

**Ames Public Library Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2009**

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, July 16, 2009, in the Library's Board Room with Bradley, Budd, Campbell, Luckett, Meier, Schill, Seagrave, Stow and Warnick in attendance. Staff in attendance included Carey and Weeks.

Call to Order: President Seagrave called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: Seagrave asked for any changes to the agenda; hearing none, the agenda was approved by general consent.

Approval of Minutes: Seagrave asked for any changes or corrections to the minutes of June 18, 2009. By consent, the minutes of the special joint meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Library Board of Trustees were approved as presented and those of the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees were approved with a correction to Jeff Scherer's name (which had been stated as Jeff Meyer) on page four.

Public Forum:

Susie Petra, 2011 Duff Avenue, stated that she feels architecture speaks to us as a community and that allowing the library to remain at the 515 Douglas site would allow the community to keep its history. She strongly urged the board to allow the library to continue to function as a library on its present site, and to keep its architecture.

Catherine Scott, 1510 Roosevelt Avenue, stated she prefers the current site. Like Ms. Petra, she believes it's important to keep the history and heritage of the library. She said she felt the library itself could be read as a book; she would like some portion of each building preserved in some way so people can see how it has changed. Ms. Scott said she has attended meetings at all the public forums and asked about the purpose of this month's meeting. She pointed out that a lot of Ames people are out of town in July and is also concerned that many people have not paid attention to the process thus far. She said that to avoid a problem such as the Franklin Park Library in Des Moines is facing (in which some review boards were not consulted in a timely manner), people should be involved as early as possible. Ms. Scott voiced some frustrations with the process: there is a temptation to react to the designs being presented, even though the architect says he is simply referring to a concept; some ideas have been lost along the way; she finds it takes her a while to absorb what is presented in the meetings, but is uncertain about how to give input afterwards.

Board President Seagrave noted that intention was to try to make a decision on a site at the September meeting but to continue to collect public input between now and then. Library Director Weeks said the July 21 meeting was designed to review the pros and cons of the last two options. The architect will have three-dimensional models of both concepts to show how they relate to the surrounding areas. He added that all comments are welcome and said he would forward all communications sent to him (via e-mail or otherwise) to the Board; comments may also be posted on the library's blog.

Tom Leslie, Associate Professor of Architecture at ISU and member of the Ames Historic Preservation Commission, introduced himself and said he was present to observe the meeting.

Geek the Library Campaign Presentation:

Library Director Weeks introduced Kathy Swift, the local representative of the Geek the Library campaign, and Jenny Johnson, Executive Director of Branding and Marketing for OCLC, Inc. Ms. Johnson presented an overview of the library awareness campaign currently underway in central Iowa and around Savannah, Georgia. These two areas were chosen to test the ability of this effort to change perceptions about libraries and to start conversations about the growing need to increase public library funding. The hope is that the campaign will pique interest in public libraries; create awareness about how public libraries are funded; get people to see the library as a transformational force in people’s lives and something that has value and relevance for them personally; and, eventually, to get them to communicate with their elected officials and demonstrate support for libraries.

Many marketing avenues are being pursued and local libraries will be encouraged to add their creative influence. Ms. Johnson said the campaign aims to reach each person 22 times in some way or another between now and Thanksgiving. Pre-campaign library support surveys were done a few months ago; in the post test they intend to measure if perceptions shifted, if the public has a greater awareness about funding, and whether or not they are willing to actively support the library. Johnson said there is not yet a commitment from Gates Foundation for expanding the campaign to other areas of the country, but if results show success in the pilot areas, OCLC hopes to get additional support.

Assistant Library Director Carey said that there was a lot of excitement about the campaign at both the American Library Association conference in Chicago and among the Story County librarians.

Consent Agenda: Stow moved and Campbell seconded approval of the consent agenda.

- 1) Motion approving claims report: June 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009, and
- 2) Motion approving the following gifts:
 - a) From Betty Bielenberg \$150.00
 - b) From J. Paul Clark for a book in memory of David Maxwell..... \$18.95

Vote on Motion: 8-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports: Weeks reviewed the June financial reports, noting that the final figures from fiscal year 2008/09 will be available next month. He said that total expenditures as of June 30 were 98% of the budgeted amounts, but he expects the current unspent balance of \$62,000 to shrink considerably.

The financial reports were received as submitted.

Communications:

Letter from Holly Fuchs dated June 17, 2009 Seagrave stated that Ms. Fuchs’s letter was sent to Weeks via e-mail, but was addressed to the Board; he suggested that he and Weeks form a response to send on behalf of the Trustees. Some sample responses had been distributed. Seagrave noted that many of the points Ms. Fuchs raised had been addressed in public forums, but he felt they were the kinds of questions a broader group might also have. Among the questions raised by Ms. Fuchs was a concern that the public was not involved early enough in the process and that an expansion to 94,000 square feet might be unwarranted. Weeks pointed out that many people may not know that a space needs study was conducted over a nine-month period by Anders Dahlgren, a professional library planner, and it led to the conclusion about necessary square footage. Weeks said a copy of the study had been transmitted electronically to Ms. Fuchs. The study itself contained many fine points as to how

much space was needed for specific pieces of equipment, recommendations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for aisle widths, building code requirements, and other things that are generally not up for discussion. Dahlgren talked with members of the APL staff about their programs and how they work, introduced possibilities for automating some processes, and took all the square footage requirements into consideration.

