

Montague Board of Library Trustees -- Building Subcommittee
16 May 2023 -- Town Hall

Attendance Tricia Perham, lydia ievins, Will Quale, Caitlin Kelley, Walter Ramsey, Steve Ellis, Nancy Crowell (as member of the community)

Call to order.

3:33 Meeting called to order.

Develop official charge/mission for the Construction Application Advisory Committee.

Tricia gave Steve an overview to bring him up to speed on our reason for forming this committee and its purpose (following Greenfield's model): this committee will advise the consultant who creates the Building Program component of (ie, the lion's share of) our MPLCP grant application. They will be an appointed public body with open meetings; their charge is, essentially, to inform the consultant of what the community wants for a library building, imagining that the current library building doesn't exist.

Steve asked for clarification on whether "Building Program" means they are advising about programming activities or building design; the answer is "space and use".

We asked how the process worked with the recently-built DPW garage. Walter and Steve explained: it began with feasibility, design, community marketing, and then hiring an engineer to work with the building committee. That building committee had people with various elements of knowledge of DPW's space and use needs; past experience with building projects; and administrative strengths.

Steve warned that a large committee (like, larger than nine?) leads to tails wagging the dog and makes forming consensus difficult. He emphasized the importance not only of integrating broad/diverse interests into this committee but also of selecting members who will give it some shared sense of interest lest it break down or lose steam.

Steve also observed that moving from a study (or visioning) committee to a building (or nitty-gritty) committee is hard to do, politically, because community members on the first committee become invested in the project and don't want to be let go when the second committee -- which requires less broad representation and more specific knowledge -- forms. Making clear at the outset that this committee will fulfill its mission and then most of its members will not carry on to the next committee is key to managing committee members' expectations. Steve added that naming the committee well is part of the process of managing -- and limiting -- expectations.

We tossed around potential committee names without deciding on a winner yet.

We then developed a clearer charge for the committee: the committee will seek informed community input from a diverse variety of perspectives for the role of a main branch library for Montague, to be provided to a consultant for the purpose of writing the application for an MPLCP grant.

The proposed method by which this committee will fulfill its charge is: the committee will visit other libraries recently expanded or recently constructed, plus a visit to our Carnegie Library, with guided tours by library directors; committee members will fill out an anonymous feedback form at the end of each visit, which will be given to the consultant; and following the several library visits, the

committee's work will end with one moderated committee discussion led by the consultant. (The consultant will separately run a community survey and conduct focus groups to receive additional public input.)

Finalize list of potential committee members.

... is what the agenda said in advance of this meeting, but is not what we determined we must do next. We should first hire our consultant. We can invite specific people to apply, and also anyone else can apply; we can then choose our consultant from these applicants based on comparative criteria with a set fixed price. Candidates can submit qualifications and strategy, and we evaluate them on this (rather than a competitive bid situation). Walter will help us fix the price.

Caitlin will get an RFP from Leverett to use as a template for ours. Walter has RFPs from similar consultant hires which we can also draw from. Steve can reach out to folks in other towns such as Greenfield, Athol, and Erving to look at their library RFPs. Caitlin will then assemble an RFP. Meanwhile, the upcoming online MBLC training workshop which several of us will attend will also help us determine the consultant's role.

Adjournment

4:29 Meeting adjourned.