

MINUTES
of the Board of Directors of the
Bridgeport Public Library and Reading Room
for the special meeting
held at the Ralphola Taylor Center 790 Central Avenue, Bridgeport CT
on Tuesday July 18, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Directors Brown, Christy, Cunningham, Errichetti, Holden and O'Donnell, along with Interim City Librarian Baldino, staff members John Solits and Nance Sweeney, and consultants, Paul Antinozzi, F. Michael Ayles, Joe Culotta and Anthony Stewart, as well as many members of the public, including, Sen. Ed Gomes, Rep. Andre Baker, Councilmember Eneida Martinez, East End NRZ President Keith Williams.

Absent: Directors, Baraka and Osborne-Gant.

Call to Order

The Special Meeting was noticed for the sole purpose of provided a Charrette with presentation by Antinozzi Associates re conceptual design of the new Newfield Branch for Community input.

Councilmember Martinez had arranged with the East End NRZ to include the presentation in its agenda for its regular monthly meeting at this time and provided notice to the community at large. President Williams called the NRZ meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Following introduction of attendees and completion of its other business, East End NRZ President Keith Williams offered the floor to the Library. President O'Donnell called the special meeting to order at approximately 6:20 p.m. and introduced the design team from Antinozzi Associates, Paul Antinozzi, Mike Ayles and Joe Culotta as well as the developer for the project, Anthony Stewart of Ashlar Construction. Mike Ayles made introductory comments regarding the history of design to date and turned the presentation over to Joe Culotta who walked the audience through the program components, floor plan to accomplish it and schematic elevations for the new Newfield Library showing the various facets of the design and anticipated materials to be used to incorporate an addition to the existing building that will provide approximately 12,000 square feet of library space on one floor, level with the existing main floor, together with a community room and conference room at grade level that may be accessed during non-library hours.

Although initial concerns were raised about coordination with the adjacent plans for the Civic Block project controlled by others, in particular with regard to promised parking to benefit the library on the Civic Block parcel, the discussion focused on reaction to the proposed design and the timetable to complete construction drawings by November, 2017, complete the City approved bonding sales, bid the project and begin construction in March, 2018 with construction anticipated over approximately ten months for opening in late

2018 / early 2019. Developer Anthony Stewart reviewed the process and assuaged concerns expressed by those in attendance that the library project would be slowed by the adjacent development. Mr. Stewart explained that great care had been taken to separate the projects so that the library could proceed regardless of progress, or lack thereof, in moving the Civic Block forward by the City and its selected developer Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust. Options for temporary parking to be made available on the Civic Block parcel, all of which is dependent upon City Zoning review, which has begun with regard to the library project, were considered and generally accepted to ensure that use of the new library is not delayed. The community made clear its desire to have the library open and functioning as soon as possible.

Rep. Baker explained the process for state bonding and indicated that success required consistent community support for the project. Director Holden also reiterated the status of the City approved bonding and urged the community, if a new library is desired, to confirm its support for the bonding and construction of the new library. Director Holden then requested specific comments from those in attendance regarding aspects of the design presented. Joe Culotta highlighted specific areas of the design and how they are intended to accomplish the desired program requirements. He noted that prior comments regarding re-working the original entrance, that will be used for egress only, as well as making the new ADA accessible entrance to the community room lobby and library spaces more inviting and impressive had been taken into consideration, but not yet incorporated in the design as presented pending this community input.

Director Holden solicited additional comments regarding the layout, location of computer stations in all areas of the new library designated for adult, teen and children uses. The general consensus and all comments were very favorable to the proposed design, in particular the layout and construction materials that would highlight the brickwork of the original building with warm wood-like timber elements and extensive floor to ceiling glass to bring light in and achieve the desired effect of making the library as open, bright and inviting as possible.

Among the issues raised for further consideration by the architects were:

- Stairs on side of the Existing main Entry are for Egress only and are to be re-evaluated;
- Parking issues need to be resolved between the Library/Antinozzi Associates and the City/Economic Development/Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust to provide zoning approval and for temporary parking on the Civic Block parcel;
- Access, especially re handicap distances, from parking to the Library to be developed;
- New Main Entry to have “Wow Factor” and stronger presence;
- Type of Glass - ballistic level to be determined;

- Anti-graffiti measures/coating can be applied to help mitigate, but keeping appearance remains essentially a community responsibility;
- Heating system – likely forced hot air system (Show roof equipment and screening); and
- Incorporate Roof Drainage – Gutters and downspouts

The presentation concluded with a very favorable response and acceptance by the community. No action was needed or taken by the Library Board pending further design consideration of the community input.

Adjournment

The community charrette concluded and the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

James E. O'Donnell
Secretary Pro Tem