

June 2009 Public Meetings: Help Shape the Future of the Library

The fourth series of public meetings on a proposed library expansion were held during the month of June. The meetings were held as follows:

- June 16, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Farwell T. Brown Auditorium of the Ames Public Library, with 47 members of the public and four members of the library staff in attendance. Members of the Library Board of Trustees who were present included Al Campbell, Sherry Meier, Dick Seagrave, and Kevin Stow.
- June 17, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in the Farwell T. Brown Auditorium of the Ames Public Library, with 20 members of the public and three members of the library staff in attendance. Members of the Library Board of Trustees who were present included Harry Budd and Dudley Luckett.
- June 17, 2009, at 2:00 p.m., in the Green Room of the Northcrest Community, with 11 members of the public and three members of the library staff in attendance.
- June 17, 2009, at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room of the Ames Public Library, with 23 members of the public and four staff members present.

At all meetings, Library Director Art Weeks welcomed the participants and turned the program over to Jeffrey Scherer, principal architect with Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, LTD (MS&R), of Minneapolis, Minnesota, who presented two concept options for public review and comment.

Scherer began the first meeting by stating that he had been contacted by a representative of the Old Town Historic District. She asked him to convey a message to the group that, contrary to an impression that may have been left in May, the neighbors are not opposed to having a parking structure north of the library and the neighborhood association board had passed a resolution to that effect. Second, he asked the audience to look at the design process from someone's perspective twenty years in the future. He said it is critical to think about what Ames needs for the next twenty to fifty years, not necessarily what is the most expedient at this moment. Third, there has been no recommendation about the re-use of the current library building, should the Board of Trustees choose not to stay here. Scherer said he senses that people are interested in knowing, but it's really not the place of the architects to weigh in on the matter -- it is a city/community issue. Finally, Scherer said he wanted to make it clear that he is totally neutral about whether the Board chooses to keep the library at 515 Douglas or to build at a different location. The two site options MS&R developed were based on the direction given by the Library Board in May, and Scherer said his firm did its best to make both concepts as equivalent to each other as possible.

At the second meeting, Scherer also clarified the stages of the building expansion process. The first was creation of the program – analysis and determination about how big the building should be, how many books should be housed, and how much space various work groups needed. At present, the community and the architects are working on the site selection process, which includes the existing building feasibility study. The design process will come next, after the Library Board decides where the building should go, and public review will continue as the design of the building emerges. He said the community's visual preferences will be taken into

consideration. After the bond referendum is put to the voters, design and development, including choices about interior colors and finishes, will happen.

Concept Presentations

Option A:

Option A is for an expanded library in its present location at 515 Douglas Avenue, predicated on the notion that the property between the Elks and funeral home would be purchased and used for 30 future parking places. The plan also calls for a one-level deck over Parking Lot Q, north of Sixth Street, to add 55 more parking spaces near the library. Scherer said the structure could eventually go higher; however, he noticed that both the First United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ were built with their sanctuaries five to seven feet above the level of the sidewalk. The parking structure could be designed, therefore, so that the first level would be as low as possible and the deck would be roughly level with the floor of the sanctuaries. He felt the one-level structure would be reasonable in terms of scale, and could possibly include a berm and plantings or some other sort of edge that mimicked the water table lines of the churches. This would create an urban design relationship between the parking deck and the urban corridor along Sixth Street. Option A, with new parking spaces to the east and two levels in the lot to the north, would have a total of 185 parking spaces.

Scherer identified four problems with the Douglas Avenue site that had surfaced in May: the library encroaching on the Methodist Church's plans for expansion; accommodating passenger-side loading of the bookmobile; the location of handicap parking; and what should be done about the plaza. He said the architects are now suggesting that Douglas remain open, but have a speed ramp (slightly elevated and with a different surface than normal streets) in order to slow traffic down in front of the library. The north-south alley east of the Elks Club would be widened, and the Elk's parking lot would be reconfigured so that access would be gained from the alley.

The two lower floors of the Option A building would be public levels and the mechanical area would be above them. Scherer said the library's mechanical room is in basement now, but it has permanent leaks. The architects looked at renovating the room to make it waterproof, but it ends up being much cheaper to put it upstairs. The building footings and columns in Option A would be sized to accept a future third floor. While explaining the concepts, Scherer reminded the groups that the images he was showing represented the mass of the building only, in blocks -- all the architectural features will be added later on during the design process.

Scherer said his firm was able to get the electronic drawings of the proposed plans for the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) and have tried to be respectful of its needs. He said the church's new plan has a large stained-glass window on the south façade, and he felt the library should not to violate their daylight. In addition, the City Manager had indicated that he would like as much surface parking as possible to be retained. As a result, MS&R proposes re-aligning the alley between the church and the library, widening it, and changing it to one-way northbound (rather than one-way southbound, as it currently is). The bookmobile would be able to enter the library garage from Fifth Street, park inside a temperature-controlled work area, be cleaned and re-loaded on the passenger side, then drive straight out and exit the alley onto Sixth Street. A two-way entrance at the south end would allow citizens to use the parking lot or return library

materials to a book drop in the alley. A canopy on the west side of the library could cover the drive lane and provide protection at the book drop. After members of the audience raised the issue, Scherer stated that it would be possible to include post office boxes at the book drop location, if the postal service agreed to it. Scherer also noted that the re-configured alley would be wide enough for the Fire Department's ladder truck.

Inside the library, Option A included a service desk at the main entrance and a nearby café or gallery. By moving the mechanical room upstairs, it was possible to put the teen area in the lower level of the north end. Teens would have their own space, but also be close to the café and be easy to observe by staff. A large meeting room would be adjacent to the main entrance, and Scherer said it could be designed to open to the plaza to allow for large events. Children's Services would be found in the south section and one wall of the children's area could also be opened up to allow access to the large meeting room and the plaza. Staff and volunteer work areas would be on the west side, adjacent to the receiving area for books and the bookmobile loading area. Stairways at both ends and elevators near the lobby would provide access to the second floor. Toilets were located off the lobby and in the children's section.

