

**ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2015
6:00 P.M.
ROCKPORT OPERA HOUSE**

Present: Chair William (Bill) Chapman, Vice Chair Kenneth McKinley, Tracy Lee Murphy, Geoffrey Parker and Owen Casas Also present: Richard C. Bates, Town Manager; Chair Cate Monroe, Eliza Haselton and Stephanie Lash all members of the Library Committee, Ben Blackmon, Library Director and members of the public

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Bill Chapman, Chair called the meeting to order at 6: 00 P.M.

II. PRESENTATION BY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

a. Current and Future Library Programs

b. Estimated Space Requirements

Cate – the committee is not unanimous on its vote regarding library issues. It is a very diverse group. Future planning has been going on for a long time. There is a lot of information on the Library website. The Library pays for all the programs and all of the services that they offer to the public. We have had a study done that shows what area is needed for the programs to function and the space that is need for the workers to efficiently do their jobs. Space is also needed for unassignable space which includes the bathrooms, stairwells, etc. The range for this space will be 10.30% of the building.

Our numbers are only estimates. Using the University of Wisconsin theory as an assessment tool, we need 6,100 square foot for all the services we currently offer.

According to Steve Podgajny's study we would need 9,264 square feet for our program space. The Committee voted on 8,750 square feet as the optimal space. Ben Blackmon, Library Director did a projection of space needed. He is organizing a move to a temporary site as well. We have 25,000 adult fiction books, 1,400 audio items and 11,000 children's books.

We need to plan for the future as well. We will be having continuing programs to meet patron's needs. We need to plan for modest room for growth. We need to expand a teen area space as at the present time the space is very small. We need more space for computers as technology is a large part of our daily needs. The majority of the Committee supported this plan. This includes; common area – 500; public technology – 300; children's room – 1,500; fiction and non-fiction – 3,000; staff space and workers – 900; program reading room – 700; storage 300; other books –

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

700; conference room – 300; plus misc. – 550. The conclusion is that we are not architects, but the majority of us support this plan.

Our needs are as follows: to have a flexible floor plan; the establishment of a building committee; \$50,000 building fund. The library is free to our residents. It is a place for people to read and get books. The building needs to serve the needs of all of the citizens in Rockport. We are encouraged in this challenge to build a lovely library for all of us.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment should be directed to items on tonight's agenda. Public comment should be brief, limited to no more than 3 minutes per speaker

John Priestley – what does the space include? It does not include bathrooms, walls, etc. You need to add 25-30% for this space.

Jim Ruddy – the unassignable space is 27% which equals 3,200 square feet. The total space needed is 11,988 square feet, so basically you are asking for a 12,000 square foot building. This is four times our current library.

Peter Chamberlain – the Friends of the Library have several concerns. #1. We are concerned about the location. We believe that it would be better to build a new library where the school was. There is no parking, so we often use other libraries. Keep your options open. #2. Have you spoken to the Bok family? If not you are not being responsible.

Rick – I have, but the deed is very clear that the property goes back to the family.

Helen Shaw – are you looking for the heirs? What are the current state probate laws? Who are the heirs? You would need to find out the current law and how many children Mrs. Bok had.

Bill Frolich – my concern is that I thought the vote that was taken showed that several people did not want to consider the former RES site. Shouldn't we consider the current space? We are facing several financial demands. One of which is a new middle school for \$20,000,000. You need to think about the retired people living on social security. You need to take into account all of the residents particularly the elderly. I am puzzled why 7,500 square feet isn't adequate. Why doesn't the committee and the Select Board consider that issue. You should be looking into the next few years of potential large increases in taxes.

Linda K. – talked about last year's election, Article 9 "Do you agree that the Town of Rockport should primarily consider the former RES site as a location for a new

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

library?" Right before the election information was sent out to all the residents with false information. It was not based on facts. Are we forgetting about that vote? David Jackson - I have lived here for thirty years. The Town of Camden has a library of 9,000 square feet that is fully utilized. The space includes two bathrooms and a closet. As to the vote last November, what does it mean? It was non-binding. The first question being do we build a new library. Why are we ignoring, but embracing the other article to utilize RES? The present site, a memorial park and library or combination of the two is the most expensive to build on and is the most impractical. If you don't consider RES, we will be back here in six months to consider it.

