

CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

Monday, December 13, 2021

5:30 PM

Library Auditorium

In Attendance: Jeremy Clemans, Chris Casco, the Library Director-Todd Fabian, Becky Herrmann, Michelle Marino, Norm Kinsler, Charles O'Leary, Lisa Sands, Ali Sekou.

CPL Foundation Members present: Stacy Brown and Wendy Follansbee

- B. Herrmann calls to order at 5:35 pm
- N. Kinsler moves to accept minutes of November 1, 2021 monthly meeting. C. O'Leary seconds; M. Marino abstains
- Foundation Update
 - Review of Foundation meeting addressing the letter from Director Todd Fabian
 - B Herrmann and T. Fabian were able to attend the Concord Public Library Foundation Zoom meeting with Director of Charitable Trusts Tom Donovan. Donovan clarified that the Foundation does have the ability to give grants to other organizations for library-related projects. The Foundation will be working on updating their by-laws and mission in the future, and potentially look at a title change for group.
- Library Director's Report and Monthly Update on Covid situation
 - Old Business - none
- Discussion on building needs for the Penacook Branch and how to provide outreach to Penacook
 - Library Director Todd Fabian presented a short slide show reporting on the existing services and challenges at the Penacook Branch. Highlights included:
 - There is no room to expand and no parking on the parcel of land the Penacook Branch is on
 - Reminder that Superintendent of Public Properties Jay Burgess said in order to address all needs, it would cost over \$900,000 to bring the building up to 21st Century compliance. It would cost close to 3 times what the building is worth.
 - If we were to move it somewhere else it would also be well over a million dollars.
 - Library Staff already partner with Merrimack Valley School District and hope to expand on that
 - Library card sign ups at the schools
 - Newsletters for outreach
 - Growing relationships with the educators at Penacook schools
 - Rolfe Park programming
 - Working with the Penacook Community Center/Boys and Girls Club
 - Virtual library programming is being encouraged
 - Work with Penacook area retirement communities - how can we reach them?
 - Upcoming programming
 - Retirement Center
 - Library Card signup at programs

- Book Delivery Service – possibly provide delivery to an area or to a retirement community on X days per month. Just started working on this idea and will identify location and interest from the community.
- Tech help on-site
- Take and make crafts - drop-off locations - crafts for all ages
- Oral history project - start to collect oral history from the public and file/categorize them to get an oral history library started.
- Explore other spaces for programs: United Church of Penacook, Concord Sports Center, Penacook Village Express Laundromat, Potential new park on the river - ideal for outdoor programming on-site
- Services to trial - patron holds to be picked up after programs, library cards on-site
- Open Penacook Branch return bin now to evaluate usage
- Marketing - email blasts to promote types of services
- Program Fliers - post in grocery stores, post offices, laundromats, etc.
- Approx 2690 households in the 03303 zip code - postcards mailed to each household promoting programs and services
- Partnership with Boscawen? Library is on the 3rd-floor of the Boscawen Police Station. Different operating systems (ILS), very small space in their library and no room to expand, lots to discuss if partnership were to be pursued. T. Fabian will touch with the Boscawen library again regarding potential partnership
- Looking forward - continue to evaluate any potential library space in or around Penacook village
- Long term goal is to have a physical space in Penacook - still the end goal
 - Questions for short term increased access for residents: J. Clements - asks how far is the Penacook Branch from the Boscawen library - .8 miles –
 - B. Herrmann pointed out that we are not discussing combining Boscawen and Penacook collections - just discussing how the two libraries can partner. She suggests that perhaps the city can subsidize library cards at Boscawen for Penacook residents in the interim. Out-of-town cards present cost \$20 at the Boscawen Library. That money could expand programs and collection for the Boscawen Library to accommodate the potential increase in use.
 - L. Sands asks what the library has available for people in Penacook regarding wifi connectivity. T. Fabian states that people sit outside their cars utilizing the Penacook Branch wifi
 - N. Kinsler asks if there is any data about Pencaook residents who currently use the main branch - T. Fabian does not have that data. But percentage wise - 1.5% of the total annual circulation of the library (including the Heights and the Penacook Branch) comes from Penacook Branch

