

**Deerfield Public Library  
Special Board Meeting Minutes  
Citizens' Input Group Update to the Board  
April 24, 2010**

Attendees:

Board members –Ken Abosch (President), Ron Simon (Liaison to the CIG), Marla Bark Dembitz, Mary Courtney, Michael Goldberg, Sunday Mueller, Jeff Rivlin

CIG members – Co-chair Mark Fox, Co-chair Rick Lynn, Christine Barr, John Bartok, Cookie Center, Betsy Eisenhauer, Luisa Ellenbogen, Mike Gruenhut, Nancy O'Neill, Judy Smith, Amy Thale

Staff - Library Director Mary Pergander, Head of Readers Services/PR Karen Kleckner, Business Manager Carol Dolin

Financial consultant Steve Larson, Ehlers.

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW AGENDA

Mr. Abosch called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and welcomed attendees. The Board and CIG members introduced themselves. Mr. Abosch thanked the CIG for their time and assistance. He reviewed the agenda for the morning and introduced the CIG co-chairs to give the CIG report.

2. REPORT FROM THE CIG ON OPEN HOUSES AND CIG FEEDBACK

Mr. Lynn introduced the report entitled: V-squared - Value and Vision: CIG Report on Library Survey Results. He outlined the process used by the tallying group to analyze the survey data, develop three priorities, and identify the preferred options to address those priorities. He emphasized the idea that report may not be representative of the Deerfield community as a whole, but provides a window to the views of well-informed citizens.

a) Mr. Fox presented slides with charts illustrating feedback from 40 respondents broken down by category.

i. Responding to the question, "What do you consider the three most important improvements needed at the Library?"

- 33% said improve the facility
- 28% said increase space
- 9% said add meeting rooms and social spaces

Other significant responses included

- improve space utilization
- improve or add technology
- address parking needs

Parking, while being a concern to respondents, is seen as beyond the scope of the Library project alone and requires participation or leadership by the Village.

ii. Responding to the question, "Which option do you think is the best option for the Library Board to consider?"

- 60% prefer Option 4 – new building on existing Library property
- 35% prefer Option 3 – remodel and expand the existing building
- When considering the CIG members only, Options 1 and 2 drop away leaving support only for Options 3 and 4
- The data indicates that the more educated individuals became regarding the issues and options, the more likely they were to support Option 3 or 4

iii. Regarding the cost of the project

- 92% of respondents said their chosen option was affordable
- Significant questions arose regarding the accuracy of the cost estimates
- Education to increase confidence in the accuracy of the estimates is critical to gaining support

b) Mr. Lynn outlined the conclusions of the CIG:

- There is a clear need to make changes to the building to some extent
- Respondents overwhelmingly believe the Library needs to be in the city center
- The Board must convey the need for a Library building into the future, especially when considering the proliferation of inexpensive Internet access, book stores, and electronic books
- People need to be convinced of the value of the project now and going forward
- Parking is a secondary issue to respondents, yet still very important
- The Board needs to address skepticism regarding no increase in operating costs with a larger building, especially with regard to staffing
- The roles of and interaction between the Library Board and the Village Board with regard to the project need to be clarified for the public

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE BOARD TO THE CIG ON THE REPORT

Board: How many of the 40 respondents were CIG?

CIG: 10 were CIG members, 30 were open house attendees from the general public.

Board: 60% of respondents prefer a new building to remodeling. Were you able to discern what they were thinking and why they prefer that option?

CIG: The overwhelming response of open house attendees was that this project is necessary and if the money is to be spent, it is important to put it to the best use possible. A new building has more flexibility for the future and can more easily accommodate a changing world of information. It can grow and change more easily. It is also more likely to add to productivity of the staff, streamlining work, and increasing efficiency gains. Building new also avoids the cost and inconvenience of moving to a temporary site and allows the Library to continue to operate at full capacity during construction. A new building may offer more long term viability when compared to remodeling the current building with its existing structural limitations.

Board: How many open house participants did we have?

CIG: Deferred to Ms. Pergander, who said she thought 82 people had attended, including the public and CIG members, but said we would confirm that number.

Board: How would you describe the profile of the survey respondents?

CIG: No profiling information was included in the survey. People attending the open houses had an opinion about the project, positive or negative. Ms. Pergander: Building on that idea, the telephone survey will be completely random and will capture the full spectrum of demographics of residents, both Library users and non-users.

Board: Did the survey indicate the importance of the cost issue?

CIG: We got the impression that people are willing to spend money if they feel they stand to gain by doing so. If the Library can articulate the benefits gained by improving the Library, the project can move forward. On the other hand, we also hear that money is

VERY important. Some people said they were not aware that the Library is paid for with property taxes and would vote against any tax increases to improve the Library. It will be important to address the vision for the use of the Library in the future, not just the building design or exterior elevations. Answering the tax payer's questions, "How will this help the children, teens, families, seniors, etc? How does this increase and enrich MY life?" is crucial.

Question: Are we continuing to collect feedback through the website?

Ms. Pergander: Not at present, because we have no way to assess the background of the respondents. We are working on developing something for the Web to gather useful information.

Board: Is more explanation needed about how technology can help address staffing issues in a larger building?

CIG: This might be helpful. Anything that contributes to the soundness of the financial picture builds credibility and has the potential to move the project forward. The Library must also address the process for funding. How does the Library handle capital items? Regarding funding of the project, what can the Library Board do and what does the Village need to approve?

#### 4. COMMENTS FROM THE CIG AND BOARD ON FEEDBACK

Board: Several categories on the charts include space issues. Why weren't those categories combined into one top priority?