Scherer said that in May a lot of people liked the idea of having an outdoor terrace, so he wanted to incorporate that idea, but was not comfortable designing it to extend across the street. Option A now includes a covered drop-off area in front of the main entrance so that people could be let off under cover or sit on the terrace up above.

Adult collections, reference services, additional meeting rooms, technical services, and the business office would be located on the second floor. Scherer said that the south wall of the 1940 addition still exists, although the original windows have been blocked in and covered up. He said the architects would like to explore the idea of opening that area up to capture daylight again, but some forensic work would be necessary to determine the condition of the wall and whether or not there has been leakage. The renovated/new building would contain about 9000 square feet of meeting room space. Scherer said the meeting rooms would be ganged on second floor so all the meeting space could be used when the library was closed.

Option B:

The proposal for Option B is a three-story building and parking garage covering the half block directly across from City Hall on Clark Avenue. As a result of suggestions made in the May meetings, the design was changed so that the parking garage would be embedded in the lower two stories of the north end of the building, and all adult materials would be contained on the third floor. The facades on Sixth and Clark would mask the parking garage so that it would look like the building. The plan calls for a total of 144 parking spaces. As in Option A, the building could have another floor added sometime in the future.

The book return for Option B would be next to City Hall's existing payment drop box. Scherer said the tunnel would be reconstructed and books conveyed under the street to the circulation work room. The bookmobile would enter the library garage from the north and exit onto Fifth Street. (Operations at First National Bank would not be affected.) The entrance to the parking ramp would be from Sixth Street. There would be four parking levels inside, each being half the

height of one story inside the library. Each level would have handicap parking spaces next to the public entrances to the library, which would be at the north end of building.

The main entrance to the Option B library would be directly across the street from the entrance to City Hall, with access also available directly from parking structure. A café, new book and browsing section, and a gallery would be near the main entrance. The library's large meeting room was shown in the southwest corner of the main floor, while staff work areas would be adjacent to the bookmobile garage in the southeast corner. The public spaces in this design face Clark and Fifth and it would be possible to have all public areas open for extended hours.

Youth and children's services would be found on the second floor, with public areas again facing south and west. Elevators and stairs to the upper levels would be placed in the center of the building. Scherer pointed out that families who parked on the third level of the ramp would be able to enter directly into the youth area of the library.

The third floor in Option B would house adult fiction, non-fiction, large print collections and seminar rooms. The area over the parking ramp would be for Administration, Technical Services and Network Services. Scherer said there was more square footage available on the third floor than is needed for the library itself, so the extra space could be used for one or more roof terraces.

Scherer said that Option B eliminates the existing surface parking lot, but replaces them with 36 spaces on the ground level and 108 in the parking structure for a net total of 144. He said it was important to note that the new parking area would be contiguous with the building, so library users parking in the garage could be under cover the entire time. This contrasts with Option A, where one would exit the parking structure and walk across the street.

Regardless of which option it chooses, Scherer stated that the Library Board will be required to go through the City's development review process. That might involve some traffic analysis, parking analysis and possible approval of the City commissions, such as Historic Preservation or Planning and Zoning. More detailed information will certainly be needed at a later date, but the purpose of this part of the program is to help the board come to a conclusion about whether to stay at the current site or move to a different one.

Timeline, Budget, and Comparisons

Scherer discussed a theoretical schedule of the remainder of the process. Assuming a referendum was put to voters in the spring or summer of 2010 and it was successful, bidding could take place in the winter of 2011. Under Option A, the library would have to move out during construction, so the move to a temporary location would take place at approximately the same time. Construction at either site would take about two years, so the move into the finished building (under either option) and the grand opening could be expected sometime around February 2013. The budget and inflation figures Scherer presented were predicated on that time frame, and he noted that the midpoint of the construction project was the date used to determine inflation.

The two options are almost exactly the same size, Option A consisting of 93,497 square feet, and Option B of 93,499. The parking is roughly equivalent, with 185 spaces for Option A and 144 for Option B, but Scherer noted that both options are affected by the surrounding choices of street parking, and neither of them includes spaces dedicated to the library. He said it would be fair to say that they both have approximately 150 spaces within 300 feet of the front door. (The number of leased spaces has been left out of the equation; they are just assumed to be public spaces.)

The costs were estimated at \$37,420,408 for Option A and \$35,446,606 for Option B.

The cost differences were explained as follows:

- Building and parking construction -- The parking structure in Option B is more expensive, but the building itself is more expensive in A because of the need to work around existing conditions and the details related to replicating historical features, such as windows.
- Furnishings (furniture, conveyors, signage) -- Almost the same in either option.
- Soft costs – The primary difference is that Option A includes the price of renting a temporary location for two years. That cost could range from zero to more than the estimated \$1,199,616. The figure was based on rental of 45,000 square feet at \$12 per square foot for two years, plus \$50,000 for one extra move. (Both options require a move into the finished library, but Option A also requires a move from the existing building to a temporary location.)
- Project contingencies – The amounts were based on a percentage of the subtotals of the three categories above, but the projected cost is higher in Option A because of having to work around an existing structure and the many unknowns (such as possible water damage, the state of the lintels of the windows, etc.).

Scherer added that the grand total for Option A also didn't include the cost of purchasing the property next to the Elks Lodge on the east side of Douglas, although by the fourth meeting he reported that the assessed value was listed at \$156,000 -- \$118,000 for the land and \$36,000 for the building. Also not included were costs related to retaining the existing library, should Option B be chosen, since its possible disposition is presently unknown.

Questions and Comments

Questions and comments from all four public meetings appear below. They have been grouped into general categories and re-organized for readability. Answers to some questions that came up on more than one occasion were consolidated.

Group 1 = June 16, 7 p.m.

Group 2 = June 17, 10 a.m.

Group 3 = June 17, 2 p.m.

Group 4 = June 17, 7 p.m.

Regarding Option A:

Question from Group 1 (Q1): If someone just came to the library to ask a question, where would he go?

