



Town of Carlisle

MASSACHUSETTS 01741

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes

Zoom Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Barney Arnold, *Chair, Select Board*, Drew McMorro, *Recreation Commission member*, Krissy O'Shea, *Historical Commission member*, Sam Rottenberg, *Citizen-at-large*, Christine Johnson-Battista, *Affordable Housing Trust member*, Helen Young, *Conservation Commission member*

Member Absent

Addie Grady, *Planning Board member*

Staff Present

Jennine Blum, *Administrative Assistant*

Others Present

Martha Feeney-Patten, *Director, Gleason Public Library*, Christine Stevens, *Library Trustee*, Kaitlin Waterson, *Library Trustee*, Betsy Fell, *News Editor, Carlisle Mosquito*

6:00 p.m. Drew McMorro called the meeting to order.

Gleason Public Library (GPL) Interior Renovation Project

Summary

Background

- Surveys, focus groups, and informal feedback over the years have repeatedly shown a consistent need for meeting and workspaces, improved acoustics, and a teen space.
- Survey responses each year have indicated a change in usage patterns, i.e. the first floor has a lot of space dedicated to DVDs that aren't used very much anymore.
- We have a small and fixed footprint. This is a purposeful renovation of the interior to reorganize the space we do have so it's pertinent and useful to the community for the next 25 years.
- Library board and staff have been considering options for several years.
- Schwartz /Silver Architects was hired in 2022 to create schematic designs for a space that will meet these needs for today and tomorrow.

Why is this needed now?

- The last major renovation was designed 29+ years ago and it was completed in 2000. The focus then was still on physical collections. Video conferencing and reliance on digital had not been envisioned.
- Library collections are now a hybrid of physical and digital.
- Increased demand for working and meeting space – even pre-pandemic, a significant percentage of Carlisle residents worked from home.
- This is our town’s public gathering space – a potential community center is 10+ years down the road. The library can meet more needs now for a relatively modest investment.
- Raising kids and teens – or being them – is harder than ever in these times, and tweens and teens deserve a space.

Master Plan Goals Satisfied

- Preserves existing buildings with cultural and historic value
- Fosters opportunities for intergenerational spaces, services, and programming
- Supports the town’s cultural and historic resources and activities
- Preserves and maintain existing open space by not using other land to rebuild
- Supports environmental sustainability with new and updated technologies for water treatment, heating, ventilation, etc.

Proposed Renovations

- **First floor**
 - Will have a more open floor plan, with a centralized service desk to improve customer service, visibility, and safety.
 - The open floor plan will allow for more flexibility for use in the future.
 - It will have a more open and brighter feel. There are lots of beautiful large windows that let in lots of light that is blocked by the current stairwell.
 - Stairwell acts as sound funnel – not ideal.
 - The new stairs will be smaller and will be where the circulation desk is now.
 - The stairs from the first to third floor will be a continuous stairwell.
- **Teen and tweens space**

Issue: Currently teen space is out in the open in the middle of the adult sections and noise filters down to lobby – not ideal.

 - New dedicated area for teens and tweens, with space to do their homework together, socialize, and use their computers/devices.
 - The new space will be located in the current reference section, which is underused.
 - Will have counter seating and booths, which will foster collaboration and conversation.
 - There will be charging stations.
 - The area has large, beautiful windows that let lots of light in.
 - The décor will be hip and young.
 - The teen and tween book collection will have a more cohesive feel as currently the collections are scattered. Teens and youth are the population that still check out books.
 - While this space is designed for teens and tweens, anyone can use it.
- **Quiet reading area** with magazines and newspapers will be created from former/existing teen space. This space is set back more from the comings and goings in the noisier parts of the library.

- **Quiet booth** for phone and video calls open reading room off to the side.
- Some of the **study carrels** will be reused, most likely on the second floor in the more quiet and private areas.
- **Meeting spaces**
 - Issues:** Meeting rooms upstairs are fully subscribed and there is no space for someone to conduct a business call or zoom call. There's demand for these kinds of spaces for people who work at home and want a quieter space, town boards/committees, college alumni interviews, book groups, as well as other groups. The fishbowl effect of some of the spaces is not ideal and the acoustics need improvement.
 - An additional small meeting room will be created.
 - o More technology including displays will be included.
 - Will provide space for a variety of group sizes
 - o Sound-proofed space for one or two people (first floor)
 - o Small conference room for one to five people (second floor)
 - o Large conference room up to 12 people (second floor)
 - o Hollis Room for up to 50 people (third floor)
 - Updates to existing meeting room spaces will be made including the space which was renovated a few years ago on a tight budget.
 - Format/design changes.
 - o Will minimize the fishbowl effect with more solid walls and less glass.
 - o The second-floor service desk will have sightlines through glass into the meeting rooms.
 - o Square footage of meeting spaces will be increased.
 - Question. CPC: There's such a demand for community meeting space, will this be enough? Is there anywhere else to include another meeting space?
GPL: We're trying to maximize the meeting space. It was a priority. Renderings we've shown you don't show all the spaces we've created. We looked at all the space. We have very limited space. We've created two additional meeting spaces and increased the square footage in other meeting spaces. We have a variety of spaces to accommodate different numbers of people. We've taken a look at circulation patterns in order to trim the collections to gain space.
 - Reservations. The rooms are booked all the time, not always with advanced reservations. If a space is available, it's on a first come, first served basis. Anyone, including non-residents, can reserve space. The space reservation policies have recently been revised and establish reservation limitations. The Hollis Room on the third floor, the largest meeting space, has more limitations. The CPC requested a copy of the new policies.