- L. Sands asks when the last time foot traffic and circ data was tracked. T. Fabian - pre-pandemic was the last time that data was tracked. Anywhere from 5-20 people in a 3-hour shift.
- N. Kinsler asks how does that compare to the Heights? T. Fabian - The Heights Branch was quite a bit busier than the Penacook Branch pre-pandemic.
- L. Sands - comparing those two facilities - are both branches open each week similarly? T. Fabian states - pre-pandemic, both branches were open 15 hours a week (3 days)
- In January CPL will be opening a third day at the Heights Branch.
- A. Sekou suggests that the Heights Branch would receive an increase in traffic if services were marketed more.
- B. Herrmann states that the popularity of the Heights Branch should not undermine the library needs of the Penacook Community.
- Discussion of how the Turner Group did an assessment of the CPL buildings. B. Herrmann shared a copy of her assessment with S. Brown (CPL Foundation member/Newly-elected City Council Member)
- N. Kinsler suggests offering free shuttle transportation from the Penacook Branch to the downtown library? City buses are free for the foreseeable future. Perhaps a specific city bus time could be allotted to library patrons?
- B. Herrmann suggests lockers or kiosks for hold pickups as a temporary solution. T. Fabian responded that it is very costly and there is not an ideal space.
- B. Herrmann brought up the idea of a Pop-up library - investment of \$75,000 - vehicle that could visit Penacook neighborhoods, schools and retirement communities. T. Fabian replied that there is no easy storage space to load and unload the vehicle. B. Herrmann explains that it can be a customized truck - not an actual book mobile – might be used as a stop-gap measure while there is no physical building to go to.
- T. Fabian noted that the Book trailers and ebikes would accomplish the same thing - CPL is waiting on funding – 2 potential electric bikes would go all over town and to parks
- L. Sands asked about the actual Penacook building. T. Fabian said that a new building is close to or exceeding a million dollars to replicate or to update and repair what we already have. Parking would still be a problem even if all the building issues are fixed.
- C. Casco asked that if the Penacook Library building is sold, could all the money be put toward a new building at a new location deposited in a *specific fund* for the new Penacook library?

- C. Casco suggests that the Penacook Community Center should be explored as a viable space for new library services.
- J. Clemans recommends we pen a letter to the City Council saying that we as the Board have met and that we support library services in Penacook but that the Trustees feel that investing money into the renovation of the Penacook Library building does not make sound financial sense. The Penacook Library Branch is not adequate. It is the city's responsibility to meet the needs of the Penacook community. A plan needs to be made.
- J. Clemans states that libraries are more than just books. It's about a lot more than that. What does a 21st-century library look like? The Penacook Library could have a physical location similar to the Heights setup - a community center model (stage, basketball courts, flexible space). What are the unique needs of the Penacook population?
- C. O'Leary compares the Penacook community to the community that utilizes the Baker Free library. Why couldn't we have space like that? It's not just the building - it's programming and access; but it should also be a physical place where people really want to be.
- L. Sands states that trying to figure out the Penacook Branch and how to move forward with a new CPL renovation has been an issue for many years in her experience being on the CPL Board of Trustees and on the CPL Foundation.
- B. Herrmann asks T. Fabian what his vision is. T. Fabian responds that he would like to see the Heights Branch become a permanent branch. He has a similar goal for Penacook, or at least a shared partnership space, but managing 3 facilities would require more staffing long term.
- C. Casco and J. Clements brainstorm wording of letter to send to the City Council. B. Herrmann asks that the two of them work on a draft that emphasizes the Trustees commitment to the Penacook community, the inadequacy of the current library branch and the desire that if the building and land is sold that the resulting funds be earmarked for future Penacook Library facilities. Urging the city to include and engage the residents of Penacook in plans for the future should also be included in the draft letter.
- L. Sands compliments T. Fabian on the ideas in the slide show and suggests that we focus on how we can bring the people of Penacook into the fold and foster the connection between the two communities of Concord and Penacook.

- New Business
 - Strategic Plan re: Trustees and Foundation – most likely February
 - L. Sands would like to work on outlining 5 or 6 areas where the CPL Foundation, the Trustee Board and the Library staff's goals intersect and work on including shared goals in the upcoming Strategic Plan.
 - Public Comments
 - W. Follansbee was helpful throughout the Penacook discussion and expressed her support for Penacook Library services. She also communicated her distress over the idea of losing the library in the Penacook community and encouraged the Trustee Board to confirm their support to seek a Penacook Library solution. "Losing a library would be just horrible."
 - Next Meeting: January 3, 2022
 - C. Casco motions to adjourn at 7:16 pm