached and LFNAC will need to go to the next step. There will always be some people who are against a new library building in town.

B. Other Town Committees:

- Get the Selectboard to support you. For the previous round they were trying to be neutral, but seemed to be not in support.
- Finance Committee: The support of the finance committee in the previous effort was not present.
- LFNAC must keep positive relations with the other town committees, especially the town Building Committee.
- Identify people on the town committees who are hesitant and organize a trip to other town libraries to see the deficiencies of the Spear Library, show them Wendell, Pelham, or Leverett.
- LFNAC should meet formally with the Selectboard and the Finance Committee.

C. Library Design:

- Difficult to determine where to put the library – many ideas
- All the feedback for the previous committee supported an expansion of the current Spear Library, so that is why the addition on the current Spear library was proposed. The previous town vote was for a proposal to add on to the existing library; a design was ready, but opposition was intense to spend money on this project (under \$1 million)
- LFNAC should not recommend any changes to the current library.
- Wait to think about the specific design elements.

D. Location:

- For the previous committee site proposals was a challenge there was not one dominant, positive site: where library is now or behind town hall

- Currently, dealing with the current library location will not be an issue because an expansion cannot be accommodated at the current location on the Town Common.
- Some people in town did not want to change the Town Common from 100 years ago and some people did not want to spend the money for a library expansion. In May 2001 there was a lot of support for these concerns and opposition to the library expansion proposal. The town needed 50% to approve design and place. Then in another vote the town would need two-thirds vote to support financing and using town funds.
- A key element will be support for an ideal location.
- One key difference now is that the Taylor property is now owned by the town. Some on the previous library facility committee believe that the Taylor property is ideal; the previous committee talked about that property but it was not for sale then. The Taylor property could bring more population from the Montague Road area. The roads down the hill would be closer to a library and participate and be supportive. Many people on the roads down the hill turn right to go down the hill and rarely turn left to come up the hill, except to maybe pay their taxes.
- The church on the Town Common is not suitable; the building requires a high cost for repair and would need an expansion for a library. The second floor would not work well.
- Town Hall has building problems, too, so an addition may not be feasible for the long run. A new library could be a stand-alone building behind the town hall; the library would not have to be an addition to the Town Hall.
- The state Board of Library Commissioners must have 3 location options in the grant application.

E. How different are things now?

- One difference now to address is the financial difference. LFNAC should try to get a certain amount of money put away every year by the town to show commitment to the library project. This will help the project move forward. Talk to the capital planning committee and have a token amount every year. This amount would change to a loan when building starts and would be converted to debt service. Last year (2007) the finance committee approved \$2000; this is smaller than what the Library Trustees had hoped for. The finance committee feels this does show good faith.
- There are still some people in town who will attempt to block changes to the Town Common.
- The Friends of the Spear Library are more active now than they were when the previous proposal was being considered.

- Low interest loans are now available from the USDA Community Facilities Loan and Grant program ([www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)). The rates are about 2% below bank rates. Apply after plan approved by the Library Commissioners.

F. Input from towns people:

- LFNAC needs to seek and look at the negatives; use a magnifying glass. It is difficult to get honest input, until the building becomes very real and serious. People get serious when they see it at the town meeting. LFNAC needs to know what the objections are early in the process.
- Previous committee was surprised by the number of people who did not know about the topic regardless of the amount of publicity. Keep information flowing.
- There will be some questions from people about why Shutesbury needs a larger library; the Amherst library is nearby.
- Interactions of the previous committee with townspeople were successful, but information from people who disagreed were not gathered and not vocalized. Many of the people who came to the previous forums (20 to 30 people attended each meeting) voiced a variety of opinions. The committee held evening meetings and different members of the committee spoke. All meetings were held at the town hall. LFNAC should have forums at different town locations. LFNAC needs to go to the people and have a formal hearing. Tell people that the reason to have forums at different places is to connect with everyone.

G. Fund raising/Financing

- The previous committee did not start any fund raising. LFNAC should talk with other towns about how they financed and about fund raising activities that worked well.
- People need to know that the town can give a small investment with a lot of leverage for more money for the town for a library. A very long loan for a hundred year old building will be very beneficial.
- Talk with area businesses about possible corporate support.
- Get an early idea as to what will be the impact on the tax rate. Give people a few scenarios about financing.

5. Sharing – reaching everyone in town – Karen shared Henry and Dante’s view of the new library. Karen wants the library to be for everyone and for everyone in town to be a part of the library.

6. Forums:  
Discussed conducting forums this spring for town input.  
Advertise in Roadtown News.

Serve food and beverages.

Need to have formal and informal gatherings; decided to start with a formal meeting.

Karen spoke with Mary of the WMRLS. Mary thought our ideas were ambitious. Mary thought people from town to facilitate would be better than herself from the WMRLS.

Discussed possible people who may be willing to facilitate a forum.

Mary Anne will visit the senior luncheon and introduce herself and ask about their thoughts about the library

Karen will contact a person from Sirius to find out how best to seek their input

Town Hall – All Boards meeting (find out the next date), LFNAC needs to report on progress; announce when forums will be held at the Town Hall,

Forum locations:

Town Hall

Shutesbury Elementary School (SES)

Lake Wyola Association

Shutesbury Athletic Club

Forum Dates:

Saturday, March 1, 2008, 10AM. Dale will book room in Town Hall.

Wednesday, April 9, 2008, 7PM. Dale will book room in Town Hall.

Tuesday, May 13, 2008, 7PM, Mary Anne will book SES

7. Town Meeting: have information material available for people to view
8. Set spring meeting schedule – postponed to next meeting.

**Next meeting: Tuesday, February 12, 2008; 7 PM, Shutesbury Town Hall**

Adjourned: 9:20PM

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Martha Field