Scherer: There will be a service point at the main entrance. We are also looking at having reference and circulation staff located at more than just one dedicated point.

Q4: Are the book stacks on the first floor?

Scherer: There are stacks on both levels – the children's are on first and the adults' on second.

Q1: Does Option A have handicap elevators?

Scherer: Yes, they're north of the lobby. There is also a dedicated service elevator that staff would use to transport books and materials.

Q1: What would the third-floor mechanical room look like?

Scherer: Please remember that right now we are not showing any design elements, we're only portraying mass. There are no rooms included either – what you are seeing is what we call program blocks, which allow us to allocate space for the various collections and see how the various work groups can function inside the building. After September, when one option gets decided upon, the architects will start to lay out rooms in three dimensions, showing furniture, tables, and the like. We will bring in computerized imagery of the library and the nearby buildings.

Q1 & 2: Can you explain which part of the lot (west of the library) the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) owns?

Scherer: At this point in time, there are three parcels south of the FUMC. The church owns the building, and the City owns the two parking lots on either side. As it turns out, the total square footage owned by each entity is almost equal and the church has already approached the City about making a swap and splitting the entire area in half so that FUMC might expand its building to the south. That would allow the library to expand a little farther west at the south end.

Q1 & 3: What will happen to the mailboxes that are in the alley now?

Scherer: We have not yet talked to post office, but it would be feasible to place mailboxes next to the book drop on the island in the alley.

Q3 & 4: Would you describe the parking structure a bit more?

Scherer: There is a move to have Sixth Street, from the park to City Hall, recognized as an historic corridor, so we were interested in building a structure that would be fairly unobtrusive and tie in with existing architectural elements. We envision a structure that would be ten feet from floor to floor, with a ramp at the north side. Landscaping and plantings could screen it somewhat from the street, but 50 percent of the surface area of the wall would need to be open so that ventilation would not be required. The cost estimates include resurfacing the existing lot and constructing the second level.

Q1: Will you build the parking ramp at the same time as the library or build it afterwards?

Scherer: You've raised an interesting point. The FUM Church recently did a survey in which they counted the number of empty parking spaces on the street within 500 feet of the church entrance. They counted on three different occasions at two different times of day. They found 80 to 100 spaces free at all times; in fact, they found 120 spaces open at 5 p.m. So it's possible that at the Douglas Avenue location, you're getting close to not really needing more parking, and you

would not necessarily have to build the structure immediately. We do see that new and reconstructed libraries have a substantial increase in use, so parking space needs to be available. The real problem though, is that it is impossible to come back to people to ask for more money to build a ramp, so the cost of providing it should be included in the original bond issue. I would recommend that you not chose to save money up front by shorting parking.

Q3 & 4: Do you think library expansion will increase business?

Scherer: Usage usually goes up at least 25 percent, although in St. Cloud it has gone up 65 percent in the last six months. A question came up in an earlier meeting about phasing in the building of the parking structure in Option A. That is something the Board or the City could consider. As the architect, however, I am trying to make the comparisons as equal as possible, so we're including parking at both locations.

Q1 & 3: Can you describe the overhang over Douglas? Is it some sort of cantilevered shelf?

Scherer: The structure would most likely be cantilevered out about eight feet beyond the curb line to allow for drop-off, and it could have a terrace on the roof so that anyone sitting outside would be able to look down Douglas. But it hasn't really been designed yet; it's just a concept.

Q4: Currently, we're able to stop outside in front of the library and park for just two minutes. Could we still do that?

Scherer: You could drop someone off, but you couldn't park in this model. Short term parking would be about 60 feet from front door on east side of Douglas. We want to offer convenience, but we don't want the building to be dominated by the need for cars. We're trying to find a balance. One thing we probably want to consider further is having a holds pick-up near the book drop so that you would not be required to go into the building for something simple such as that. It can be automated so you'd just drive up, swipe your card, and get the materials 24-7.

Q4: Does the plaza cross Douglas?

Scherer: We are now talking about having a speed table, in which the surface of the street is raised, but has different pavement and traffic slows down. It would be possible for the City to close it off at certain times of day or for a special event. Last month there was discussion about closing the street; this doesn't do that, it just allows for that option to be considered.

Q1: Could you go back to the three-dimensional model of the present library? When we are putting this much money into this area, it's important to me that a person see the exterior.

Scherer: Option A allows people to enjoy the architecture much better as they come to the library.

Q1: Am what I'm seeing in your picture of Option A is that it looks just like the present building only bigger?

Scherer: You cannot take these representations literally. What we have now are block drawings that relate to function – this is not architecture.

Q2: Does the existing facility stay in place but with a second floor?

Scherer: No, the 1984 addition would come down. We'd keep the historical buildings intact.

Q2: You're saying the whole back part will be torn down?

Scherer: Yes. If the '84 addition had been built differently, it might not be necessary, but the footings aren't adequate and the double row of columns impedes the structure. The ceilings are at three different levels, too. The existing building just does not allow for the flexibility that will be needed over the next 20 to 50 years.

Q2 & 4: Are you still planning on raising the level of the floor?

Scherer: Yes. If you walk toward the library entrance from the north, between the trees, notice how the tops of the planters are level but the sidewalk slopes. Our hope is to keep the planters and the trees and just elevate the sidewalk. The new floor of the library would be at the level of the sidewalk so you could come straight in. The slab of the 1984 addition would stay – we'd just sink the new footings down into it and patch where necessary – we'll also extend it to the lot line.

Q4: Will the building go from corner to corner?

Scherer: The new part will, yes.

Q4: Would the architecture on the outside be the same?

Scherer: The historic end would look the same, but with new windows. When we get to the design process, we'll represent the rooms and furniture three-dimensionally. We'll also put in the adjacent buildings to give you a better idea of scale and a tool to help critique the design and add more layers of detail.

At the next meeting we'll do a sort of architectural Rorschach test. We'll have you look at about 250 photos and see what designs appeal to the citizens – at least those who attend the meetings. The scale, the outside materials, all the aesthetics will be considered then. At this point, we are still working on function, making the two options comparable, and making sure staff is satisfied that they can provide excellent service. After the referendum – I expect we'll have six to 12 more meetings during the design phase – we'll bring samples and models for you to look at.

