

Minutes
Portsmouth Public Library Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
October 1, 2008

Call to order: 6:15 by Chairperson Amy Brnger

In attendance: Library Trustees Elias Abelson, Amy Brnger, Jody Record, Betsy Shultis, Megan Tehan, Ann Walker (School Board Representative), and Barbara Ward; School Board Chairman Mitchell Shuldman; Lisa DeStefano, AIA; City Manager John Bohenko; Mary Ann List, Library Director and Steven Butzel, Assistant Library Director.
Excused: Library Trustee Carol Lincoln

Amy Brnger welcomed the guests to the meeting and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to address the concern of the Library Trustees with access to the Library in light of the expansion of the Middle School. Preliminary designs show a negative impact on such access.

Mitch Shuldman voiced the opinion that the concerns of the Trustees were being heard by the Mayor, the School Board and the City Manager. He further stated that now is the right time for the Library Board to become engaged in the project with the understanding that the Library is an important stakeholder in the further development of Parrott Avenue.

Lisa DeStefano explained her role as local architect stating that she is charged with finding out "how best to get the project to fit into the community. Ms. DeStefano gave a brief history of the planning so far.

Dr. Shuldman and Ms. DeStefano pointed out that project planning is still preliminary and that final plans will be developed with the Joint Building Committee.

Elias Abelson asked that, time being short, the meeting concentrate on addressing the Trustees' concern with parking for the Library.

Participants viewed preliminary sketches from presentations on June 23, 2008 and August 5, 2008.

Discussion points on parking:

School needs 100 designated parking spaces. The dedicated spaces do not need to be contiguous to the school building. Approximately 1,000 visits to the Library are recorded each day with people visiting all during the day and evening. One aspect of green buildings is shared parking. Mrs. Record asked for an explanation of the process for finding adequate parking. Mrs. Shultis and Ms. List asked how the Library could request a given number of dedicated parking spaces.

Dr. Shuldman asked who had the authority in the City to ensure that adequate parking be provided for the Library.

City Manager John Bohenko described the role of the Joint Building Committee. The Committee will be appointed by the Mayor and will have equal representation from the City

Council and the School Board, and, in addition, representation from the community. The Joint Building Committee will have statutory responsibility for final design and construction. The Middle School design will also go through the City's land use boards. Three agencies in the City will be affected by this project, the Library, the Schools and Recreation. The City would plan for the three agencies to work together.

Discussion of Eminent Domain:

Mr. Abelson asked for explanation of the City's intentions with eminent domain. Mr. Bohenko said that the City Attorney will answer any legal questions that the Trustees ask and directed Library Director Mary Ann List to contact City Attorney Robert Sullivan to arrange for the exchange of information.

Mr. Abelson asked how the Library's access can be protected once the process goes forward.

Chairman Brnger asked that the Library be guaranteed representation on the Joint Building Committee. Dr. Shuldman said that he will ask Mayor Tom Ferrini to ensure such representation.

Mr. Abelson stated that the ideal solution to the problem would be for the Library Board and the School Board to go before the City Council on October 6th and explain that an agreement has been reached that the Library will have a voice at the table and that adequate access to the Library will be achieved. Dr. Shuldman agreed.

Mrs. Tehan reiterated the importance of joint planning, noting that the City Council has been supportive of the Library in the past.

Mrs. Ward noted that, while Dr. Shuldman and the City Manager couldn't make promises tonight, the Trustees can help work through the issues for the good of the whole community.

Dr. Shuldman agreed to expand his presentation for the October 6th City Council meeting to include that the School Board has had a discussion with the Library Trustees and to recognize the needs of the Library.

Moved by Jody Record: That Chairman Brnger will go to the October 6th City Council meeting to speak for the Library Trustees explaining the progress of this meeting and asking for representation on the Joint Building Committee for the Middle School.

Seconded and voted unanimously.

Several other Trustees reported that they will be attending the October 6th Council meeting also.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann List