

**GREAT NECK LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
NOVEMBER 1, 2011, AT 7:30 P.M.**

A special meeting of the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, November 1, 2011, in the Community Room of the Great Neck Library, 159 Bayview Avenue, Great Neck, NY 11023, for the purpose of discussing the referendum results and plans to go forward. [Agenda attached]

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Janet Nina Esagoff – President
Anna Kaplan – Vice President
Joel Marcus – Secretary
Varda Solomon – Treasurer
Marietta DiCamillo – Assistant Treasurer
Josie Pizer, Assistant Treasurer
Martin Sokol

Also present:

Jane B. Marino – Director
Laura Weir – Assistant Director
Bob Goldberg – Legal Counsel (Farrell Fritz, P.C.)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by President Esagoff.

DISCUSSION OF REFERENDUM RESULTS

[The referendum vote took place on Tuesday, October 25, 2011, and was defeated. 1,288 voted in favor and 2,936 against it.]

President Esagoff assured the public that the Board has heard them that the plan presented for the referendum vote was not favored by them. She opened the floor for comments from the public as to how to bring the building into a modern and safe environment for the patrons.

Steve Walk – Wanted to know if all the fees paid so far are wasted and would the Board have to start all over for zoning and Town approvals.

A lot of the work done by the professionals is reusable. The Director had contacted the Planning Department of the Town of North Hempstead about what is valid in terms of site plan approval to use as the Library may go forward with a renovation and not an expansion within the existing

footprint. Renovation within the existing footprint does not trigger site plan approval. The drainage requirements are triggered if the Library intends to expand, reconstruct or reconfigure the parking lot. As soon as the library has settled on a revised building program, it should be submitted to the Town as an Amended Site Plan Application.

Norma Rutta – Read a prepared statement on what the community doesn't want and what it wants. The Director requested a copy of his statement for the record, which is attached.

Jeff Whitehorn – His kids did all their school work from home and never stepped in the library. Did the Board do focus group studies to see what the residents want? Not sure that in the 21st century the community needs this building. Libraries are like horse and buggies. Shrink the library, do not expand! Combine services offered by Great Neck Library and Port Washington Public Library.

Pam Marksheid – People move to Great Neck for several reasons – the quality of life, the School System, the Park District and the Library. Her son has used the library and its program ever since he was a little boy. Children come to the library for more than books. The library is a valuable place. She is a retired teacher who used the library all the time. It is a resource that cannot be lost. Kindles are not going to replace the library. The public has spoken but we can come to some agreement about what the people want. But she totally disagreed with the sentiments that a library is not needed.

Valerie Feinman – Librarian since 1964 and using computers for a very long time. She cannot use Kindle because of medical conditions and to say older people should learn to use them is wrong. We still need books. We have an aging community and in a few years, this may change how things in the library will be used. The library had study groups, of which she was a part as well as focus groups. Librarians are debating at the national level right now what is being done in the library and the feedback they are getting from the libraries is that the kids are working more and more with computers. However, these kids have no sense of community, peers and socialization with people of their own age. Events that the library offers are good socialization for our children and we need to keep our libraries open for that reason.

Karen Rubin – Speaking for her self as a resident, she wants it to be entered into the record that Mr. Rutta certainly does not speak for her or 100% of the community. What he said was his opinion and his analysis. Since he is so concerned about paying for renovation out of existing revenues and not raising the taxes, close Lakeville Branch and use the money to refurbish Main. She would be resentful if this Board expands Parkville Branch for the third time. If we don't need expansion, we don't need libraries, we should not be spending our tax dollar to fix up and expand Parkville Branch for the third time.

Shirley Samansky – 10 years ago, she was a part of the Ad-Hoc Committee which did a survey of the library staff. There was a questionnaire mailed to the community and a visioning held by the Town Supervisor. All these reports were ignored by the Board. None of these reports said more space is needed. She disagreed with the gentleman who wants to do away with libraries. The building needs renovation and reallocation of space, and this should be done economically and accessibly.