Q4: Could the building go underground the way some libraries do?

Scherer: I wouldn't recommend it; there's a very high water table here and it would be very expensive.

Comment from Group 1 (C1): In the past you talked about using the parking lot to the west, but tonight you haven't.

Scherer: It is there and it can be used now.

Q1: What about putting a second floor over it and putting the bookmobile there? Why should we leave that parking to the Methodists?

Scherer: I have to urge you all to look at them as citizens and the church as an organization that wants to stay downtown. They are members of the community who are contributing to the vitality of the urban core and we are simply trying to be respectful of their needs, along with the library's. However, there is no formal, legal understanding about this between the church and the City, so they have proceeded with architectural plans at their own risk.

Weeks asked how many people in the audience used spaces in the lot at the northeast corner of 5th and Kellogg when coming to the library and two persons raised their hands. He stated that there is not a sense that those are thought of as library spots.

Q4: If you change the alley between the library and the church, how could church-goers exit?
Scherer: We planned a two-way alley entrance on Fifth Street because we assume people will want to go in and out there. In the church's plan, cars can also approach its new entrance from Kellogg, so someone could be dropped off and the car could go on through and exit onto 5th St.

Q4: Are you showing a garage west of the existing building?
Scherer: Yes, in the area that is presently the rain garden. There are some other issues that need to be worked out on this – the blind corner there, for example, curb cuts, and other parking issues. The blocks on these slides just represent placeholders for a concept. Please keep in mind that this is not a recommendation for a final plan – we've only got a concept here of how we could solve some of the problems.

Q4: Are you planning on a new bookmobile?
Scherer: No, we're working with the same one.

Q4: Is there any way for the two lanes not to cross (near the book drop in the alley)? Is that required?
Scherer: No, that is just an option. If no one were parked at the book drop, the bookmobile could use either lane. But we don't want the bookmobile to get boxed in if there are people lined up to drop off materials – it goes out five times a day.

C1: Another advantage of Option A is the Adams Funeral Home. Maybe sometime in the future, that could become part of the library.
Weeks: That is unlikely – it is not handicap accessible, and neither is the Elks' building. The library has to comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) guidelines.

C1: Option A includes some good, innovative ideas about how to use the old space and the new. To me it seems functionally very good.

Q2: Has any consideration been given to having any kind of skywalk from the parking structure into the library?
Scherer: We did look at that. The geometric problem is that the upper level of the structure will be about ten feet above the street. A skyway would have to be about 14'6" above the street, so you would have to have an elevator to get up to that level. The next problem is where to have a skyway cross the street. If we come in on the northeast corner, we end up masking the historic façade we're trying to preserve; if it is positioned closer to the middle of the building, it would break into the north façade. Another factor is that, even in bad weather, people tend to jaywalk rather than go up to use a skywalk. In the end, it doesn't make common sense to spend the money on it. It requires bridge span technology and runs about \$2000 to \$3000 per linear foot.

Q2: What part of the building could stay open at night?
The entry way, the toilets, the meeting rooms, and the café could be left open.

Q4: I don't see the public rooms on the diagram. How are they labeled?

Scherer: They are labeled as program rooms if they seat 25 or more people. Some rooms will hold smaller numbers and offer space for seminars, small group study or tutoring.

Q4: What is the size of the big meeting room, as compared with the Farwell T. Brown Auditorium?

Scherer: It is about 50 percent bigger, but has a lower ceiling, so that we don't restrict the ability to put additional meeting space on the second floor. It will hold 250 people, whereas you can hold 142 now.

Q4: Do you plan to name the room after Farwell T. Brown?

Weeks: I believe that the name will stay in a new building. The Library Board also recently resolved to name the Board room after Dale Ross and that will carry over into a new board room.

Scherer: Naming is a delicate and important thing. I recommend having a donation panel at the entry.

Q2: Will there be the same ability to check out a book on both floors?

Scherer: We'll get into more detail about these things after September. We want to consider a concierge-type model, so you don't have to go all the way to the front to check out. You'll be able to get assistance from different types of librarians at one desk and self-check-out units will be spread throughout the building.

Q2: What will happen to the north entrance?

Scherer: We will keep it as an emergency exit. The lower level will have space for young adults, so they can exit that way in case of a fire. There was a weird conundrum in thinking about what to do with it. We could tear out the three-tiered stair and make it more discreet, but we were not sure it was worth doing that. There's a possibility that someone could nominate the building as an historic landmark. If that were to happen, the National Park Service laws about historic preservation require that you have to allow for whatever modifications you make to be returned to the original state. It wouldn't make sense to remove something that might have to be restored.

Q4: What is up on level three?

Scherer: Just the mechanical room and some storage space. When we were thinking about having the mechanical room downstairs in the older buildings, we had thought more square footage would be required in this option. Moving it up to a new area eliminates that problem.

Q4: You talked about the difference in price with two moves. Is there any way to evaluate the stresses on the staff and the changes for clients?

Scherer: It is very difficult to put a price tag on those things. The Hennepin County Library stayed in place while we did asbestos abatement; it was a nightmare. If you added that into the equation, the choice would be clear. But I have no way to put a price tag on that and I'm not sure there is enough public empathy for it. There are many ways to go about the temporary situation...using small store fronts, separating the administrative office from the library, and so on. In my opinion, it is critical that you not think about obstacles right now. Instead, look ahead

twenty years and try to see what is right for the community. If you have the right answer, the headaches will disappear.

Q4: Has there been any discussion about Option A if the FUMC doesn't move forward with its plans? What would happen?

Scherer: That is a very good question...something we may want to talk about at the next meeting. If they don't take down the building in the middle (between the two parking lots), the lanes and the alley re-configuration would not be possible. I believe the church's plan is to have a vote in January and the congregation needs to raise \$2.5 million. If it doesn't happen, it would change the dynamics of what the library could do.

