

Special Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2009
4:30 p.m.

Present: Asplund, Buck, Hunigan, Kroll, McDonald, Peterson, Reichel. [7]
Absent: Conolly, Phillips. [2]

Also present: Pam Van Kirk (Library Director) and Nancy Terpening (Library Staff).

President Reichel called the special board meeting to order at 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, June 18, 2009. He explained that the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the results of the NAEIR and Econofoods site evaluations with architect Mark Misselhorn (Apace Design) and Bob Johnson (Metzger Johnson).

Mr. Misselhorn gave an overview of the two sites. The board received copies of the brief written summary of his site visits. He explained that this was a visual survey to see if one or both of the properties warrant further evaluation.

Mark explained that regular proportion and shape of a property is important in looking for a good building site. NAEIR has a good proportion. He also said that proximity to schools is a debatable subject. It is more problematic if a library is located near a middle school because there can be latchkey and disciplinary problems. This varies according to community but it does impact the programming and budget for youth materials and staff.

The NAEIR parking lot needs extensive renovation. There could be zoning issues with drainage and sewage. A substantial storm water handling system would be needed.

The NAEIR building has good ceiling height for duct work, lighting, and sprinkler system. There is a good span of floor space. It is a solid building. There is adequate square footage but it is on a single level. Mr. Misselhorn said that having a single story public library of this size is impractical. He said that it is more practical for staff to supervise and easier for patrons to use no more than 35,000 square foot levels. The library board should be looking for a two story building or an expandable property as the most efficient and practical.

Mr. Misselhorn said that it is sometimes possible to add on to an existing structure by building up but the original footings are not able to support the extra weight. The NAEIR roof structure is for a roof not a floor. Building consultant Fred Schlipf was consulted and he said that the lack of perimeter windows was another problem. Perimeter windows allow a view into and out of the building while providing natural light. Lighting would be needed in the middle of the building and a skylight is an impractical solution.

Kroll asked if the cost benefit of the original building would be lost by making the necessary changes to the structure. Mr. Misselhorn said that remodeling costs are expensive and existing buildings are not always a bargain.

The NAEIR location is somewhat remote being on the Northwest part of town but it is easy to get to. It doesn't meet the desire of the board as being close to the downtown area.

The property is plenty large enough and available for purchase, but Mr. Misselhorn believes that the property is too large and not the most efficient to make it fit the building plan.

Kroll said that what made that property attractive was the ability to reuse an empty building and the thought that it would be a lower cost alternative. Kroll asked if he was correct in understanding that use of the NAEIR property wouldn't save the library money but could possibly cost more. Mr. Misselhorn said that he was correct and that the cost of redoing the parking lot also needed to be considered. Kroll said that it doesn't seem practical to continue to pursue the NAEIR property. Mr. Misselhorn said that at this time it's not worth examining the roof and checking for asbestos. He said that other sites should be evaluated and NAEIR should be ranked with them.

Mr. Misselhorn said that it is unlikely that the board will find the perfect site. The proximity, availability, and affordability of a site are the points on which to concentrate. If the NAEIR building was reusable, the electrical, HVAC, and sprinkler systems would be examined. Currently, the HVAC system would have to be started from scratch. The water & electrical service is adequate but might not be practical. There could be roof questions. Energy efficient windows are expensive. Even though the building is solidly constructed it is not insulated. Kroll said that the NAEIR building should be viewed as a 6 sided cube and all sides would have to be fixed or renovated. He said that it was his understanding that this was not a bad building but not a building for a public library. Mr. Misselhorn said that was correct the NAEIR was not very suitable for a public library.

The Econofoods site on East Main is closer to the downtown center but further to the east this is more of a plus. The lot is 3.08 acres but only 2.34 acres are useable. The parking lot is in poor condition. There is mildew in the cold storage areas.

Mr. Misselhorn said that the Econo building is a pre-engineered building that can't be expanded vertically. The Econo building is a lesser quality building than NAEIR. The ceiling height poses challenges as it is not adequate for mechanical, electrical, and sprinkler. A finished height of 11-12 feet minimum is necessary.

Mr. Misselhorn does not recommend or advice to expand or add-on to the Econofoods building. He would like to do site analysis sketches to determine if the site could accommodate a two-story library on the north side along Main Street with parking around and on south side. He said that this is not a floor plan but a site study. The space could be too small to adequately meet the needs of the library for many decades.

Kroll said that starting with restrictions limits our flexibility. Mr. Misselhorn said that he can't say that the site is too small but the question is whether it is big enough. He said that the board should look at other properties and rank them. Econofoods is accessible,

and closer to downtown. Mr. Johnson felt that the library should continue to pursue the site and that it is a decent location. Mr. Misselhorn said that the site plan study would be well within scope of work.

Kroll asked Mr. Misselhorn and Mr. Johnson if the board should be looking at other sites. Mr. Misselhorn said that the board definitely should exhaust all possible sites. He suggested working with a commercial realtor. It is prudent to look at as many properties as possible.

McDonald commented that it is not a cost saving approach to use an existing building. Mr. Misselhorn said that was true but if the right building is found it could be a cost saver. The building has to be practical, low maintenance, and economical.

Kroll suggested looking at the OT Johnson site. Reichel said that the board conducted a review of 18 potential sites and narrowed the list down to three. He said that the board considered demo costs and property purchase price in that review. Mr. Johnson said that OT's is a decent site but that parking could be an issue. Purchasing adjacent property might be necessary. Mr. Misselhorn said that an analysis of the feasibility of the site could be worthwhile. The board agreed that the site should be studied.

Reichel said that the next steps are to have Apace do a conceptual site analysis of the Econo site to determine what can be done with the existing site and the possibility of expanding on other sites. A site analysis of O.T. Johnson site will be conducted. The board agreed with these steps.

Asplund is concerned that the Econo site is too close to a busy main street and the area is not safe after dark. Mr. Misselhorn said that a good rule of thumb is that if a site is good for retail it is good for a public library. He said that also a busy street is a positive. Hunigan agreed that the neighborhood is not the nicest but that the downtown area can be not very nice.

Reichel moved to proceed with the conceptual site analysis of the Econo site and to conduct a site study of the OT Johnson site. Kroll seconded. There was voice vote agreement.

The board will hold a special board meeting on July 16 at 4:30 to discuss the results with Mr. Misselhorn.

The board will hold a special board meeting on June 22 at 8 a.m. to discuss the carpet for the reading room and a personnel matter.

Adjourned: 6:10 p.m.