Aida Berkowitz – Represents herself and officially many of the people whose homes are on Udall's Pond. Mr. Rutta represents 2,900 people who voted 'no.' As residents living near this library, they are concerned about over-building on this site. She loves the library and it is a vitally important structure. It does not need to be overbuilt because books will be electronically stored in the future. The footprint of the building should refer to the building itself and not the pathway that goes around the building. She is opposed to any building that will take this structure closer to the water because it is bad for the environment and for the neighbors. The residents do not want everybody in the library looking into their backyards from this structure. The public understood very clearly what was proposed. Use the tax dollars wisely. At a meeting of the Board when the architect was present, a former Director said that the children's space does not need to be that big but the Board disregarded that statement. Modernize the building into a beautiful library making use of the existing space.

Steven Hirsch – Park District raised taxes by \$120 annually per household to build Parkwood and there are 10 times more library card holders than Park card holders. We have one hope to reunite the community and it is with the next item on the agenda. The focus groups in the past involve a small minority of people who were very vocal and not necessarily democratic as the referendum was. He recommends weekly meetings of the Board, staff, public and the architect at a few selected meetings to come up with the logistics of a survey. The results of that survey in a couple of months would be an objective answer to what is best for the community. He asked for the word 'opponent' to be taken out of everyone's vocabulary.

Les Bocher – The Trustees have not got the message of the referendum. He is even opposed to \$13 million. It can be done for lot less money if it were done annually, slowly, and not at once – it could be in the regular budget each year. Mr. Rutta represented more than the 2,900 who voted 'no.' He represented those who remained silent and did not vote. We are in a huge recession. Many people in here wondering how they are going to pay their mortgage. Think of the seniors who have to decide what they are buying today – food or drugs.

Ruth Wolosof – This library is fantastic and employees are just wonderful. She is for the renovation of the building and has faith in this Board. Udall's pond won't be affected.

Naomi Penner – Asked the Board to listen to the people! She loves this place and is here twice a day. She is opposed to not having a library for three years. The library is a place for people to be people – the last vestige of democracy in action and this place is a community center. It's more than a book store or book haven. It's a place for people to still be people and get together and there are many seniors who love it. She implored the Board to fix the building and keep the library open as much as they possibly can.

Stu Hochron – Still hears people siding with where they were before the referendum. The reality is – in the community where voting is extremely apathetic, over 4,000 people came out to vote in this referendum. The vast majority made a statement and they never said to close the library. What they said was to spend prudently. We have to control spending. The library is a very important part of this community. Number one reason people come to Great Neck is the close proximity of Great Neck to the City. The fact that it has great schools, library, and park district are all added benefits. Let's listen to what the people have to say.

Lawrence Goldfarb – Love books and reading but now we have iPad and Kindle. Many people like the library and a great many don't use it. I looked at the budget and saw it was prepared in 2009. If you use plans based on pre-ebook world, it is like building things for horse and buggies when cars are around. In today's economy, it has to reflect the times. People get their information differently from five to 10 years ago.

Michael Zarin – As far as the economy is concerned, if everybody around the country has the idea that we should cut back on improving our infrastructure, we are in for a depression. There will never be a better time to finance a bond than now. Interest rates are low. This community has very high property values and we are going to destroy those values. This is the first bond issue that has been defeated in the history of Great Neck. 4,000 people came out to vote. The last time when we had a similar issue of this magnitude 25-35 years ago 20,000 people came out to vote. Now that the community is awake, he recommends to the Board to give the community a chance and let the community come out to vote again to protect their property values.

Don Dillon – Lives in Kings Point and grew up in Great Neck. He always voted for School and Library budgets and a strong supporter of the library. He voted against the referendum because he felt that the scope of the project seems to be out of control and did not have much faith in the ability to control the costs based on his profession as an architect and project manager. The library needs help; it needs to be rebuilt; it needs to be rethought out; it needs the participation of the whole community. A project manager would not put out another budget before a re-examination of the whole process. The project must be taken back down to its bones, which means thinking about, organizing, cataloguing and prioritizing the specific needs of the library. Try to rebuild a budget that rationally handles the needs of the library and this will be supported by the community that has to vote on it for it to happen. The support from the community must be rebuilt. He does not profess to want the job of managing this project but the library needs a project manager who is independent of the other consultants to look out for the interests of the library and not influenced by the cost of the project. He will help to prioritize the needs and build from that point. Although he has limited time, he would be willing to participate in these meetings.