Regarding Option B:

Q1: When you added up parking spaces, why didn't you include the lot west of City Hall?

Scherer: We took that lot out of the equation because it already exists and would not be modified. For the sake of comparison, we wanted to include spaces that are, for the most part, adjacent to the library's front door.

Q1: With three levels, would you have increased cost because of the need for additional personnel.

Weeks: No, the work units would still have their own space and the new layouts would require fewer points of supervision. One of our goals was to keep the operational costs equal (between the present and expanded libraries).

Q1: If the new library were put in front of City Hall would you still need a big meeting room?

Scherer: The two library designs are equivalent. We didn't want to let neighborhood opportunities add to the confusion.

Q1 & 3: Won't a four-story garage attract people that aren't necessarily using the library?

Scherer: Well, success creates its own problems. There will be more pressure on parking at the Clark Avenue location.

C1: The parking lot across from City Hall has been used for play events and those spaces would not be available if the library were built there. It's also used for the auditorium, so those are parking spaces we don't need.

Scherer: At certain times of day and for certain events, there would be a lot more competition for parking at the west end of downtown.

Carey: I expect that would happen very rarely.

Q3: Was there a reason for putting the parking ramp on the north side of the library?

Scherer: Yes. We felt the side of the library where activities took place should be nearest to Main Street. Also, this makes the parking structure more available to the library than to the general retail area, and there has already been discussion about building a new ramp for shoppers in one of the Central Business District parking lots.

Q1: What about (the possibility of) a vehicle fire in the ramp next to the building?

Scherer: We're proposing a sprinkled ramp and there would be a four-hour fire wall between the parking area and the building – it would be a dry sprinkle system that doesn't freeze in the winter.

Q1: What would happen to the part of the library up above the ramp?

Scherer: There would still be a concrete deck between the two areas and the whole ramp would be a four-hour-rated structure that complies with the fire code. Of course there is some risk, but it would not be any more risky than cars parked in a garage.

Q1: How do you keep car exhaust from being drawn into the library?

Scherer: At least 50 percent of the wall area of the ramp would not be enclosed, and the library building will be positively pressurized so that air will move out of it. The vestibules between the ramp and the interior will also have higher pressure in order to keep the air separated.

Q1: How does long term maintenance of the parking ramp affect the life of the library?

Scherer: Parking structures are high-maintenance items, but I don't have the figures at hand. The cost depends on the actual construction and what kind of preventive maintenance is done.

Q2: Would the parking be metered?

Scherer: I'm not sure how city would pay for the maintenance. Costs could be included in the bond, they could opt to install meters, or maybe it would be covered by some other means....

Q4: Where would you park to pay a bill at City Hall?

Scherer: In the ramp.

Q4: Would you have to pay for it?

Scherer: We don't know yet.

Q4: Wouldn't people who work downtown take up the whole ramp when the weather is bad?

Scherer: There are all kinds of policy questions about how the ramp would be used, paid for and maintained, but it would be a public facility.

Q1: You mentioned that you worked in one place that had remote storage for the books. How much more would it cost to fill out the third floor and have more storage?

Scherer: The remote storage I mentioned earlier was something that was done as a solution while the library construction was taking place. The building we're talking about here would have room for enough books, although it is possible to design floors to carry enough load to also have compact shelving.

Regarding both Option A and Option B:

Q1: What is the relative size of staff space versus public space in the existing building, and in both Option A and Option B?

Scherer: When we started this process, we looked at the original building program and minutes to see what was anticipated and planned for the existing library, and we have the information that includes the 1984 vs. 2009 vs. 2030 comparisons, so I can get that for you. Right now, I can only say that it is roughly a 20/80 split and we are planning for about a 30/70 split, so staff space would increase in either option. This library is so crowded now that if you were to give the current staff properly-sized space today and did not change the building, you would lose about half the public space. The splits in Options A and B are identical.

I should point out that library department heads have reviewed both options and they believe the service to the public would be equal in either option, although in Option B the major meeting room is on a separate level from the children, whereas in Option A, the meeting room can provide overflow space for the children.

Q3 & 4: Will a larger building require more staff?

Scherer: We are trying to design twice as much space but keep the same staff. One of the goals is to increase the library's size but keep the same operating budget. We do that, in part, through automation -- the automated materials handling system will free up staff to do more work with customers. And we're looking at more of a department store model, rather than having a dedicated desk where one service is available. The building will have a more intuitive layout requiring fewer points of supervision and self-service areas will be set up throughout the building.

Q1 & 3: What will the price per square foot of the buildings be?

Scherer: We are estimating construction costs at about \$205 per square foot.

Q1: Is that price normative? If not, why not?

Scherer: The numbers were based on the median price for library construction in Iowa in 2008 and increased to 2009 numbers -- the average was \$204 and the median price was \$193 per square foot. The budget we've based the Ames project on is \$205 per square foot, which is below the median, as we've adjusted for 2011. We felt the average was a reasonable level to work toward. It's \$100 per square foot less than was spent on Hennepin County's new building in 2008 dollars, and it's lower than both the Fayetteville and St. Cloud new libraries. It might turn out, in the end, that Ames citizens will want to raise more to have nicer furnishings, greater energy efficiency, or something. This figure allows for LEED Silver construction.

C1: In Option B, if you entered directly into the building from the parking structure you would not see the building. In A, as you approach the library, you would see the exterior.

Scherer: It does offer a different experience.

C4: I'm concerned that both designs are so tied to the parking structure. I have the view that the city is talking about a new parking structure and I don't like the fact that we are tied to the parking problem.

Scherer: Is there a parking policy for the urban area? It would be preferable to not have to solve the problem on a building-by-building basis. We are at odds with our hearts and our heads. My heart tells me people want to park at the front door; my head tells me that we should get away from demanding every convenience. But one person's need may not be the same as another's.

We are also at a disconnect because we want walkable cities, but we also have cold weather. Luckily, here, the whole downtown from the park to Grand Avenue is only six blocks. For someone from a big urban area, Ames feels like a walkable place.