Weeks said that because the existing library building is fragmented into so many rooms and corners and is hard to supervise, the architect and planning professional were specifically asked to help give the Ames library flexible space. The Board of Trustees also wanted to take the long view with a project would have lasting value to the citizens. Weeks said the professionals originally proposed a 118,000 square-foot expansion, but felt it was more prudent to scale the project back to less than 100,000; they eventually settled on 94,000. The architects are working very hard to make the most efficient use of that area. Weeks said a citizens' advisory group was also formed about a year and a half ago; those individuals urged the Board to keep the library downtown, so that was another issue that was largely in place from the outset and did not receive much public discussion.

Stow wondered if copies of the Space Needs Study were available for the newer board members. Weeks said they could be provided.

Warnick stated that she did not feel the size of the building could be up for discussion at this point, but does sense that some people feel the process is going too fast and there are others who either don't feel they've had a say or don't know enough about the project. She said she was not sure how to remedy that without losing momentum or adding to the expense, but does not want an outcry.

Campbell stressed the need to demonstrate, or get the word out, that the Trustees are stewards of the library. People need to understand that they are responsible for making sure there is adequate space to meet the community's needs for the future – this project is not something they just dreamed up without a process. He felt that there was a need to somehow convey the sense that this is the Board's charge, that no decision has yet been made about which space would be better, and that the trustees will go through intense deliberation before they move forward.

Meier wondered whether it was time for a letter to the editor or some detailed explanation of the whole process. Weeks detailed some of the efforts that had taken place already:

- Alexandra Haynes' first editorial in *The Tribune* was intended to encourage participation and Jennifer Meyer, the new city beat reporter, was present at this meeting;
- information has been going out regularly though the "Library Notes" column;
- both Jeff Scherer and Mr. Weeks have appeared on KASI radio broadcasts with Trent Rice;
- the building tours offered in April were successful;
- staff members talk often to customers, both inside the library and on the street;
- the choice of MS&R as the architectural firm was based on who would do the best job of getting public input; and
- extra public meetings have now been added to the schedule.

Budd stated that he felt it would be helpful to articulate to Ms. Fuchs how the Board came to the decision about size and the rationale for it. He said it should also be pointed out that what is being proposed is not just a building for today but for tomorrow – the Trustees don't want to spend \$30 million for a building that won't serve into the future.

Seagrave commented that an underlying issue is that, sooner or later, the public needs to trust in representative government. He said he would like to assure people that the Trustees have intentionally hired the best people they could find to help them decide what is needed and how to do this. Making an analogy to another City project, Seagrave said people seem to trust that the professional recommendation to build a new water plant is valid, but for some reason the library doesn't find itself in the same position.

Warnick conjectured that it may not have been communicated clearly enough in the beginning that the final decision on the site would be made by the Board. She thought it would be helpful for the Trustees to be more visible at the public meetings – or to have a meeting where people could come and tell them what they think in August.

Seagrave remarked that when they were asked in June, most people did not really want a straw poll. Furthermore, the city ordinance, which is based on state code, entrusts the Board with decision-making responsibility.

Luckett felt that any communication should stress that the proposed size was based on technical considerations and that the Board is planning for the future using well-established guidelines.

Seagrave said that the response to Ms. Fuchs would discuss the process that was followed, point out the Trustees' role of representation, and the continued desire of the Board to get public input. There was discussion about a means for getting public comments, with the conclusion that it would be helpful to plan for input during the August meeting. Weeks suggested that the meeting be held in the Council Chambers so that it could be recorded and video streamed. The regular meeting is scheduled on August 20, which will be the first day of class for Ames public schools, so people should be back in town. It was agreed that this should be arranged, if possible, and announced at July 21 public meeting as well as in the newspaper.

Budd stated that he does not favor one option over the other, but he will have a problem voting in September unless he has an idea of a probable use of the existing building. Campbell wondered if the Board would be at the point of knowing what might possibly replace the library then. He said the dilemma is that if the Board were to initiate a parallel conversation, it might give the impression that the Trustees had an agenda. Another problem is that it may take a few years to reconfigure the building for someone else's use.

Administrative Staff Report:

Carey stated that four staff members attended annual conference of the American Library Association (ALA) in Chicago in early July; all very much appreciated the opportunity and thanked the board for making the trip possible. She said the participants attended many different sessions, talked to colleagues from all over the country, and came home with a lot of new ideas. She said they also felt good about what the Ames Public Library is offering.