Ofra Panzer – 24 year user of the library. Technology is changing rapidly. Through grants, 9th grade kids at the North High School have been supplied with iPads and they are trained how to use them in the classrooms instead of taking notes in their notebook resulting in teachers changing the way they are teaching. Need somebody like Steve Jobs around to help re-imagine space and how to use it smartly. Hope you find somebody like him who has his ability to imagine and perceive the way things are and how they could be and come up with some solutions other than the ones you previously had. When hospitals do major work, they do not close the building but they do it in sections. Keep the library open as much as possible. Some people who voted 'no' were in wheelchairs and they are able to get around now for their needs. Instead of separate areas for teens, have flexible areas that they can share. Instead of auditorium seating in the library, use auditorium spaces at the schools. College students are now purchasing text books in the form of dvds. It changes size and ordering of books.

Jean Pierce – Since this is the best time for interest rate on the bond, why was the library considering a 5.5% interest rate? Have you got a bill from the publicity firm you hired?

The Board approved a not to exceed expenditure of \$20,000 of which only \$2,500 was spent on the PR firm.

Elizabeth Allen – I think everyone in this room got the message of the referendum. My question is now what? I commend you for making copies of the original Option A available. It is a wonderful starting point but I agree with Mr. Rutta that there are ways to approach the development of the next plan. I would love to have an action plan that includes perhaps Mr. Rutta's presence or the presence of people who have suggested concrete ways in which the various interests can be respected as we go forward. The real meaning of this meeting tonight is to go forward I hope. Let us have please a reformed Option A, and let us have a library in one form or another. We all love our library!

Eileen Walk – What vehicle does the Board plan to use to get feedback from the public as to what they would accept?

The Library will communicate with the public through surveys and public engagements.

Renee Zarin – 46 year resident of Great Neck. In your deliberations consider not only the least expensive but the best way to do this. Every community in this country is renewing their libraries. I am astonished at what happened the other day. This has been almost a 20 year consideration, and in the meantime technology has changed. However, books are amongst the most valuable properties we have. Holding a book is very important. It is very important for children, whether they use iPad or Apple in the classroom, to have books. It is also important for people who are disabled whether or not they think that they can maneuver around the library. Think very carefully to make the library ADA compliant, one of the reasons for the expansion process. Think about the 35,000 who did not vote.

Jack Lemonik – The message of those who voted against the referendum is that the Board should start at zero base budgeting. It is proven to make sure that organizations can make the most cost effective decisions and ensure that facilities and services no longer useful are not maintained simply because they are there and frees up funds for what is truly important. Also technology has changed in so many ways. The world has and is changing. So what we need to do with our plan is not to look at the past years but we need to develop a plan for a facility for 2020 or even 2025 and it is not an easy task. It is your task and that is what needs to be done.

Trustee DiCamillo thanked everyone for expressing themselves and asked the Board at this time to consider the abandonment of Plan D.

Upon motion by Marietta DiCamillo and seconded by Martin Sokol, and after discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees, in recognition of the results as voted by referendum on October 25, 2011, abandon Option D known as the plan for the renovation and expansion of the Main Building.

Public Comments:

Michael Zarin – You are now abandoning Plan D. The previous plan put forth was a structure approximately one-third larger than Plan D yet costing the same as Plan D. Going back to ground zero will have less of a library when all the communities in surrounding areas have improved their libraries. If you go this route, you are going to spend the same \$20 million to get less of a library.

Karen Rubin – How much money will be wasted starting over by making that vote?

