

**Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
Informal Meeting – Brown Bag Work Session
August 13, 2009**

Board members present:

Harriet Kalinsky, Phyllis Fleming, Doug Elliott, Susan Corrigan, Susan McDermott, Hilery Livengood, Joe Lock. Absent: Paul Pelletier.

Staff & others present:

Library Planner George Lawson, Tamara Glise, Karen Johnson, Sue Stannard, Christina Riedel, Doug Munson (for the Union,) Sarah Slack, Melody Spence; Council members Chuck Weineke, Justin Shields and Brian Fagan; City Clerk Ann Ollinger, former Foundation President Chris Schuety, Friends President Greer Fry, Friends Board member Robin Kash and several members of the public.

Library Board President Susan Corrigan - Susan called the meeting to order.

Library Board Vice-President Doug Elliott – Doug welcomed attendees. This informal work session is a summary and update of the Building Program. Prior to June 2008, the Cedar Rapids Public Library completed a Building Program to reconfigure the current facility to meet the growing needs of the library in 2008. Following the flood, it was decided the library needed to update the original program to determine whether those needs had changed.

A. Discussion of Library Building Program, George Lawson:

While working on the original needs assessment, George had extensive conversations with library staff, Trustees, the City Manager and Council members. The library needed to be completely re-done prior to the Flood of 2008 due to the way existing systems were working and the fact that after 20+ years, furniture, equipment, etc., needed to be replaced. In addition, projected population growth indicated the need for a facility of 135,000 to 160,000 square feet. The original site did not have a whole lot of room to get bigger, other than building upward. After the flood came, the Building Program was revisited and was just completed in June 2009. The study's focus is on operational/functional specifications for the library, not necessarily how the library will look inside and out. The Building Program is available on the website at <http://www.crlibrary.org>. Per George, this is a good time to be planning public libraries due to advances and services available to the community.

Within the past year, 76% of Iowans have visited public libraries. Library visits have increased 35% in the past decade in Iowa. Currently, there are two million registered borrowers in Iowa, which is a 20% increase in a decade. Libraries have become technology centers for communities. They provide services to teens and “tweens,” and young children and parents remain steady (with programming such as story times/toddler programs, etc.). People expect libraries to continue to do more for the community, as well

as maintain past services, which puts pressure on the size needed for libraries. The needs assessment indicated that the community wants an increase in programs and the size of programs available, as well as an increase in technology available. The library should be cost-effective in organization of services and staff operations in the library. Some of the possibilities include self-check-in, added space for teens, collaborative meeting spaces for students, independent business people, and non-traditional students. There was also discussion about splitting the current, over-arching Adult Service Department into two departments. In addition to the Adult Services Department, there would be a Technical Services Department for ordering, cataloging, etc.

A building program is what is handed to an architect. Within our building program is a chapter for each functional space within the library. On the handout that was given to attendees today, the main meeting room, two smaller rooms, and a conference room are listed. Total proposed space for the library is 104,167 square feet. The add-on listed on the bottom of the handout would be for office and meeting space for ISAIC. The cost of this would be in addition to the projected \$45 million. It is in the program as a consideration. Originally, the Building Program was two programs: one for the main library and the other for a west side branch. The original plan for the west side branch was 26,000 – 27,000 square feet. This has not been updated since post flood. Unassigned space is for restrooms, general circulation space, elevators, etc. The Building Program will be considered complete when the building is up. Collection makes up 28% of the building, approximately another one-third is “other” (walls, halls, etc.) and 45% will be computers, seating, meeting rooms, service desks, check-in areas, etc. A library is really a materials handling warehouse as well as a place for people. Reference materials, media, periodicals can now be accessed more on-line, so some space has actually been reduced. The space for new materials has increased from 490 square feet to 630 square feet (which equates to a 50% increase).

B. Question and Answer Session:

Q: With regard to Page 13 of the new draft, Hilery Livengood asked if the entrance should be at grade or raised.

A: It’s important for patrons to make the connection to the library as soon as possible. Buildings are designed for a specific site. With the current library, the complaint was that it took forever to actually get into the library from the parking lot.

Q: Hilery Livengood said, “The library is a special use building. How does this affect location?”

A: The Building Program is designed to be independent of site locations. The requirement is that it meets the functional specifications.

Q: Hilery Livengood asked, “Can any part of the program be phased out if money is an issue?”

A: George referred Hilery back to OPN. Some of the items at the core of the building would not make sense to phase out. For example, collection space is the easiest and

cheapest to build. The whole collection is only 28% of the building. How could that be shortened up?

Q: Phyllis Fleming asked what the square footage was for the circulation desk.

A. The desk itself will be something modular that can be reinvented over time. For example, the circulation desk in the Moline, IL Library is small, but there are additional stations that are like individual podiums. The equipment can be turned for self-serve stations as circumstances dictate.

Q. Chris Shuety asked how flexible our current program will be.

A. OPN was selected because they are very flexible. Technology is ever changing and is being taken into consideration when planning the new library. Needs such as wireless access, places to plug in devices for power, and meeting spaces with media capability are taken into consideration. People have sophisticated expectations.

Q. Harriet Kalinsky asked how many study rooms were in the plan and about their size.

A. Study rooms are detailed on Page 30 in the program, but amount to about 1,740 square feet of space and include (4) 2-place, (4) 6-place and (2) 12-place rooms.

Q. Susan McDermott asked if the former meeting room use was analyzed. Were 50 about the participation that we were having in the room? A room for 50 people could seem very large if it's not filled.

A. Rooms accommodating 50 will be approximately half the size of this programming room. Dividers can be placed in the room to cut the room to a third or two-thirds of its full size.

Q. Susan Corrigan said that before the flood the library had 1,200 patrons a day. Does George expect this to grow?

A. After a new building opens for business the gate count usually increases permanently from 30 to 50 percent over the old gate count. George believes it could be much more. The second year typically levels out and goes back to a regular two to three percent incremental growth. Per Joe Lock, pre-flood circulation increased about five percent a year.

Q. Chris Shuety asked what the current trend is for library systems. Centralized or decentralized?

A. The current trend is for large, centralized systems, a strong central library supplemented by branches. A central library is a critical mass of resources so that when patrons come to the main library, they can find what they need for that day. As Cedar Rapids grows, branches will pop up. This is why we're looking at a larger west side branch, because the west side of Cedar Rapids is growing. The Hennepin County library in Minnesota is the largest in the country with regional branches of 80,000 square feet. Des Moines is at 110,000 square feet and has six or seven branches, and this does not include Ankeny or other surrounding communities. Des Moines, however, does not have a strong metro library network like Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha and Marion do. This metro library network acts as branches for each other. The Elgin, Illinois Library, which is a

community similar in size to Cedar Rapids, is at 135,000 square feet and Elgin just opened a couple of branch libraries. Kalamazoo, MI just built a new library at 135,000 square feet and they have a downtown branch.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees will be doing another Brown Bag Work Session in two weeks and will feature OPN architects Bradd Brown and Bruce Hamous who will give presentations on current, best practices in library design. This will be an opportunity for everyone to become better educated in design choices and there will be a lot of images to look at. Doug Elliott encouraged those attending the session to come back two weeks from today on Thursday, August 27 at noon. If you would like to comment about the Library Building Program, just click on “contact us” on the library website.

The Brown Bag Work Session was adjourned.