C1: I'm concerned about the scale of the two choices. To me, A looks as if it's in scale with the surrounding buildings and includes a step back on the upper level, but Option B has three stories. Scherer: The top floor of The Octagon is the third floor, but the room has a high ceiling, so I imagine the building is the equivalent of four stories. Option B consists of three 18-foot stories. (In the fourth meeting, Scherer said it would be 36 feet to the top of Option A's second floor, and he estimated that The Octagon is about 50 feet high.)

Q1: Would Option B dwarf City Hall?

Scherer: I'd say City Hall is about 35 feet high and the library would probably be higher. I'll have to get the numbers for you. Whichever scheme the board chooses, we will have all the buildings put into a three-dimensional format so the public will have the opportunity to see how the building fits into the cityscape.

Q1: When you put the mechanical area on top of the buildings, does that mean the floors have to bear more load?

Scherer: No, in a library that's not that big a deal. Every floor bears a heavy load.

Q4: I see nowhere on either option for family studies or genealogy studies.

Scherer: That is part of the non-fiction section. We are not showing the individual sections at this point. As we get into the schematic design phase, you will start seeing individual rooms, furniture, and more detail. If you are anxious about your own interests, I recommend that you check the building program available in the reference section.

Q1: In Option A, would the second level of the parking structure be open to the sky?

Scherer: Yes.

Follow-up Q1: But in Option B you always have covered space.

Scherer: Yes, Option A requires that the snow be hauled away, but the lower level would be available and under cover.

Q1: Have you considered adding "green" roofs?

Scherer: The concepts include a green roof and LEED Silver energy efficiency in both buildings. In Option A we'll get negative LEED points for demolishing the newer part of the building, but pluses for saving other things....

Q4: What does LEED mean?

Scherer: It's the acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. There is a LEED Green Building Rating System that we're referring to. It's the nationally-accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance "green" buildings. LEED Certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project is environmentally responsible and a healthy place to live or work; the different levels are silver, gold, and platinum.

C1: You have said that the two options are equivalent. Plan A addresses preservation of the historical parts of the building, but Plan B is silent on that issue, so that part of the equation is really not equal.

Scherer: It seems that there is some anxiety that if the library goes to Option B there is less likelihood of having this building preserved. If the City had a process for this type of situation, there might be less stress over that. In Fayetteville, for example, they ended up selling the former library building, but imposed deed restrictions for historic preservation on it. The new owners turned it into offices. The City took the value of the sale of the property and applied it to the new building. In Iowa Falls, they moved out and original library became an arts facility.

Q2 & 3: Do the new plans include adequate meeting space?

Scherer: Both configurations increase meeting room space from the 2600 square feet you have now to about 9000. In 1984 you actually had 3100 square feet dedicated to meeting space, but some of it has been encroached upon. So we're tripling what was originally planned. There is a high demand for public meeting space in Ames.

Q2: Whose responsibility is it to take care of this (Douglas Avenue) building?

Scherer: I would recommend that the Library Board engage in conversation with the City about what would happen to the existing building. Between now and next February, that needs to be worked out.

C2: I came to the second meeting and thought it would be nice to stay here (on Douglas), but now I feel that a newer property would lend itself better to the future. If there is a question about what this could be used for, there has been a lot of talk about the human services agencies' need for a place.

Scherer: It is my understanding that the square footage the service agencies need is roughly the same as is available here. A committee probably needs to be formed. The group last night also mentioned that the Historical Society often uses the library.

Q3: What plans would there be for the existing building if the library moved?

Scherer: I don't think citizens will be comfortable voting for Option B unless they know what the Douglas Avenue building could be used for.

C3: It would be a great Historical Society place.

C3: It could also be the human services campus.

C3: The human services campus should be downtown, rather than out north.

Q3: How much bicycle parking will be included?

Scherer: I think 25 spaces would be enough.

Weeks: The survey we took in March showed that fewer than two percent of the library's visitors rode bikes...we would expect a higher number in warmer months when school is out.

C3: The refinements you've come back with are great, compared to last month.

Scherer: Each round gets us closer.

C3: I really like the outdoor patios on both designs.

Scherer: There's money in the budget for a green roof. It would be possible to have an elevator go to either roof for events, if you wanted them held there. Some libraries have installed permanent anchors for tents on the roof.

C3: Event space on the roof would be great.

C3: Prior to today, I was leaning toward B; now I'm leaning toward A.

C3: The two designs seem more equal to me now. I can see either one being very satisfactory.

Q3: Wasn't there some discussion in the past few months about salvaging the façade of the Option A library, even if B were chosen?

Scherer: Early on, one idea was to use the original exterior as an interior element, if the new building were built to the lot line on the north and east.

C3: I was thinking you could actually move the old façade to have it included in Option B.

Scherer: No, I don't see any way we would be able to do that.

General Questions and Comments:

Q1: Is it too early to talk about where the money comes from?

Scherer: Yes.

Q1: Is there any federal money available?

Weeks: We will start looking into feasibility of funding in the near future.

Scherer: We've seen all kinds of strange options and a lot depends on how people feel about the process, whether or not they understand it.

Q1: I'm wondering what effect a library move would have on the downtown, the distribution of traffic, and so on.

Weeks: We're hearing that a new building will probably generate about 25 percent more library business. We currently average 1500 visitors a day. In March, the Ames Public Library (APL) did a survey in which we found that 85 percent of users came by car, 10 percent walked, three percent rode CyRide, and less than two percent arrived by bike. That was during cold weather, of course, and before Cy-Ride was free, so we plan to do the survey again in July to see the difference.

Scherer: By nearly every measure, the four-plus blocks of Ames's downtown is a pretty small footprint, and a garage in either location could be considered to be serving both properties. In Minneapolis, I have to walk eight blocks to get to the library, unless I care to pay \$5 per hour to park, so I would love this situation.

Q1: If the APL serves 1500 people per day, it seems like 360 parking spaces is too many.