Doug Poisson – I have spoken to all my neighbors in my neighborhood and we really don't want to pay more taxes. Based on the numbers for a 12,000 sq. ft. library, it would cost \$3.6 million. We should take this seriously and use our pencil and paper and make it smaller. I urge you to be serious and realize that smaller is cheaper and better.

Patty Witt – moved here in 1978. There was a grant for \$10,000 that Molly Larson authorized to be spent for an architect. There was a report for a \$4 million library at RES. So we do have an idea what it would be and how much it would cost.

Sally Cook – I am not convinced that the current library cannot be repaired. A study was never done of the air quality. I would recommend that one be done and that they look at the walls and foundation to see if there is a mold problem.

Priestly – regarding the cost and the current site, it is not challenging. Could we get a release from the Bok family? The current site would be less expensive. You could sell RES and use the money for the cost of a new library.

Bob Baldwin – my concern is this has been a caustic process for the library staff, Library Committee and the Select Board. I think that so many plans and proposals are time wasted. We need to make a compromise.

IV. SELECT BOARD DISCUSSION:

Rick - quoted parts from his eight page memo to the Select Board. Our comments may make some people happy and others not happy. We need to build a new library.

- a. Library Programs
- b. Library Space Requirements

Geoff – we have heard an hour of public testimony and all of these efforts are valuable. Will you be able to work with a lesser number?

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Ben – yes, I could do that. We can keep it a cozy and friendly library. I am advocating for the programs and I will do the best job that I can in whatever space we have.

Geoff – another floor will cost a considerable amount of money and probably double the cost.

Rick - How important is the square footage to the operation of the library?

Priestley – I believe that you have enough information to make a decision.

Bill – talking about space, I believe that a basement hides a lot of sins.

Ken – the use of spaces can be multi use. What we are doing here is hearing the library's thoughts on their importance of the programs and collections.

Tracy – we have talked about more space for the teens. We have talked this to death. At some point we need to have a belief in what we have been given for the numbers. We need to decide if what they have presented to us is what we need to make a decision.

Geoff – I still have a question for Ben. What does the growth look like to you?

Ben – for the next twenty to thirty years, the room for growth is quite modest. It is difficult to determine what it will be in the future.

Owen – thank you to everyone who wrote to us. I have a number in my head, but want to know what the taxpayers have the stomach for? We haven't seen the fundraising part of it yet.

Bill – the Library Committee will be bringing in a professional to help to decide that answer.

Ben – the funding will be split. The operating cost of 20% is paid by the Library and the Town pays for staff, wastewater and the building.

Cate – they will be hearing from a fundraising consultant.

Geoff – should we hear a short comment from the public?

Tracy – we need to move forward. No more comments.

Ken – let's see if we can wrap up item a & b.

Tracy – are we going to listen to all of this again? We have heard it all before. We need to move forward.

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Geoff – I am concerned that we have done our due diligence getting the word out to the media.

Bill – we have all of the information posted on the Town’s website, notices are posted at the Town Office and other places in Town and we have several reports that are available.

Tracy Murphy moved that we accept the recommendation of the Library Committee’s report of 8,750 square feet plus unassignable space. Geoffrey Parker seconded the motion. VOTE: 5 – FOR – 0 OPPOSED

Tracy – this is a policy decision. We need to let the architects choose from other reports.

Ken – disagreed and said that the information should be available and they need to know what people want for space.

Owen – we need to bring the space down.

- c. Physical Considerations, e.g., parking, exterior spaces
- d. Location Considerations

Geoff – proposed that both sides of the road be combined and to consider it as one site. We should incorporate the monuments on the site.

Tracy – we need to talk about other sites like the Town Office site, RES and any other parcels that Rockport owns.

Owen – what is the value of the RES land now?

Tracy – I am sure that it is a reasonable amount of money.

