

DECEMBER 18, 2014

**COMMUNITY MEETING HELD AT FANEUL BRANCH OF BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY:
PROGRAMMING STUDY**

PRESENTATION NOTES

A brief presentation on the Draft Existing Conditions Report (previously issued to the community for review and comment) was made, together with an introduction to the in-progress development of the Library Building Program.

Existing Conditions

- Most people walk to the Faneuil Branch Library, it is a neighborhood resource
- Need to explore a different “Main Entry” other than the ADA accessible entry through Children’s as it can invite strangers into an area with children.
- Back light above entry is not used often as the neighbors complain that it is too bright
- Back door creaks, loudly.
- Building has civic presence
 - o When the trees pass on, a different tree could be implemented that does not mature to such a large size.
 - o Community adamant about not cutting down the trees as part of a renovation plan
- There are not many Art Deco Style Libraries in the Boston area, we don’t want to do anything that would compromise the architectural integrity or heritage of this building.
 - o Community member submitted an application, nearly 10 years ago, to get the building on the National Historic Register – have not had a response
 - Exterior Modifications would need to be approved if passes
- Historic Interior had an open spatial quality
 - o Want to reduce the over-crowding
 - o Expansive addition is not an option due to site constraints and vertical expansion would not be historically appropriate or technically feasible
- Accessibility is an issue – existing building is not ADA compliant.
- Library needs to adapt to changing collections and technology and demographic
 - o Library needs to be child friendly and accommodating
- Mechanical systems are dated and inappropriate
 - o Complaints of HVAC being too loud and spatially intrusive
 - o Plumbing and Fire Protection and electrical need to be replaced and brought up to code

Preliminary Programming Introduction

- Building Program: the narrative that describes the quantity and quality of what should go in a building. Specifically identifies each room’s function and service goals
- Program draft clusters the rooms into several zones: Welcome Zone, Common Zone (which should include copiers), Adult Services, Administration/Support, Teen’s Services, and Children’s Services.

COMMENTS ON PRELIMINARY PROGRAMMING

Three break-out groups were organized to focus on segments of the program and then report their thoughts to the entire meeting. Comments included:

- Welcome Zone & Common Zone
 - o The front door/primary entrance, needs to be ADA accessible
 - Option of ramping, sloped walkway
 - Saving the trees and preserve architectural integrity were identified as goals
 - Main Circulation Desk is a focal point and the community likes the location of staff being welcoming, front and center. However, it may be desirable to reduce the size to make it easier to move around
 - o Art Deco glass panels of original design should be incorporated
 - o Lower level needs to be accessible to staff, an elevator will resolve this issue
 - o Open area to garden could be added, flexible for 20 – 50 person groups (community confirmed this is a good range to be designing for when thinking of group meetings)
 - Children’s Area could open into an addition too?
 - o Low stage area invites poetry, meeting/presentation space
 - A lower stage (to a height of approximately 8”) could be acceptable and would require a shorter ramp to make it ADA accessible
 - o Explore adding restrooms to the main level
- Children’s
 - o Parent’s literature on higher shelves but no computers for parents in this area
 - o Children need to be watched by parents
 - o Higher shelves for collections that make sense on higher shelves
 - o Current Children’s Area should remain the Children’s Area and can continue to be general meeting space
 - o Quantity of computers is good but need more sufficient configuration
 - o Would like a cozy place for parents to read to children
 - Currently utilize the stage with one soft seating lounge chair
 - Kids like to be on the stage for the fun of being on the stage
 - o Need/want tables that can be reconfigurable and store easily
- Teen’s
 - o The service population is primarily Tween’s, primarily 7th & 8th grade students
 - o Primarily use the library for homework and group projects
 - o Advisable to stay where they are for supervision
 - o High school teens don’t tend to hang out at the library, they go to Teen Center at the Y
 - Would go to the library if there were extended hours. Open later and/or Sundays
 - o Don’t want a shared space with Children
 - o Furniture needs to be something that comes and goes
 - o Would like to retain the glass panel room dividers
 - o Long table is not utilized well, would like smaller “group” tables

- Don't want to create a dedicated Teen Area that will be under used when teens are not present
- Teens want more technology and books
- (Christine played devil's advocate and made an observation that no teen was at the meeting to speak for themselves, their own wants and needs from the library space, may not feel welcome in the space because it's not appealing to them)
- Adult's
 - Do not want Main Entry moved, keep front circulation desk in the center but maybe smaller to be able to move around with more ease
 - No increase to reference section collection
 - Expand Collection. Consider compact, mobile shelving
 - Corridor into Children's from Main Entry is a bit "spooky" for a 5 year old to enter.
 - Create an ADA compliant corridor maybe from another entry point (from addition)
 - Media Collection: no fundamental change, same with Magazines
 - Seating needs updating
 - Don't necessarily need more computer, but up to date with software
 - Lots of patrons do bring their own computers (Jeff commented that not everyone can afford their own computer and do use the Library's)

OVERALL COMMENTS

- One comment: with multiple meetings occurring in one space a participant has the chance to overhear the other meetings and people are okay with that
- Art gallery or exhibit space should be incorporated into the program
- Community expressed the concern of having the library be closed for an extended period of time during renovations
 - One comment: suggested a phased construction project while staff remains in the building
 - Christine does not recommend as it is not appropriate for a library branch of this size
 - Typical renovation 18 – 24 months such as Jamaica Plain and Brighton
- Accessibility accommodations to front door will have impact on façade, trees and interior space
- Purpose of the library to be educational and serve the people. The role of a free educational environment is the same regardless of technology.
- One community member's desire to see Classical plays performed on the stage
- Request for 3D Printers (to be incorporated into the Program of Shared Services, laser cutter.
 - Teens want as a resource, not a Maker's Space but want the technology
- Making the building have the required accessible routes throughout will mean wider aisles and will have an impact on collections and seating. An addition may mitigate the impact of ADA compliance.

NEXT STEPS

- Existing Conditions Report and Preliminary Programming Documents to be put online by Christine

- Feedback from tonight's meeting as well as any other comments to be submitted by January 14th to be collected for next Community Advisory Committee meeting approximately the first week of February
- Summary of comments and feedback from survey will be incorporated into the Appendix of the Final Report
- Next meeting – in February/March the team will present preliminary floor plans/layouts based on all the community feedback gathered to date. Opportunity for community to comment further on options
- Fourth Meeting – late spring/early summer – design team to present preferred option(s) based on all feedback to date
- Final report to be available online – summer 2015