Scherer: I was only saying that if this building were standing alone, without adjacent street parking, it would call for 360 spaces -- if you put a new library in a suburb you'd need that many spaces. There is a different calculation in an urban setting where people come for other activities, such as grocery shopping. I think you need about half that number. What we need to try to imagine now, though, is what will this look like in 50 years? What if there is free Cy-Ride year-round? What if the society moves away from so much dependency on cars?

C1: I am concerned about the future of the east part of downtown.

Scherer: The issue of what happens there is an economic study that architects are not able to do.

Weeks: In the survey that was done -- which was statistically accurate -- 50 percent of library users came only to the library, but 23 percent also shopped for groceries, and 10 percent did retail shopping. Less than two percent went to The Octagon and almost none went to the Ames Historical Society. The survey was done shortly after Wheatsfield moved, so we assume that they got groceries at Fareway.

C1: I'd guess that the Historical Society uses library.

Dennis Wendell: I do refer a lot of people to the library.

Follow-up comment: With the Historical Society working hard and the Octagon working hard, I think we have yet to see what synergy could be created in the area. The Historical Society does want to have a full museum at some point in the future.

Q1: Are you aware that the old Ford dealership lot has for sale signs on it?

Scherer: Yes, we know about that. However, the dealership only owns about a third of the block, so it is too small. We are also working hard not to take land off the City's tax rolls and to purchase as little land as possible. At one point I suggested the library should occupy the 100 block of Main Street, but that idea didn't fly. It seemed to me that if one approached the center of town with a beautiful library on one side and a park on the other, it would make a statement about what this community is all about.

Q1: It's hard to look at the placement of this and trying to imagine what it would look like in 50 years. Is there any master plan for the downtown that advances any sort of vision? Would one or the other site be better?

Audience members: A few years ago the charette pinpointed areas that were owned by the city and were open for development. The Historic Preservation Commission also hopes that a "civic corridor" preservation district could be identified. A 1992 reconnaissance survey showed a possibility of having one from City Hall down Sixth Street, encompassing City Hall, the Post Office, three downtown churches, the library, the Elks Building, and Bandshell Park. The corridor has not yet been surveyed, but the Commission hopes it will appear in an historic conservation plan that is currently being drafted.

Scherer: We could stop the presses now and let the plan develop before we start up again. My sense is that there is some inertia downtown and that the east end depends on the library. If you take the library out of the equation, what goes in in its place is important.

Q1: What criteria are you following to determine which location you are going to use?

Scherer: We always look at safety of staff and equipment, public access and travel time, how to enhance the library experience for the users, but there are many factors. In the two options we are looking at, a lot of these criteria are so similar that they are almost exactly the same. The buildings are scaled and parking is close by, so it is coming down to a bigger question than the technical answers provide.

Q1: It seems to me you have to get a location selected before you can get behind one option. Will you ask the Library Board on Thursday what criteria they need to have in order to make a decision?

Scherer: Right now, from a library use and experience point of view, I would say both options are equal: operationally they both function well; the parking situation is more or less the same, except that competition for space would be greater on the west end some days; and there's about a five to six percent difference in the economics, but probably not enough to sway the vote if people really want one of the options.

It appears to me that Ames is down to a few fundamental points now:

- the impact of moving out on this (Douglas Avenue) neighborhood;
- which option is the wisest choice for the long term;
- if this building (Option A) is to have the same degree of expansion as Option B affords;
- if the parking garages are to have the same degree of expansion (The Option A structure could go higher, but it would be a little harder at the Option B location); and
- one's subjective preference about preserving and enhancing the historic location or having a modern building.

It finally comes down to personal preference and the Board simply has to make a choice at some point.

Q1: It sounds to me as if the final decision depends on the Library Board, but I think it should be the public that decides.

Weeks: Some library board members are here, so they are hearing all this. (Campbell, Meier, Seagrave, and Stow were in the audience.)

C1: A straw poll could be done.

Scherer: How many want to do a straw poll?

Six members of the audience (of 47) indicated they did.

Q1: In other libraries, who makes the decision on which location to go with?

Scherer: It varies, and sometimes we work with private libraries. If you had a lot of money, you could fully execute both options and put them up to a vote, but I'd guess it would cost another quarter of a million dollars. Your Library Board is trying to get this as close to what the community wants as possible without going to that length.

Weeks: This is by far the most public input there's ever been in my experience, and I've been involved in 12 projects. One reason MS&R was selected was because Jeff was ready, willing, and able to conduct this kind of public process.

Scherer: I believe the Board is open to your comments. If you have a strong preference, let the Trustees know. Call them, attend a Board meeting, or get in touch via e-mail.

Weeks: You may contact me at aweeks@amespubliclibrary.org and I will pass all comments along to the board. The Board meetings are open to the public so anyone can attend, and all meeting information and minutes are available on the Web. The Board plans to decide on the final option in September.

Q4: Once the Library Board picks a site, then what?

Scherer: We will start the design process.

Q2: How did you get to these two plans?

Scherer: There has been a process trying to get public comments on what people like or don't like for the last few months.

Weeks: This Option A is an amalgam of two options shown last month for buildings that could work on the Douglas Avenue site. This month, MS&R has removed all the elements people didn't like.

C2: I would like to go on record saying that I am so impressed with the way the public has been brought into this, and I'm very pleased with the way my opinions have been heard and listened to.

Q2: How long will it take to move in to the library once it's done?

Scherer: Moving will take about a month. The library would have to be closed that long to get all the books moved, the computers in place, all systems up and running and checked for LEED certification. January would probably be the best month for that. I know of a library that held a community check-out day. They asked everyone to come in and check out about 20 books. People kept them at home and had something to read while the library was closed. Then, when the library re-opened, they asked people to bring them back on a certain day, depending on their last name, so they didn't all come in at once. The whole community helped with the move.

Q3: Where does the library staff park?

Weeks: Some of them rent parking spaces in City lots, but most of them park on side streets.

Q3: When can a vote be held?

Scherer: Under State law, it may take place on the first Tuesday of March, May, August or November.

Q3: We're looking at many levels in the buildings. What does an escalator cost?

