

**Special Joint Meeting of the Ames Public Library Board of Trustees
and the Ames Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2009**

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met in special session on Thursday, June 18, 2009, in the Library's Community Room with Trustees Bradley, Budd, Campbell, Luckett, Meier, Schill, Seagrave, and Stow in attendance. Warnick was excused. Commission members in attendance were: Gloria Betcher, Elaine Dunn, Dillon Kraft, Brittney Rutherford, and Sharon Wirth. City staff members present included Carey, Thompson, and Weeks from the Library and Ray Anderson from the Department of Planning and Housing. Library Architect Jeffrey Scherer was also present.

Call to Order: President Seagrave called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion of the Historic Preservation Commission's Role in the Library Expansion

Process: Library Board President Seagrave greeted the Historic Preservation Commission and stated that he welcomed the opportunity to have a conversation, answer any of the Commissioner's concerns, and develop a closer relationship. He commented on some of the constraints the Library Board was facing as it carried out the expansion project— political (getting people to vote), economic (determining how much Ames tax payers can afford), environmental (building a facility that is user friendly and environmentally friendly), and technological (trying to plan for future needs and wants). Speaking for the Trustees, Seagrave stated that they had not made up their minds on any given course; they did, however, have a September goal for making a decision on a site.

Commission Chair Gloria Betcher stated that the Commission wanted to work with the Library Board throughout the process. She noted that Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code* specifically talks about "historic districts," but said that the greater purview of the Commission was related to helping the City Council understand what is going on in Ames with regard to historic resources, educating the public, and working with other units of city government who are trying to do things that are historically sensitive. She explained that the Commission was in the process of revising antiquated text that has not yet caught up with the reality of the Commission's mission. She also said that the HPC had asked the State Historical Society to determine whether or not the existing library building was eligible for nomination to the historical registry. Once that determination is known, the HPC will be in a better position to make a recommendation to the City Council about a library proposal.

Discussion followed about the Library Board's immediate goal of finding the optimal downtown site on which to expand the facility and the Historic Preservation Commission's goal of working with the Board to ensure appropriate preservation of historic resources and library expansion that is compatible with the surroundings. Jeff Scherer, library architect, advised the Commission that the library would comply with all city regulations, but said he was confused about the overall HPC process. He said the focus of the public meetings thus far has been to present ideas about how each site might be developed. The design phase will begin only after the site is chosen. Yet, everything he had read in Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code* indicated that the design is what would trigger HPC procedures or approvals. Since the community is still in the site selection process, there is no design for the Commission to look at.

Members of the HPC indicated that they felt a larger planning process was called for, as both proposed library locations are adjacent to historic districts or historic buildings, and expansion in either location would have an impact on downtown. They also mentioned that the library is located in what might be designated an historic civic corridor along Sixth Street between Grand and Duff Avenues. Commission member Sharon Wirth explained that a committee was in the process of preparing a comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for the city that would be comparable to the Land Use Policy Plan, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, or other guiding documents used by the City Council. It might be ready by October and will help people understand how historic preservation fits into the planning of a community.

Scherer stated that he did not understand how such a planning process would work at this point, when there isn't yet a design to be evaluated. Nothing he found in Chapter 31 spelled out guidelines or design criteria that would apply. He said the envelopes of both buildings he has talked about so far comply with the zoning and building codes, and he did not see how the HPC could hold a hearing on a concept.

Betcher stated that the concepts that have been presented so far were enough for the Commission to work with. She said that talk about a four-story ramp adjacent to an historic district or a four-story building across from City Hall, which is a contributing building in a potential historic district, was enough to raise red flags and spark the Commission's concern.

Scherer asked if there was anything in writing that stated, for example, that a parking ramp could not exceed two levels in the historic district. It was determined that there was not, but Commission members said there still remained the issue of compatibility. City Planner Ray Anderson stated that public buildings are on property zoned "Government-Airport" so there are no specific zoning regulations. He explained that the Planning Department's practice has been to look at nearby improvements and regulations that apply to properties in the general vicinity with respect to setback, building height, landscaping, and so forth, to determine if a proposal would be compatible.

The fact that those guidelines are not in place now, Scherer said, left him feeling as if he was "on quicksand with...nothing to hold on to." He stated that in Washington, D.C., for example, he knows that the bead has to be 72.5 feet above the level of the street; in Philadelphia there are envelope restrictions based on distances. When the City of Telluride decided to build a modern building in an historical area, the project was possible because there were specific guidelines in place pertaining to the placement of the building, its exterior, door locations, the percentage of area that had to be open plaza, etc. He said that in Ames he feels it will simply be a matter of the opinion of those who sit on the Commission. He added that it would be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming to take both options all the way through the design phase just to choose a site.