Weeks stated that the 2008/09 circulation statistics hit an all-time high; close to 1.4 million. He compared that to the 1.5 million items Des Moines is circulating out of its central library and all five branches.

In less happy news, Weeks said that Project Smyles, one of APL's most valuable programs for getting children set up for reading and life-long learning, depends on gifts and donations, and they have been down.

The City's Legal Department is reviewing the library's proposed Sex Offender Policy. Weeks said he expected it to be ready for Board action next month. He said there were still details to be worked out with respect to exceptions, appeals, and access to the bookmobile. There was some discussion about how the library could give sex offenders against minors access to books or other library materials without putting anyone at risk; work on that matter remains to be done.

Library Building Expansion Committee Report: Weeks stated that the committee will meet on July 21 with architect Jeff Scherer and again on August 5 to discuss the July meetings. He said he hopes they will consider the pros and cons of the two sites and offer suggestions to the Board on how to proceed with site selection.

Policy Review:

Investments Policy – Action Item: Lockett moved and Stow seconded approval of the Investments Policy as presented/amended.

Meier stated that she had written this policy and wanted the other Trustees to be aware that it involved not only the City Treasurer and Finance Manager, but was also approved by the City Council and complies with state law. In addition, the policy was certified by a peer review board of municipal treasurers of the USA and Canada. When asked if there was any possibility the City or the library could have a great loss such as IPERS recently experienced, Meier said no, because the City does not invest in stock or real estate.

Vote on motion: 8-0. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Determination of Eligibility for listing the library building on the National Register Board Member Lockett inquired about the designations of A, B, C, and D in the eligibility review from the State Historical Society, whereupon Tom Leslie was invited to address them. Leslie stated that the National Register has several criteria upon which it bases its determinations. The categories Lockett had referred to were as follows: A – the structure was associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; B – it was associated with the lives of significant persons in the community; and C – that there is architectural merit and may be distinctive of a type, period, method of construction, or represent the work of a master. Leslie said he could not recall exactly what D stood for, but thought it might have to do with the structure's ability to yield further information about the history of the community.

Leslie said the State Historical Society assigned criterion A to the library, but noted that criterion C might also be valid, as well because the original building was designed by Hallett and Rowson, who were associated with the important firm of Proudfoot and Bird, and the 1930s addition was designed by Allen Kimball, the first head of ISU's Architectural Engineering Department. Leslie said Kimball also designed several campus buildings and two churches, and his work contributes to culture and history of Ames.

Lockett asked how probable actual registration is, once eligibility is established. Leslie said that it takes some effort to carry a nomination forward, but felt the library would have an excellent chance. He guessed that could take six months to a year. Leslie said that any citizen may nominate any structure, whether or not the Historic Preservation Commission is involved. Many buildings on the Iowa State University campus, as well as the former Municipal Building (now occupied by Youth and Shelter Services) and the former Ames High School (now City Hall) are listed. The College Heights neighborhood may also be listed at some point. Leslie said that the National Register is mostly an honorary title, so the architect's hands would not be tied unless federal funds were used – but federal funds cannot be used for a project that demolishes or

significantly alters a listed building. Advantages to being listed, Leslie stated, are that there may be some loosening of the ADA requirements (in the original sections) and eligibility for grants.

Board member Budd asked for a copy of the HPC's request for determination of eligibility and Leslie said he would get it.

Luckett asked if the integrity of the interior were required in listed buildings. Leslie said that exterior integrity was required; the interior could be a contributing factor and taken into consideration.

Trustee Comments:

Warnick stated that she received communication about the Iowa Library Association conference and was interested in attending on Thursday. Carey said library staff would take care of registering her and some people would be going every day, so there would be opportunities for car pooling.

Bradley said that she was interested in the conversation about Ms. Fuchs's letter; since she is a relatively new Trustee, she learned quite a lot.

Luckett noted that Seagrave would be out of town when the Board met in September and asked if he would like to vote absentee. He said the bylaws were silent on absentee voting, but it would be possible to amend them by giving a week's notice to the Board.

Campbell – no comment.

Stow said he appreciated having the representatives from OCLC at the meeting and encouraged people to visit the GeektheLibrary.org website. He also suggested that the library engage children with buttons, bumper stickers, and other items that would help bring up conversations with their parents once they got home. He would like the library to be as proactive as possible in promoting the campaign. Carey said that OCLC will work with the library and provide materials. She said staff was already getting permission to use the campaign art work to make buttons and put a sign on the back of the bookmobile, and are coming up with ideas for using banners on the building and perhaps on Cy-Ride busses.

Meier – no comment.

Budd – no comment.

Schill – no comment.

Seagrave responded to Luckett's inquiry by saying that he would not like to vote on the site in September unless he could participate in the discussion. If his participation could be arranged, he would be willing to vote, but he expressed confidence in the other eight members' ability to make the right decision.

Weeks advised the Trustees that the reception for Dale Ross and the official naming of the Board Room would take place on Sunday, September 27, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the administrative wing of the library.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.