VOTE: Yes – 4 (DiCamillo, Pizer, Sokol, Solomon); Abstention – 3 (Esagoff, Kaplan, Marcus)
MOTION CARRIED

Trustee Pizer called for moving the agenda along so the Board can start to develop some plan to consider renovation of the Library.

The Board then discussed putting together an advisory committee to include members of the public, staff, trustees and professionals.

There will be a signup sheet in the back of the room for those wishing to serve on an advisory committee. Volunteers would give their names, telephone numbers, email addresses and area of interest or expertise. The same information will be on the library's website. The Director will report back to the Board who will then decide on whether they want to form a committee. If the Board wants a committee, she suggests this being done via a Board resolution.

The Director added that she went to a conference on this subject and one of the things the leader of the conference said was to engage the public in a committee in a forum. The moderator of the conference, who has been involved in many renovations of building projects, said if you tap into the expertise of the community, you get fresh pair of eyes on things that have not been looked at by other eyes but ours. They take ownership of the project and that ownership then extends to other people within the community. It's a ripple effect and very powerful one and can work effectively.

Anyone having questions for the survey was asked to send them to the Director, who will then compile all public comments and forward them to the Board.

The Board also discussed the formation of a Main Advisory Committee comprising trustees. The Director clarified that all the Board committees have four members, including the President as ex-officio. She suggests that if the Board wanted to follow that pattern, a sub-committee might work more efficiently and be able to report back to the Board. President Esagoff asked for volunteers for this committee. All the Trustees indicated their interest to serve on such a committee. President Esagoff will therefore appoint three trustees to this committee.

Trustee DiCamillo stated that if the committee has three trustees, there should also be three members of the public identified as official advisors to the Board committee, and three staff members including the Director.

Attorney Goldberg pointed out that the Board has to first figure out the purpose of the committee and the hierarchy and how it is going to work. It should be open to all members of the public and trustees.

Director Marino had spoken to the architect who suggested that the trustees and Director take a look at the original RFP sent out to architects outlining the needs of the Library. We need to take a hard look at what we think we need and decide what we need now. So looking at the original RFP is a good start.

Public Comments:

Rebecca Gilliar – Studies were done in 1995-96. The Director is the person the Board hires to look into the process by which to reach out to the community. She is our first expert. The trustees are not experts. They are public spirited citizens who run for office and hope to do their best. So when she says it is important to reach out to the community and she is going to look into how to do that, then we should listen to her.

Stu Hochron – Does not disagree with the idea of having a survey. It will give input on what should be done going into the future. However, if the survey is compiled only by members of the Board, it will not give you the information you need. He suggested reaching out to the public by forming four focus panels of 10 people each to find out what it is they want to see in the library and how it should be renovated. A survey can then be done that reflects what the people actually want.

Leslie Kahn – Informed the Board that they are going down the wrong track. Two types of committee required – one to come up with the needs of the library and another to assist with the construction process. He would be happy to volunteer to serve on the latter.

JoAnn Farley – A lot of issues were raised about things that are unsafe and things that should have been fixed. The public is looking to see some of these repairs done to make the building safer. But if they hear survey, which I am not against, which is going to take years, you will see some reaction to that. She asked for this to be taken into consideration when making a decision.

Naomi Feldheim – She is concerned about opinions which are not necessarily facts. Although some wheelchair persons are comfortable in the library, the building needs to be ADA compliant. Once you touch a building it must be ADA compliant which is a fact. When the building is being renovated, asbestos and safety of the air we breathe are concerns. These are facts rather than opinion.

Carol Frank – Important to set up better connection between the public and the Board. There's been a disconnect. The Board needs to find different ways to communicate – moderated blogs, meeting participation. The composition of advisory groups should be selective and not free for all, someone representing parents of young children who use the library, parents who have kids in Levels, and the needs of seniors.

Ralene Adler – Inquired if the Board has any boundary for budget and size to limit the construction to the existing footprint.

Trustee Pizer wanted everyone to understand that a building in this footprint will reduce the current 47,000 sq ft by a minimum of 2,200 – 2,500 sq ft. Trustee DiCamillo added that the difference can be made up by moving departments that are occupying a great deal of space from the Main building to another location.