Betcher agreed that it was simpler when there were written guidelines. Wirth stated that it might be better after the Main Street Iowa "visioning" took place the following week, as it might lead to the designation of an historic district downtown or to a local designation that would include guidelines. Scherer said he felt as if he were being criticized for failing to conform to something that wasn't even in place yet. He asked if the library should stop the expansion planning now and wait until there were objective criteria in place. Betcher said the intent was not to criticize, and she did not believe it was necessary to stop the process; what is important is that the HPC has the responsibility of making a recommendation to the City Council, and it would be best for the Commission to be involved in the process as it moved along.

In order for the Library Board to continue to move forward, it was agreed that the Board of Trustees would keep the HPC informed of progress toward a final design by providing the Commission members with Library Board agendas and packet items for meetings at which the expansion project would be discussed and allowing an HPC representative to participate on the citizen's advisory committee. There was discussion about how the two groups would work together and keep each other advised of their progress.

Scherer said that he would make the presentation he had given over the last few days available to the library so that it could be posted on the Web or sent out to the HPC via e-mail. That way, the Commission could take the information, discuss it, and define their concerns. Scherer suggested they send him a memo or contact him by phone, if necessary, so that he could refine the concepts in accordance with the commission's concerns prior to the next public presentation. It was noted that the HPC meeting will be held July 13; the public forum will take place on July 21. Betcher noted that Anderson would be able to say clearly what, if any, objective criteria were non-conforming; the subjective material would come out of the HPC minutes.

Scherer also requested that if the Commission reported on concerns, it also report on what it was not concerned about – that is, if it is not concerned that the existing building continue to be used as a library, that matter be made clear to the public. Betcher said any report the HPC made would give both pros and cons.

Wirth said she felt that it would be reasonable for the library to include the HPC's concerns when putting out its compilation of input, as a way to help inform the public of what is going on. Scherer suggested that someone from the Commission present its comments to the public on July 21st so the information could be folded into a final report and submitted to the Board in September. Betcher said she would also send the information to Seagrave in care of the library.

Adjournment: The special joint meeting was adjourned by consent at 7:24 p.m.

Regular Meeting of the Ames Public Library Board of Trustees

Call to Order: President Seagrave called the regular meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: Seagrave proposed that the item concerning the Change Order for Phase One of the Library Expansion Project be addressed immediately after Scherer's presentation. There were no objections and the agenda was approved by consent.

Approval of Minutes: Seagrave asked for any changes or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. Without objection, the minutes of the meeting of May 21, 2009, were approved by consent.

Public Forum: No one spoke.

Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle, LTD: Jeffrey Scherer, library architect with Meyer Scherer and Rockcastle, LTD, said that during the previous evening's meeting a gentleman asked if there would be any matrix for site selection, so he had pulled together an example, based on criteria that were used in Norman, OK. The five major goals were: to assure safety to patrons, staff, the collection and equipment; to improve public access; to improve the potential for optimum sustainability; to accommodate growing library collections, services, training and writing space;

and to enhance the library experience for users. Scherer said a sixth set of criteria related to the historic preservation would be added for Ames. In the meantime, he felt the Norman model would give a sense of the considerations that are made with respect to sites.

Scherer gave an executive summary of the material covered in the June public meetings for the benefit of the board members who were unable to attend. Option A was a concept design for the existing location, while Option B was for a site opposite City Hall. Option A included the construction of a single deck over the parking lot north of the existing library, while Option B, a three-story building, included a four-level parking garage imbedded on the north side. The result was that the two sites ended up with approximately the same number of parking spaces.

After the May meetings, Scherer made several changes to Option A which included:

- adding a drive-through off of Fifth Street for the bookmobile;
- widening and reversing the direction of the alley west of the existing building;
- leaving Douglas Avenue open to through traffic, but slowing it down by installation of a speed ramp;
- adding a covered drop-off area at the front door which could feature an outdoor terrace on its roof; and
- adding more handicap parking as close to the front door as possible.

Scherer said that during the week, citizens also asked that post office boxes be included near the book drop and, in the future, he will probably also show an option for an automated book pick-up so that books on hold could be delivered to the cars any time of day. That option would reduce demand on the need for short-term parking.

Scherer said he and Weeks had spoken to the chair of the First United Methodist Church's building committee and, while the library's proposal has not been approved by that committee, the chair has informally agreed to the concept. Scherer suggested that formal approval from the church's committee be requested for the Library Board's record.