Rick and Bill – the Library land reverts back to the heirs if it is no longer used for a library.

Geoff – why are we adding more options when you say that we are wasting time on this and that we need to move on?

Tracy – why wouldn’t you consider RES? We are chasing square footage. I think that it is short sighted to immediately jump to Limerock Street. We are clinging to one site.

Ken – the vote in November was not to primarily consider the RES site. We are going in the direction we should go and that is the combined site of the present Library. An Architect can tell us what it will cost to build there.

Geoff – we could use the primary site or a combined site.

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Owen – we could have a 12-18 space roundabout there for parking.

Tracy – you are making up numbers, but we have ordinances that we need to go by.

Ken – we should have some off street parking on site. I don't want to argue about that. A garden aspect and a space for the monument would make an appropriate setting there.

Owen – I didn't just pull out the numbers. I looked at a conceptual plan with that many spaces.

Ken – we want to look at the entire site. It should have seating, gardens, etc.

Bill – it is a possibility that the basement have useable space where storing and sorting of books for the book sale could take place.

Owen – felt that it was fair to bring up the outdoor space. We need to salvage as many trees as possible.

Geoff – talked about making Limerock Street one way or closing off that end of the street.

Tracy – brought up the November Ballot questions 8 and 9 and why the Board listens to one of them to not have the library at the RES site, but dismiss the one that was against a new library.

Ken – they are different questions.

Bill – we have been at this for 2 hours and 40 minutes and we need to come to a decision. Do you want to take a break or adjourn until another night to complete the discussion? Should we have another vote in November when the numbers will be high because of the presidential vote or possibly in June during the primary vote?

**Kenneth McKinley moved that we primarily consider the combined site on either side of Limerock Street and include some off street parking and green space.
Geoffrey Parker seconded the motion.**

Owen – there is a lot of different factors that go into this decision and I want to thank you for that information. The RES site could become a source or real estate taxes if we sell it.

VOTE: 4 FOR – 1 OPPOSED (Murphy)

e. Creation of an Ad Hoc Library Building Committee; consideration of its purpose, mission, results and deadline(s)

Bill – how should we progress with this? We need to have an architect on the committee.

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Tracy – we need to give them our guidelines and they will need a mission statement.

Ken – we need a wide range of views and the charge we give them is critically important.

Geoff – we should each come up with a list of candidates.

Bill – those who take an interest in this project should apply for the committee.

Geoff – what size should the committee be?

Bill – seven?

Geoff – seven or nine?

Tracy – if we invite them to apply, it is no guarantee that they will be chosen.

Ken – what about a subcommittee?

Tracy – what is the charge of this committee?

Bill – we need something to put on the ballot.

Ken – we need to draft a RFQ and they need to help us choose from the responses by making a recommendation. We need to populate the committee with enough experts.

Geoff – we are massive control freaks and are at our worst right now. We don't need to worry about brick versus glass.

Tracy – they need to know what we expect from them and we need to be clear about it.
How do we want them to work with the design groups?

Rick – in Rockport, we do not have a shortage of smart creative people. Let's get them on the bus and move forward.

Bill – the committee should be populated with most of the members if not all from the Town.

Ken – I would lean heavily on Rockport residents.

Rick – you could have a non-resident as an advisory member and a non-voting member.

Bill – we need to come up with a mission statement. Do you want to meet on Tuesday, November 17th in the afternoon? We need to let them know what the time constraints are and what we want them to do or not do. Should we meet at 4:00 here at the Opera

ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

House? What are your thoughts? We need to resolve the Bok gift now or down the road? There are several heirs involved.

Rick – the property is ours unless we vacate it and then it reverts back to the family.

Tracy – we should get them to sign a new deed.

Bill – should we track them down and what would the cost be to do so?

Rick – we have a lot on our plate right now and this will require a lot of extra work.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 p.m. Geoffrey Parker moved to adjourn the meeting. Tracy Murphy seconded the motion. VOTE: 5 FOR – 0 OPPOSED

Respectfully submitted,

LINDA M. GREENLAW
TOWN CLERK as RECORDING SECRETARY