

**Comments from Ames Public Library Expansion Public Meetings
February 16 & 17, 2009**

2/16/09 – Large public meeting:

There's no lack of seating.

Condemned property reverts to original owners if it's not used for intended purposes.

Who are we building for? We're not going to be around in 20 years to use it.

We should look at this with a "pay forward" mentality. We have the opportunity to look out for the future of Ames. The library is part of what people look at when they consider coming to ISU and Ames. They usually ask about schools, safety, the library and the parks. We should remember that many of the decisions we need to make are not about us – they are about our city and our citizens. We build for the kind of community we want to live in. We need to think about building for future generations.

I am hearing people talk about their own views of the library, but everyone uses the building. I come here a lot and notice that there are lots of teens here on Saturdays. The computers are full then, too. Seating is hard to find in the early evening. More people should get a tour of the staff areas.

People are sensitive to biased presentations because the City has a history of them. West Ames is always underserved. Perhaps we should have two buildings, with one in West Ames.

I hope you will be taking advantage of green opportunities – we should "go green" all the way.

Don't be afraid to put parking underground.

I'm wondering if there are other options in this neighborhood, such as purchasing the Elks and the house next to it, or if we could build walkways. We should be creative.

Without going into any details right now about renovation or a new building, I would just ask the people here to recall the discussions we had about converting Hallet's Quarry into Ada Hayden Park. The people responded with 85% plus in favor of a bond issue to create a signature element of the community. Here we have another opportunity.

I have seen a small library in Northeast Iowa that didn't have the vision to build for the future, and I would urge us to build for the next generation.

2/17/09 – Comments from Northcrest Community Meeting

Fifty computers (in the proposed facility) seems like a low number.

Communities take pride in buildings and institutions. Expansion of the library should be downtown – that's really where it should go – and for additional parking, a ramp would be the way to go. The library should be a source of community and civic pride. Most businesses would give anything to have the traffic count of the APL.

Ames is expanding in every direction. I can see having branches in the south, west and north.

If I am reading the graph correctly, to put everything that is stuffed in right now, you need 22,000 more feet just to function efficiently. I take it that the old Strand Paint building won't do it (accommodate the needs). The question is whether we want to be on target or ahead of the game.

2/17/09 Suggestions offered during the teen meeting:

The library should be built downtown, either here or within a block or two. It's easy to get here without a car.

Planning for energy efficiency is important to this community. Include lots of windows so there is a lot of daylight and lower cost for energy.

Asked what else they'd like:

- outdoor spaces for reading;
- more computers;
- a gaming center;
- a modern auditorium where we could have movie nights;
- a film-making studio;
- themed areas – a tropical theme in the teen area;
- fish tanks in the walls;
- a garden on the roof so it would feel like you could go outside even in the winter;

We need more music, more CDs. You should survey people on what they want because stuff here doesn't appeal to me.

Related comments:

Music is on line now so maybe the library could get that.

What about a trade where you give a CD and take a different one?

You should have a set-up where you can go on-line and pick something and then the music would play different customers' suggestions.

We study in the coffee shop because it's comfortable, there's no obligation to buy anything, there is background music and wireless Internet.

I don't think a separate teen area is needed, but it might be easier to find stuff. I think middle-school-age kids would prefer separation. (Most in the group agreed.)

I like to take a novel and sit in the farthest corner where it is super-quiet. The library needs a cozy space.

There should be longer hours in the summer – it should be open later. Maybe part of the building could have extended hours.

I don't know how many parking spaces are needed, but someone needs to talk about a parking deck – except it's really inconvenient to go through and pay.

Group liked the idea of a “smart card” so fees could be paid down at the self-check and fees would be reduced (e.g. fifty-percent lower or first hour free) for card holders.

It would be nice to have software at the library so we could do homework here. I never have enough time to do my 4D Art projects at school. Consensus on this – Photoshop, Garage Band, Physics Simulator, 4D Art, etc. It would great to be able to start a project at school, work on it for a while at the library, then continue working back at school. Groups could work together that way, too.

We never know what's going on the library. There should be a Facebook page. (Youth librarian is in the process of doing this; Facebook is still unwieldy for organizations.)

There are lots of opportunities for elementary-school kids and high-school kids to get help, but it would be nice to have a tutoring program so that high school students could volunteer to work with middle-school kids. A good time would be 4-5 p.m. Maybe you could get extra privileges in exchange for volunteer time.

The library could have a socially-conscious movie night for teens with discussion afterwards.

There needs to be a lot of color, especially the children's section. (The group liked the children's desk in the slide show.)

Be sure to have hand puppets. I loved that when I was a kid. (Several agreed on this.)

It would be good to have a place where you sold supplies (pens, pencils, paperclips, markers, paper) at the library.

2/17 Comments from Young Families

We come for story time and the children's play area. It would be nice if it were bigger, more comfortable.

My favorite thing here is the books, but I don't like the other kids making a lot of noise. We need more space for books and things, and space for reading.

I think we need more space for family or individual research. We could use an area for multiple projects. The kids like to have an enclosed place with round tables and I think space where families and students can work together with all the resources here would be good.

It was noted that many families, including Asian and Mexican families, enjoy working at a table as a family, and they enjoy doing this at the library, rather than at home.

Sometimes the kids run into glitches on the computers that they cannot get past without my help. I'd love to see more computers with kid-friendly access and also a big screen for kids' research.

For me, it would be ideal to have both dark and light places in the library. Sometimes I want to be able to be near a window and look out at nature, but it's also nice to be able to "cocoon" in among the shelves.

I would come if you added a Spanish story time. My wife likes the staff picks.

Someone should make a Facebook group for the library. (Brought up in teen meeting as well; staff is working on making it more accessible.)

APL has always been the hub of Ames – it is so vital to this community that I feel it's very important that it be a part of downtown.

With the library downtown, in the historic area, would be nice to keep architecture compatible with the traditional style.

We really need to think about building a showcase in Ames. People who might be coming here to work at ISU look at the library before they move. It seems there is always this belief in Ames that we can "make do," but people should be aware that if you want people to come here to work, you have to offer amenities.

We wish you had longer hours of operation. Friday night would be ideal for us; we'd like to come to the library for something special. There's nothing much going on in Ames and we would like to be able to come to the library with our kids.

Perhaps there could be an elementary age area in connection with a family area. Maybe there could be some flexible zones that could be used in different ways during the evenings or on Friday nights.

Scherer mentioned a conversation with the teens related to having extended hours in one section of the building. The whole building would not have to be staffed, but some browsing materials, a

computer lab, maybe even a coffee shop, could stay open until midnight. He also noted that without extended hours, libraries run the risk of shutting shift workers out.

I think APL offers great resources for the elementary ages, but the aisles only allow one person at a time. If someone else is in the aisle, you have to go around. There's no elbow room.

I like the idea of having a learning center or discovery center for kids.