Option B has been changed since May so that now it features:

- a three-story building with all adult services on the third floor, children's areas on second, and public areas on first;
- a four-level parking ramp adjacent to the two lower floors, with direct access to the children's area that eliminates the need for crossing a street;
- space on the top floor that would allow the building to be set back farther from the street - or from either end - for a roof terrace; and
- a bookmobile drive-through from north to south along the east side of the building.

Scherer said that library staff and department heads had determined that Options A and B were equivalent from the point of view of function, efficiency, and service to the public. He said that equivalency had been a specific goal of the architects. Scherer added that the footings in both buildings would be designed to accept another floor in the future.

The original project schedule might still work, Scherer said, if a site could be selected in September. Design would take place until February, with additional public meetings and a break around the winter holidays. One part of the process will include a visual preference survey that will help the architects understand what appeals to this community. The floor plan, elevations, and artists' renderings would be presented at the end of design phase so that a referendum could take place in May, August, or November. Using a timeline predicated on a summer option,

he said the library could plan to move into a finished building between February and April of 2013.

Scherer recommended that a subcommittee or citizens' advisory committee be appointed coincident with a choice for Option B, as it was his sense that the public would need to know about the disposition of the existing building before it would feel comfortable voting.

MS&R's cost estimates included an inflation factor of four (4) percent per year, which equates to \$80,000 per month or \$3000 per day, so Scherer said that issue was important in determining when the vote should go forward, although the state of the economy will also be a factor in the final cost. Because the selection of Option A would require the building to be vacated during construction, price estimates included \$1 million for rent, though there might be ways to reduce that cost. He said the extra move and temporary relocation would be disruptive, but not insurmountable. Option A also included demolition of the 1984 piece, additional money for historic restoration and bringing the building up to code, as well as a little more on the exterior envelope, as he was thinking Ames might want to have an addition compatible with the stone on the older buildings.

Overall, Scherer said he felt the difference in price between the two buildings was probably not enough to sway the voters; it is a small percentage of the overall cost. The functionality, sustainability, and efficiency of the two options are equivalent, so he felt the question of location was what the decision boiled down to.

Scherer identified a few of the pros and cons for each option and stated that in July he would try to take public comments, rank the criteria, list the pros and cons as objectively as possible, and add the comments of the Historic Preservation Commission. The Board would then have time to consider everything through August and try to make a selection in September.

Change Order for Phase I of the Expansion Feasibility Study with Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, LTD: Moved by Stow, seconded by Budd, to approve Change Order Number 1 for Phase I of the Expansion Feasibility Study with Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle, LTD, as presented/amended.

Weeks presented a revised cost itemization for Phase I, recommending that the amount be increased from \$49,000 to \$79,000 for concept design costs. He stated that the building program is done and the schematic design and fundraising come later; the existing and alternate site studies and concept designs were the matters being considered. As public forums are added, the number of times Scherer redevelops the concepts increases – and that involves not only Scherer, but the professionals in his office, engineering firms, cost estimators, and others who will be engaged in additional work. Therefore, the cost of public forums is expected to increase from \$10,080 to \$49,920 and the cost for the other professionals goes up from \$24,360 to \$77,427. The total amount that could be billed for hourly service for “existing building feasibility and alternate site studies” would be \$41,787 (increasing the contract maximum from \$60,000 to \$101,787).

Weeks suggested that a way to contain costs would be to hold only one public forum on one evening, rather than four meetings spread over two days, in months when Scherer visits Ames. Meetings with staff could take place the following day. The July meetings would be on the 21st and 22nd. Weeks said that reimbursable expenses have been kept down to date, but he recommended they be increased by \$9000 to cover the extra trips or other contingencies. Total reimbursable expenses would then go from \$24,000 to \$33,000. The total cost increase will be \$50,787; but Weeks said he would like to increase the contract now to “an amount not to

exceed \$51,000” over the original price. That way it would not be necessary to request another increase from the City Council at a later date.

Meier asked if the funding would come from bequests. Weeks said he would like to request the use of funds from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP); if the Council turned down the CIP request, bequest funding would be the fall-back. Campbell asked how that would play out, given the fact that the Council approved the original contract with a cap of \$306,000. Weeks said the change order would increase the cap.