Scherer: There are several issues with escalators. The first is the noise and vibration they cause within the building. Second is the cost, which is about \$350,000 per level plus \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year for service. You need a contract in order to make sure they keep running because when they are not operational they drive people crazy – the tread is sized differently than a regular stair. It would be better to spend that kind of money to install two more elevators. The third problem is that they are dangerous to kids. And they take a lot of space. There is a new Mitsubishi escalator that is circular and takes less space, but it took an incredible amount of engineering and costs about half a million dollars per floor.

Q3: I'm just wondering how we get this paid for. I worked very hard to get the rec-plex passed and it failed.

Scherer: It would be naïve to suggest that this will be easy. We need to keep having meetings so that people will get involved and will see the value of it.

Q3: Do you know if there is a price point in this town?

Scherer: I have no idea. I would say that the possibility of support for the library is probably greater here than in many places because of the university and the citizens' level of education.

Q3: What is the market now on municipal bonds?

Scherer: I don't really know, but it is pretty complicated.

Q3: Do the City Finance people have a threshold?

Scherer: I don't believe they have bond counsel yet. The numbers will be refined as this process goes on and they'll depend to some extent on the choices of materials, such as brick vs. stone exterior.

Q4: Is Ames's bond rating such that if we vote for either one of these options, we can go forward?

Scherer: I really couldn't say.

Q4: Suppose the referendum fails? Would any of this work be transferable to another plan?

Scherer: The building program holds. You could always scale back to the small addition planned in 1984, although you'd still have to change all the mechanical and electrical systems. What you have now are metal stud walls, two-inch insulation and brick, and the systems are totally outdated. Ames is already in the top ten percent of libraries, in terms of usage, in the whole U.S. You have worn the building out. You would have to invest \$25 million, at minimum, to bring 74,000 square feet up to standard, so you need to get the story out in order to secure 60 percent of the voters.

Q4: I keep thinking back to the fear of people not voting if they don't get their way. I don't think that will happen, but is there anything you can point to about other cities and what is most likely to pass?

Scherer: If the citizens of Ames vote with their heads, either option will pass. If they vote emotionally, one will pass and the other won't. The emotionally-charged vote rallies more people and the people with a stance will work harder to bring out voters. We have to work really hard to make sure the choices are essentially equivalent. Every community is so different.

Outcomes are usually influenced by three factors: inertia, emotion, and price. Price drives more than the others, but there is not that big a difference here to make a difference. If there were a \$10 million difference, it would be a factor. I've found it interesting that there is an inverse relationship between the age of people and their interest in preserving the old or building a new library. The Northcrest and Green Hills folks have been very enthusiastic about the new building; younger people are interested in the historic. The older citizens are adamant about taking a global perspective. It's also interesting that at the first meeting, there were not very many people attached to 1940 building. The building was pretty plain even when it was built;

nevertheless, the idea of retaining the history, rather than the preservation of the artifact, seems to be important to some.

When you read the minutes of the meetings from 1930s, people didn't argue about the price of the building -- they argued about building a quality building that would last for centuries. Today we have very little conversation about institutional investment and a look toward the future. I think a conversation about the investment return in the overall quality of the community needs to take place.

Q4: The City is looking at new water treatment facility now and the old one happens to be at the end of Fifth Street. Have you looked at that site?

Scherer: No, from the beginning we were asked to stay in the downtown core. I proposed taking the east end of Main Street and making it the gateway to the community. The front door of the library would be a symbol of the front door to the City of Ames. A hundred years from now, people would not question why that was not done. But the water plant is a little outside of the core and Duff Avenue is a big barrier. Psychologically, the library needs to say on the west side of Duff.

Q4: I wasn't clear about the rationale for doing this in the first place. Are Options A and B the same size and how much bigger are they than the current building?

Scherer: The options are approximately 93,500 square feet each; the program calls for 94,000. Our goal is to keep going down, as we work on efficiencies of the lay-out. We have different locations and different prices, but the size, function, staff requirements, operational cost, and level of customer service are all equivalent in the two options. The size of the existing library is about 48,000 square feet.

Q4: Have they (the librarians) decided what they will buy?

Scherer: That's not really the issue. Right now they are having to withdraw books because of space constraints, so in order to keep timely materials on hand, they are having to relinquish some things that it would be preferable to keep.

The new buildings would have more seating space by far, more meeting space, and more staff work area. What's more important is that what we end up with in 2013 is of value twenty years later. If you look at the history, you see that from 1900 to 1950 library service was about the same throughout the U.S. – that is, the relationship to the library and what happened in the building was the same. After WWII, the nature of urban versus suburban libraries changed.

In 1983, when the personal computer and Macintosh were introduced, there were a lot of questions about the future of not only libraries, but paper in general. What happened is that we now use four times more paper per capita than we did in 1983. When video first came out, there was talk of the demise of movie theaters. That did not play out as some people feared, either.

The public library you have today was planned pre-computer. The 1984 addition was designed as a mimic of older libraries; it was not designed to deal with the changes we have taking place. By 2024, we will probably not have any physical artifact for movies or music. Everything will be downloadable and the walls and the desks will *be* the appliances. The only two constants I would

bet on are power and data. New buildings will have raised computer floors; data and power will be below them. Everything will be plug and play – move a table, plug it in, and have it ready to go. You will need to be able to change the configuration of a room on the fly. Air quality and the level of human comfort have come a long way, too. During the energy crisis of the Seventies, we went into a phase where we tightened up buildings to keep the temperature-controlled air inside. That led to us having a lot of “sick buildings.” Today, air comes in from below; there are no ducts in the ceiling. Air flows upward, keeps people comfortable, lifts gases and pollutants up and away from the people inside. Today we don’t place lights in the ceiling, either; we want ambient light to reflect off the ceiling. We use a ceiling surface with a very high acoustical value so that the new method of air handling is also quiet and efficient. I hope you want to have this be a really smart building that will hold up for 20 years.

C3: I tell everyone I know that we have the best architect we could possibly get. I am very impressed with your work.