Mike Currie – Commended the Trustees for doing a non-paying job for the community. Have a list of all the things need fixing and fix the building one step at a time with capital money. That is what the public wants.

Marty Adickman – Cannot read people’s mind on how they voted. But it could have been a variation of many reasons. To vote for this would handcuff any decision going forward.

Norman Rutta – Voters spoke clearly. He asked for the Board to limit the building to the current footprint. Accept what 2/3 of voters said. He is in favor of objective survey by a professional firm.

After listening to concerns from the public, the Board put forth the following resolution:

Upon motion by Marietta DiCamillo and seconded by Martin Sokol, and after discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees adopt a building program that renovates the main building within the existing building footprint of approximately 47,000 sq ft.

Public Comments:

Joan Adickman – This motion shows a distrust of the committee proposed earlier.

Naomi Feldheim – The public did not vote on whether or not the library should remain in the existing footprint.

VOTE: Yes – 4 (DiCamillo, Marcus, Pizer, Sokol); No – 1(Solomon);
Abstention – 2 (Esagoff, Kaplan)

MOTION CARRIED

COOLING TOWER

Library Director Marino provided the Board with the architect’s report for the replacement of the cooling tower. She pointed out corrected information on the cooling tower as contained in the architect’s report. Page 8 (A1) shows that the current tower is 160 tons and not 120 tons as was previously thought. B1 shows that the capacity on the proposed tower has a range of 160-185

tons, which is the smallest unit the architect is recommending. The smallest range on the market is 140-160 ton unit which the architect felt is too small to cool a building of this size even if was only renovated.

The reason for recommending a larger unit than the existing one is that when the original unit was installed, there were approximately 8,000 sq ft of unoccupied space in the lower level. Since then, the Audio-Visual department was moved to the lower level and Levels was built creating the increased need for more cooling. That explains why both departments have had cooling problems because the unit was not big enough to handle that space. The estimated lead time for the tower is nine weeks. The cost estimates have been lowered to \$350,000-\$400,000 inclusive of other related works, such as fees from construction management and architect firms (page 11 of report).

Since the cooling tower is now being considered as a separate project from the defunct building program, bids will be solicited from other construction management firms. The Director has solicitations out to two firms and she will get two more to the Board in time for the next regular Board meeting.

The RFPs that will be sent out will be based on the architects' drawings and their recommendation of what is needed for that space. When the bids are received, the Board will then make a decision.

Trustee Kaplan suggested that maybe Don Dillon could be engaged for some suggestions.

Leslie Kahn – He had spoken to the library's architect. Since the building expansion is not going forward, the Board should stop the cooling tower project right now and continue with another temporary cooling tower for the next cooling season because a lot of money will be wasted. A cooling tower costs approximately \$100,000 and he wanted to know where the rest of money would be going.

The Director disagreed with Mr. Kahn as the Board had made it clear that it no longer wanted temporary measures. The architect had also made it clear that it won't be a waste of money as it will fit into whatever repairs that have to be done to the building.

Trustee Sokol disclosed that he has had business relationship with Leslie Kahn, and Mr. Kahn is hesitant for the trustees go forward. He asked the Board to take Mr. Kahn's opinion seriously. He also called for Mr. Kahn's point of view to be held publicly alongside others. President Esagoff asked for a written opinion to be submitted.

Trustee DiCamillo wanted to know why the project would cost \$350,000 - \$400,000 when the actual unit only cost about \$100,000. The Director explained that other work needs to be done – construction and engineering work prior to installation of the unit.

OPEN TIME

Naomi Penner – Concentrate on repairs to the building

Marianna Wohlgemuth – Hopes the Board understands this was not a north versus south vote but a vote of people who use the library and want it to be better but at this point can't pay for it.

Andrew Nadler – Doesn't think the majority of the population on the peninsula really fully understood the whole thing. There should be a concerted effort to get out people who do not vote as it affects them personally.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Josie Pizer, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Marcus
Secretary of the Board of Trustees