Scherer stated that he has not included any travel time in his requests. Approximately 56 hours of his travel time have not been asked for in the contract; that was a choice he made because he is very committed to the public process, which is really critical in arriving at the best outcome for a community. He also only charges for an eight-hour day (\$1680), although he typically works 12 to 14 hours a day when he’s here. He explained that he is writing off the extra hours in order to make the contract as lean as possible. He noted that the City of Fayetteville spent over \$300,000 on public meetings – 36 of them – and to save money he stayed with board members the whole time.

Stow remarked that additional expenses have already been incurred in May and asked how they were to be covered. Scherer replied that he had come at his own risk. Weeks said that under the original contract, the expenses would have been covered in September.

There was some discussion about whether the September meeting should be a formalized part of the Board meeting, a general public forum, or simply an architect’s presentation to the Board. No conclusion was drawn, as Scherer and Weeks were still working to make sure all the meetings could be aligned, but it was noted that people were asking the previous night when they could present ideas to the Board.

HPC Chair Betcher stated that the Historic Preservation Commission’s intervention might help in supporting the Library Board’s request to the City Council for extension of the process.

Vote on Motion as presented: 8-0 (Seagrave voting). Motion approved unanimously.

Weeks said he thought the request could be included on a City Council agenda in July. Betcher stated that a recommendation of support could be added to the HPC’s agenda in July, as well. Seagrave said the Trustees would appreciate that.

Consent Agenda: Lockett moved and Stow seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

- 1) Motion approving claims reports: May 1, 2009 – May 31, 2009
- 2) Motion approving gifts:
 - a) From Mark Blaedel and Deborah Blaedel \$20.00;
 - b) In memory of Irene Van Zee from the Ames Woman’s Club..... one audio CD.
- 3) Motion approving re-hiring of three former circulation desk assistants for the summer, each at her previous rate of pay::
 - a) Jo Gruenewald at \$7.77/hour, effective May 20, 2009;
 - b) Robert Hunter at \$7.77/hour, effective May 16, 2009;
 - c) Laura Johnson at \$8.30/hour, effective May 11, 2009.

Vote on Motion: 7-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports: Weeks reviewed the May financial reports, noting that expenditures were pretty close to the expected percentages. Budd inquired if unspent funds from sources outside the general fund lapsed at the end of the fiscal year; Weeks replied in the negative.

It was noted that there was an error in billing from Qwest which resulted in the overcharge on the telephone line. Meier also pointed out that footnotes appearing in a column on page 25 were being added into the totals, resulting in errors in the totals. Staff will correct that.

The financial reports were received as submitted.

Administrative Staff Report: Weeks stated that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is concerned that there is not as much public support for library services as there should be and has made a \$5 million grant for a campaign to improve library advocacy. The campaign is entitled “Geek the Library,” and will begin on Monday, June 22. A study showed that most Americans don’t know how libraries are funded; they also found that most people say they support the library at the ballot box, but only 37% are firmly committed to it.

Weeks said the pilot campaign will test the concept that increasing funding support means changing the perception that the library provides services and information to a perception that the library provides transformational opportunities for citizens and communities. Forty-two libraries are included in the Iowa pilot area and pre-campaign pilot surveys have already been conducted. If the results of the campaign are positive in Iowa, it will be taken nation-wide.

One aspect of the campaign involves turning the noun “geek” into a verb, meaning “to love, celebrate, enjoy, or have a passion for.” A “geek” is someone who is passionate about something, and the library is the place you can explore any passion you choose, so the library helps everyone explore the things they geek. The message is to keep your passions vital by turning your passions into support. Posters and ads will include phrases such as “The library can help everyone explore the things they geek. Get your geek on. Show your support.”

The campaign will cover a broad range of media, including Facebook, Google, billboards, websites, the *Des Moines Register*, National Public Radio, and Public Broadcasting. There are plans for newspaper inserts, postcards, radio stations, presence at events such as Iowa Cubs games, a Des Moines Pops concert, and the State Fair. The Ames Public Library will have a booth for the 4th of July, and it includes a large signing wall to engage activity. The Board inquired if there were street banners or light pole banners available, and Weeks said the library might be able to buy them. More information is available at Geekthelibrary.org.

Weeks said the Iowa Legislature passed new restrictions on sex offenders against minors which set up exclusion zones, one of which is public libraries. The APL needs to develop a policy on this because the law allows exceptions. He said the Ames Police are going around to people listed in the registries to advise them of the places that are off limits, and they expect that most of the offenders will comply. He explained that the library does not have the responsibility of determining that anyone walking through the door is an offender, but if staff knows or is notified, they can verify the individual on the sex offender’s website and remove him. The only exception to the law is that the library is a polling place, so offenders are allowed to come and vote. They may also come in to pick up their own children, and Weeks is looking into whether that rule can be modified. He is also working with the Police Chief on a process for appeal and library staff is working on a policy, as the law goes into effect July 1.

