

**Ames Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
Special Retreat**

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees met for a special retreat on Saturday, November 7, 2009, in City Hall Conference Room 235 with Bradley, Budd, Campbell, Luckett, Meier, Seagrave, Stow, and Warnick in attendance. Schill was excused. Library Director Weeks and Assistant Director Carey were also present.

Call to Order: President Seagrave called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Updates

Library Director Weeks stated that the architects at Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle have suspended work on the library expansion project for the time being, as Jeff Scherer is aware that the potential move to the Clark Avenue location requires action on the part of City Council, and that schematic design should not begin until some preliminary results, at least, of the fundraising feasibility study are known.

The contract with The Hodge Group for the Fundraising Feasibility Study will be going to the City Council for approval later this month. The City Attorney requested that an insurance clause be included; therefore, a revised contract has been sent out and library administrative staff is waiting for a signed copy to be returned. Weeks added that The Hodge Group's charge will be to assess the willingness of the community to support the project financially, but work cannot begin until it is clear that the City Council approves of the Library Board's recommendation and authorizes the use of the property on the east side of Clark Avenue for construction.

Seagrave stated that, as a result of the election held earlier in the week, it is clear that there will be at least two – possibly three – new city council members in January. The trustees listened to a recording of the responses the council candidates made to a question raised prior to the election at a forum held by the League of Women Voters. The question was whether they would support a bond issue for library expansion and what their personal feelings were on the matter. All candidates seemed supportive of the referendum itself and Ryan Doll expressed a clear preference for the Clark Avenue site, but the others indicated a preference for the existing location on Douglas.

Luckett observed that there seemed to be a misconception that renovating on Douglas Avenue would be less expensive than constructing a new building. Seagrave remarked that it seemed they also believed the building could be smaller if it remained on Douglas. Warnick remarked that from the candidates' comments, it seemed as if they felt that the vote on the bond would involve not only funding, but size and location as well.

There was discussion about the recent comparisons citizens had made to the library project undertaken in Iowa City. In many respects, the situations are analogous; however, that project began at least a decade ago. For the sake of information, Weeks agreed to find out the size of the bond issue and how much private funding, if any, was garnered.

Seagrave said he felt it was important that City Administration supported the Library Board's actions and, to that end, he and Weeks had met with Mayor Campbell to discuss the project. He said that he, Weeks, and Carey had also met once with Steve Schainker, Sheila Lundt, Duane Pitcher, and Dan Culhane, and again, later, with Mr. Schainker, Ms. Lundt, and Doug Marek. His feeling was that the administrators' initial reactions to the project seemed neutral or cool,

and sensed that three factors were at play: the high dollar amount of the bond (\$35 million), concerns about traffic and parking, and worries about responsibility for and disposition of the existing library building. Weeks suggested that several competing projects -- upgrades to the water plant and electric utility, construction of the intermodal transportation center, and discussions about the downtown parking ramp -- have also been occupying the City Managers' attention right now.

Seagrave said that the second meeting happened at a time when Jeff Scherer was able to be present. At that meeting, Mr. Schainker indicated that he liked the library project, but still had some concerns about parking and reported that the mayor still had hopes that a park-like, downtown gathering area could be created near City Hall. In voicing concerns about the existing library building, Mr. Schainker also said he felt the Board of Trustees should be involved in resolving its future. Seagrave said that, during the course of the discussion, Mr. Scherer suggested that he could work up an alternate model for the existing site, if necessary. The board members discussed that possibility, but felt they should proceed with the original proposal and defer any consideration of alternatives until they had met with the new City Council.

Recess: 10:50 a.m.

Reconvene: 11:00 a.m.

With agreement among the trustees that the ultimate goal is to put forward a ballot issue that will succeed, they strived to set a realistic timeline for the work ahead. The following preliminary schedule was outlined:

- New future Council members receive library tours and project orientation – Dec. 2009/Jan. 2010 (depending on whether or not a work session may be scheduled prior to swearing in of new Council members)
- City Council votes to approve the use of the Clark Avenue property – Jan. 2010
- Hodge Group begins fundraising feasibility study – Jan./Feb. 2010
- Hodge Group reports on fundraising feasibility study results, MS&R begins schematic design – June/July 2010
- Public meetings held on building design, Fundraising campaign conducted – summer & fall 2010
- City Council approves/sets date for bond referendum (at least 46 days prior to date of election)
- Bond vote – Nov 2010 (or March 2011, if necessary)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.