

Ames Public Library

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2007

The Ames Public Library Board of Trustees met in special session on Thursday, April 12, 2007, in the Library boardroom with Trustees Jennie LeGates, Dudley Lockett, Sherry Meier, Dale Ross, Deb Sondall Saetveit, and Melody Warnick in attendance. Bob Anderson, Kevin Mungons and Deb Krauth were absent. Also in attendance were Friends members: Wayne Beal, Michale Hansen, Lisa Hill, Joan Van Norman; and Foundation members: Chuck Jons, Roger Kluesner, Jim Mason. Staff members present: Lynne Carey, Art Weeks, and Dawn Hayslett.

Call to Order: Vice President Ross called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

New Business:

Work Session with Building Consultant Anders Dahlgren: Weeks introduced Dahlgren to Trustees, Friends, Foundation, and staff members. Dahlgren gave an overview of his visit: the "getting to know you" tour, touring the Library, meeting with staff, key-informant interviews, and the windshield tour of Ames. Dahlgren asked the attendees what they envisioned the end product to be. Ross stated he would envision two products: a description of services and collections and what space was needed for the following areas: seats, computers, size of collection, and meeting spaces; and achieving these space needs: a building program statement and if needs could be met on the present site and what were the possibilities. Jons asked Dahlgren about his experience in communities near metropolitan areas. Anders stated he had experience with several Chicago area libraries and a library in the Jackson, Mississippi, metro area. LeGates asked what he would recommend if the community was fiercely loyal to the current location. Dahlgren replied that he was open to all possibilities.

Dahlgren asked how they would characterize Ames today. The following responses were provided:

- Conflicted, people who work in Ames and live elsewhere
- Potential for growth – where will they live?
- Transient – population turnover
- Still a small town
- Town and gown
- Commuters who live here and work elsewhere
- Diversity
- Smart Growth – in growth rather than spreading out
- Lack of affordable housing
- Difficulty getting people engaged in the community
- Self-satisfaction in the population
- ISU – driving force, secure employment
- Insulation from real world, from economic pressures
- Affluent housing market

He asked how the community would be changing in five to ten years. Discussion followed:

- Fewer children
- Fewer international students and families
- Success of biofuel industry will impact growth
- Growth has been northwest in Gilbert, not in the Ames school district
- People are talking about the changes

Dahlgren asked those present to tell him about the public decision-making process in Ames and how projects move forward. Discussion followed:

- Through the City Council
- Stakeholders with more clout than others
- Some go through the ballot box
- Stalemates and then nothing gets done
- Ames can be very polarized, characterizations about issues, causes frustration and gridlock defeats a common vision

He asked about other factors or changes in Ames.

- Medical services have grown, brings in people from surrounding counties, affects people retiring here because of medical services and specialists, recruiting is easy once physicians see Ames
- Successes like the middle school because people saw the need

Dahlgren asked what areas the Library did well. The responses follow:

- Accessible, hours
- Friendly staff
- Centrally located
- Innovative, dynamic, willing to try new things
- Spirit of innovation
- Literacy
- Customer-focused, hold system, BookLetters
- Staff are good communicators
- Lots of community activities and new books
- Outreach services, bookmobile, Project Smyles, home delivery
- Children's services, range of programs
- Teen space

In addition, Dahlgren wanted to know what features of the building worked well:

- Space is used well, with what we have
- Welcoming Library, can find a place to do what you want to do
- Collection is quite adequate
- Interlibrary loan
- People ready to help you
- Façade of the building is nice
- Like the children's section, good use of space, play area and large collection, make a good impression

He asked what areas the Library could improve or new things to add:

- Capacity to download, devices to borrow
- More self-check stations
- Improved security, increase sight lines and building security, external and internal
- Efficiency (use technology to check in) and save staff
- Parking in front to pick up is annoying, should have drive-through pick up
- Workspace for staff could be improved
- Not as senior friendly as we need to be (shelving, seating areas, lighting)
- More information literacy to help citizens determine information they need and evaluate information

Dahlgren asked what new features they would like to see:

- Free parking, ample parking
- More comfortable seating spaces

- Activity room for children's crafts
- Bookstore in Library
- More public access computers
- Places to plug in WiFi
- Space for teens, keep them interested in Library
- Meeting space, small group room, student group study projects

He asked what the top priorities were for future expansion.

- Improved services to patrons
- Getting accurate demographics before we move forward
- Not confining ourselves as we consider possibilities

Weeks said to see this as expanding the Library but looking at how the Library fits into Ames' growth. Dahlgren said the focus would be on improving service on service outcomes. Discussion followed on how the library best serves the community; how the service area is broader than Ames; better space utilization; an add-on to the Library and how it matches the existing building; and an elevator that people could find. Dahlgren suggested one consideration might be to remove the older section of the building to avoid so many levels, as not much is left of the original Carnegie building (inside or out).

Ross thanked Dahlgren and those who attended. Dahlgren thanked the group for their input.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.