Luckett inquired as to whether or not the law applied to the bookmobile. Carey said it did not; however, all but two of its stops take place on school property, which is also off limits. Weeks said that in order to provide service, the library could send materials via mail or make home deliveries. There are 56 convicted sex offenders in Ames, but since the law only applies to those who have offended against minors, some individuals would not be included.

Weeks said that he had received several requests for another handicap parking space near the library entrance and Public Works is looking into it. When asked who would bear the cost, Weeks replied that he would try to get funding out of CIP funds. City assigns money for large projects. Stow asked why the City would allocate any money for improvements at this location, if the Board opted for Option B, to which Carey replied that it would not be tremendously expensive, as the curb cuts are already there and even if the library were to move, it would be at least 2013 or later before the new one would be ready. Weeks stated that any other potential occupant would probably need the handicap space for public access as well.

Library Building Expansion Committee Report: No report.

Friends of the Ames Public Library Report: Budd stated that the Friends do not meet in the summer, but some time ago *The Tribune* published a letter to the editor complaining about the Friends book sale. The organization decided not to answer directly, but did prepare a response that was published on June 10. He distributed copies. The Friends' next meeting will be on the last Monday in August.

Ames Public Library Foundation Report: Stow said the Foundation discussed the first draft of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two boards and there was discussion about forming a joint committee to work on the fundraising feasibility study for the building expansion. Stevin Dahl and Dan Devine will join as representatives of the Foundation. Stow said they also discussed some ideas about sharing staff if a development director or fundraiser were hired.

Carey reported that the campaign mailing was sent and \$8249 had been received to date. Overall, she felt the level of donations was low. In response to a question from Stow, she said the higher donations are in the \$70 to \$80 range. Stow commented that there would be different skill sets between someone raising those amounts and one raising higher amounts.

The Foundation will not meet in July or August.

Unfinished Business:

Appointment of Trustees to the Fundraising Feasibility Study: Stow, Meier and Bradley were named to the joint committee, along with APL Foundation members Dahl and Devine. Stow said the committee needs to start meeting over the summer to develop a Request for Proposal.

Policy Review:

Use of Patron Data Base Policy: Campbell moved and Bradley seconded approval of the Use of Patron Data Base Policy as presented/amended. The staff recommendation was to make no changes and the Trustees concurred.

Vote on Motion: 7-0. Motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that the Investment Policy would be up for review next month. Weeks said he would send it Campbell and Schill (the Budget and Finance Committee) for their review. Stow requested that the City's guidelines also be included in the packet.

New Business:

Central Iowa Library Service Area (CILSA) Inter Library Loan Agreement: Budd moved and Meier seconded a resolution to approve the CILSA Inter Library Loan Agreement as presented/amended.

In response to questions from the Trustees, Weeks stated that, for reimbursement in participation in Inter Library Loan, McCallsburg is a contract city, so it is not listed. Carey explained that the term "fill" refers to delivery, or the filling of a request. Sometimes one also sees a reference to a "fill rate." Weeks explained that OCLC originally came from "Ohio College for Library Cataloging;" now it refers to "Online Computer Library Center."

The Board members disliked the use of jargon in the contract and Budd said he would also prefer to see acronyms spelled out at least once. Weeks said staff would pass those comments along to the Central Iowa Library Service Area.

Vote on motion, with a note to pass the Board's comments on to the Central Library Service Area: 7-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Comments:

Schill stated that he was very impressed with Scherer and the extent of his knowledge; he applauded whoever made the decision to hire him. The fact that he is giving up much of his time shows his commitment to the project. He also felt the "I Geek the Library" campaign was exciting and looked very professional. He is excited to see it roll out. Schill also suggested the APL look into using social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, for letting people know about public forums.

Stow brought up the article that had appeared in the *Des Moines Register* about the Franklin library in Des Moines. The eight-year project was presented to the City Council for approval and now there is serious criticism about the planning and design. He said it illustrated the need to get buy-in from other City commissions very early.

Luckett – No comment.

Campbell said he had been apprehensive about this meeting. He still has some questions about protocol and each board's purview and feels the City needs to clarify that, but overall he was left with the sense that there was mutual understanding.

Meier stated that she had also come in apprehensive, but hopes the two groups can move forward as a team.

Bradley – No comment.

Budd – No comment.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.