

Great Neck Library
BUILDING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 20, 2021
Via WebEx

Board Members

Barry Smith, Chair (BS)
Weihua Yan (WY)
Scott Sontag (SS)
Josephine Mairzadeh (JM)

Guest

Greg Maret, Bayview Landscape Architecture

Staff

George Trepp (GT)
Steven Kashkin (SK)
Adam Hinz (AH)
Charles Wohlgemuth (CW) absent with notice
Egita Johnson (EJ)
Garry Horodyski (GH) absent with notice

Members of the Public

Marietta DiCamillo (MD)
Marianna Wohlgemuth (MW)
Josie Pizer (JP)
Kate Goldberg (KG)
Rosa Namdar (RN)

Call to Order

BS called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He announced that the Main and Branch Committees have merged to form this Building Committee. BS shared that there are three ongoing capital improvement projects; the landscaping project, the Station Branch renovation and the Parkville Branch renovation. BS welcomed Greg Maret, owner of Bayview Landscape Architecture, who will provide an overview of the landscaping project.

Landscaping Project

GM shared that this project was viewed by the previous board as a space that should instill community pride. He shared the project's schematic package. GM explained that the project has three major design areas which are; the front area along Bayview Avenue, the rear plaza area and the Garden/Parking area. The rear plaza area is located by the entrance to Levels. It will be predominantly used as a spillover of their activities so they can have an area to call their own. GM continued to the central space which is a mixed use and mixed age area. A ribbon of color that wraps its way around from Levels, through the children's interactive space until the end by the parking lot. GM explained that this ribbon not only serves as a sitting bench but will also contain people from wandering into the water. He stated that the central area will be more of an open space that can be used a variety of ways. GM highlighted a node that will be a raised deck area where people may get up and view out over the water at the ecology that exists past the tall grasses. The deck will include a sculpture and shaded area. He shared that there will be many colorful, monochromatic beds. Everyone agreed that color should be an important component that will pop off the existing vegetation. GM described the plans for the walkways which include angular edging on paths combined with gravel to help them better blur into the landscape. GM continued to the interactive children's area as a space designated for children to be able to stretch their legs. The

area does not include any moving parts just interactive elements for engagement. He went on to the lower parking lot which they pulled into the overall design by adding raised planters and creating safe places for people to walk towards the building. GM discussed the addition of a small amphitheater in a nook against an existing wall of the lower level. He stated that it will be a three-tiered, no maintenance seating area constructed out of sustainable wood shaded by an existing oak tree. He highlighted a speed table that was added to the parking lot to aid in the safety of the parking lot by reducing the speed of the drivers. GM shared signage that will be added to the front of the building. He concluded by announcing that he has been working with world renowned artists Gillie and Marc who are known for natural bronze sculptors. He hopes to be able to get them onboard for the library project. If so, they will design the tree sculpture for the deck area and also have the opportunity to create art for the children's interactive area.

KG asked if water elements can be added to children's interactive area as they are very popular. She suggested using native Long Island plants that can be beneficial for local pollinators like birds and bees. KG said the library can help raise awareness and educate the public on this. BS explained that the purpose of this space is not to replace the park district rather just to provide an outdoor space for families and children visiting the library.

RN feels this project is not very useful. The outdoor space is very narrow and in her numerous visits to the library she has never seen anyone utilizing the area. She thinks that spending a lot of money on this project is not prudent.

JM questioned if teenagers from Levels were included in the planning for the outdoor space. AH said that although he is not aware of teens being consulted, completion of this project will create a lot of opportunity for outdoor programming. JM stated that, moving forward, it is important to implant a culture of leadership within the Levels community. These are a group of patrons whose voice is not heard because they do not have the ability to vote for trustees to represent them. JM wondered if the raised deck space could be used by Levels patrons to put on performances.

JP stated that this project has been vetted and that public participation was included. She added that it is important to get this project started and not miss this planting season. JP recommended displaying the landscaping plans in the Main Library so that new trustees have the opportunity to examine them. MD announced that the library is on wetlands which inhibits certain designs. She shared that she is a former trustee who served as president of the board during the entire building project. MD said that this project has taken a tremendous amount of time due to the minor changes that they wanted to make on the project. She cautioned against significant changes as this will further stall the project. MD asked about the sculpture that was supposed to be placed to the right of the front door facing the main entrance. GM responded that that area was flagged for a donor tree. She stated that initially a sculpture was planned into the design and would like to know what happened to it.

WY inquired if thought was put into the potential for flooding in the area and also the dangers of a child possible wandering off into the water. GM responded that there is a ribbon all around the back of the campus which prevents a child from going into the water. He added that, although he can't speak to water rising issues, there are no stormwater management or flooding concerns with this project.

GT reminded everybody in attendance that this is the last step in the permitting process. If there is any delay in the process the library will lose six months or more on the project. BS added that the trees and the shrubs must be ordered now if they are to be planted this season.

WY wants all the current trustees to view the complete plans and feel comfortable with approving this project. After everyone has the opportunity to review, he will schedule a special meeting to accept the resolution and move forward with it.

MW asked what the timeline is for the project. GM responded that with the board's permission to move forward, Danny Ostad (Rockwell Developers) will send out bids to a vetted group of contractors. The bidding period will last six to eight weeks at which point Danny will bring the responses back to the board for approval. GM stated that construction will be able to start two to four weeks after approval, approximately April 1st, with an estimated the construction period of two to three months. This would put the completion date of the project at around July 4th.

BS announced that the next Building Committee meeting for Wednesday, January 27th at 7:00 p.m. to give everybody time to review the complete plans.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Submitted by Gina Chase

Great Neck Library
BRANCH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 20, 2021
Via WebEx
Action Items

George Trepp

1. Email landscaping plans to all trustees.