CIG: The responses in that section were write-ins so they didn't fit in neat categories. They were captured and grouped by theme, then sorted to create the charts. The differences in nuance caused the divisions in categories. For example, a person might have indicated more space in general as one priority and more meeting room space as another category, which created two distinct categories related to space.

Other comments from CIG members include the following:

- One issue to address is whether the purpose of the project is to enhance the Library for the Library or to enhance the Library to enhance the people of Deerfield. The phone survey might offer a better insight into how people perceive this issue.
- It was particularly helpful to see the cost breakout on a tax bill, i.e. the College of Lake County receives the same number of my tax dollars as the Library, or the daily cost to fund the Library is about the cost of a cola. Examples like this really illustrate the value I get from the Library.
- People appreciate a strong articulation of vision. What services will the Library offer? How will the physical space be used to benefit the community, especially into the future? Why would I use the Library and if I haven't before, and what would make me use it now?
- Information technology is changing with the Internet, e-books, i-Phones and the like. Where does the Library fit into this changing picture? Will we need a Library building in ten or twenty years? It is important to articulate the "why" of this project.
- When articulating the vision, it will be important to emphasize flexibility. The building must be able to adapt with changing technology and services. It might be helpful to get images of newer libraries to show where libraries are headed. This will

help to show the vision for the future and why libraries continue to be vital parts of their communities.

#### 5. DISCUSS THE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Simon: The goal was to widen the net to capture more voices from the community. The CIG has succeeded in doing so and the additional feedback is very valuable to the process. The Board has heard what the CIG recommends regarding the vision. The Library's architects research libraries for a living and are well equipped to assist in creating a visual interpretation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century libraries. Themes taken from the CIG report:

- a) Educating the public – need to reach people who are unaware of the Library and its benefits
  - i) Articulate the vision – “How is this good for me/my community?”
  - ii) Money – prove the cost estimates are valid, answer the questions
    - a. “How can we increase space without increasing staff?”
    - b. “How can gains in efficiency offset costs of increased operations that usually come with expansion?”
- b) The message must be clear, consistent, comprehensive and compelling – hire a professional PR firm?
- c) The message must articulate the idea that the project is not simply to build a better place to hold books, but how an improved Library improves the community today and into the future. Some examples might include:
  - i) Spaces for quiet reading and study, meeting, and storytelling
  - ii) Free public meeting space
  - iii) Modular and efficient, forward thinking with regard to technology
  - iv) Improved staff efficiency, streamlining work processes so more attention can be devoted to customer service
  - v) Upgrading infrastructure – we have done a good job of getting this across, but need to continue showing the building has served its purpose, but needs can no longer be met
- d) The message must address the questions about the Lindeman property, and issues related to the Village/quadrant parking

#### 6. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

Mr. Abosch outlined the next steps in the process.

- The Board will assimilate and digest the information. They may call a special meeting or discuss it at the next Board meeting.
- The results of the telephone survey should be available by the next Board meeting.
- The Board will decide on the option or possibly the top two options to pursue by late May or June.
- The Library Board will meet with the Village to share information about the option chosen
- Aggressive marketing and outreach will precede the second series of open houses and input sessions to draw as much public attendance as possible. These open houses will:
  - Share the results of the research and surveys
  - Articulate the value and vision of the proposed project
  - Share the Board's top (or possibly the top two) recommendations
  - Provide a means to gather final input and feedback to help the Board make the final choice
- The Board will commission architectural plans for the option selected, including floor plan and site plan concept in July, August, and September.

- The Library Board will meet with the Village leadership to share the plans and update them on the progress of the project.
- The Board will determine a strategy to secure funding, which may be a referendum or some other option.

Mr. Abosch welcomed questions or comments from the Board or CIG about the next steps.

CIG: Once there is a plan, does there need to be a referendum?

Board: If a referendum is sought, it would be an advisory referendum. Technically, a referendum is not required. From a community stand point, it makes sense to put the question out to voters for approval. The Board wants community input and approval of the project.

CIG: How will the next round of public meetings be different that the first one?

Board: The first round focused on basic education about the Library and offered four possible options. The second round will share the results of the research, identify the top one or two choices, articulate the value and vision, and seek final input and feedback.

The CIG suggested that a CIG-Public Relations committee be formed to communicate with the community. This committee could brainstorm ways to get people to the open houses and consider other avenues to educate people. One idea was to approach Deerfield High School teachers to see if this could be done as a summer project for a business class.

## 7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

Dorothy Collins – Deerfield resident

Requested that architects' plan includes climate controlled, secured, and private space for the servers. This is essential to the long term viability of the equipment and to the security of the system.

Bruce Shermerhorn – Deerfield resident

Why did some people think Option 3 would be better?

CIG: Some people started off thinking Option 3 would be better because it would cost less and utilize existing space, but after considering the options further, Option 4 seems to be the better value, offering more flexibility and potentially longer term viability for the building. Uncertainty remains about the value of Option 3 versus Option 4. It would be helpful to define clear differences in the deliverables with Option 3 compared with those of Option 4.

Stuart Fried – Deerfield resident

Does the Library have significant cash reserves and what will be contributed to the project?

Board: The Library has reserves of approximately \$3.5 million, which is insufficient for any of the options, although it could be used to secure additional financing for Option 1. The Board has committed \$2 million to whatever option is chosen. It is important to maintain some portion of the reserves for other needs.

## 8. SET NEXT MEETING, IF NECESSARY

No meeting was set at this time.

## 9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.