Council on Aging

- Question. CPC: Barney Arnold stated that there is no dedicated space for the Council on Aging to host all kinds of activities – some that involve the exchange of ideas, but most are more active. How much do you see older people using the library as a place to just come to be with other people and to relax and read? The COA has talked a lot about having a drop-in social space that is welcoming to older folks in the way that the teen space will be welcoming. Did you give this consideration?

GPL: Martha Feeney-Patten likes this thought. We definitely do see older people coming in for a variety of reasons including socialization. The adult reading area is used in that way. Christine Stevens added that an important footnote to the teen and tween space is that it is open to everybody. The Hollis Room is also a very popular venue – it's the single largest space. The renovated reading room on the second floor is open and airy. It will have new lighting and the furniture can be rearranged to suit patrons needs. We had this space in mind for other events. This is what we had in mind for the types of activities you have in mind.

- **Acoustics will be improved** to enhance quiet enjoyment of the library space.
- Much needed **expanded mechanical room**, including space for water treatment and modern, energy-efficient technology to resolve issues that have added up over the years.
- **Accessibility improvements**
- **Laptops and desktops** will be made available for patrons throughout the library rather than the bank of six computers currently opposite the circulation desk. There hasn't been as much demand for the bank of computers since the pandemic, and kids have their own devices now so there will be fewer computers available.
- There will be a **gallery wall**, which will be a great venue for local artists to show their work.
- **Small bookshelves** under the gallery wall art will be used as permanent space for the Friends of the Library books for their book sale.

Estimated Cost

- In 2022, Schwartz/Silver estimated the total cost to be \$2.3 million. The architects segmented the costs by usage group.
- The architects padded the estimate considering the heavy inflation rate and time needed for fundraising.
- Question: CPC: How much was the last major renovation in the late 90s? GPL: Unknown.

Funding

- The CPA grant application is for \$400,000. The library trustees haven't requested the funds for any particular usage group or specific part of the renovation project.
- The amount (\$400,000) was determined with guidance from Drew McMorrow who gave them a historical perspective on grants previously given. In the early 2000s, a \$650,000 CPA grant was given to the library for preservation purposes for the slate roof and foundation to prevent water intrusion.
- The trustees are envisioning that private donations will be the chief source (80-90%) of funding and they are beginning a quiet phase of fundraising. An actual goal hasn't been set at this point.
- The library has had great supporters in the past and hope they will contribute to this project as well.
- Other sources of funding to meeting overall budget might include:
 - Endowment funds
 - Grants from other sources including the Mass Cultural Council for \$200,000 which will be announced in the spring.

- Municipal Facilities Committee (MFC) will be contributing to the mechanical and life safety projects. The amount hasn't been decided yet.
- Question. CPC: Would the money contributed by the MFC come out of the operating budget or long-term capital funds? GPL: Unknown.
- The CPC stated that it can grant CPA funds based on contingency of securing other funding.
- Question. CPC: How was the 2000 renovation funded?
GPL: A lot of it was funded through a state library building fund which required matching funds. The scope of this renovation didn't qualify for those funds which are primarily for construction of additions and new buildings.

Longevity

- Question. CPC: How far out are you projecting the needs of the town will be met by this renovation? Ten years or longer? What services will be needed in 10 years? If we do build a community center, how would that affect library usage?

GPL: We're thinking longer than 10 years. We're creating spaces that will be useful longer term. The open design will allow for more flexibility in the future if changes need to be made. Even if there is a community center down the road, this would still be a very useful space for meeting, working and library programs.

The way we differentiate ourselves from a community center is that the library space is meant for the exchange of ideas and learning from one another when the focus is on dialog and visual aids. Now more than ever there's a need to come together as a group to learn from one another and listen. So, more meeting space was a huge priority for this renovation. We see a community center as more of an active space. Perhaps there is some overlap in the meeting spaces. We want to be the family room of Carlisle. We host knitting groups, book groups, and all kinds of teen events and projects.

CPA Funding Categories

- The library presenters feel the renovation project qualifies for historic funds, but not for open space/recreation which is for outdoor projects specifically.
- Drew stated that it seems likely it will qualify but he will review the application with Town Counsel to be sure.
- Sam Rottenberg and Barney suggested that the library seek approval from both the Historical Commission and the Historical Society. Note that the Historical Commission is the town entity, and the Historical Society is an independent entity.

Construction

- The hope is to start the renovation midyear with private funding and perhaps endowment funds.
- Question. CPC: Will you do construction while remaining open by closing off areas?
GPL: Yes, as much as is possible.
- Question. GPL: When would CPA funds be available if approved?
CPC: It's a matter of negotiation in terms of the security we feel about other funding sources and when we would release that contingency. Our funds would be available in the next fiscal year after June 30th assuming contingencies are met.

Other Related Business

- The MFC has determined that the wood library windows are in desperate need of maintenance. Given that it was too late to submit an application for CPA funds, the CPC suggested this project be rolled into the library's renovation application.

One bid for \$68,000 had been obtained to remove the wood windows and take them offsite to do a full restoration. Martha stated that perhaps that some of the restoration work, including lead mitigation/remediation, had been done about ten years ago as part of a CPA funded building project. The library group is open to that and added that it certainly would qualify for funds.

Follow up for February 27 Meeting

- Review of the budget
- Review of floor plans
- Review of construction process
- Review of fundraising plans including contingencies
- Recently revised library space reservation policies
- Identify funds that are certain and what the trustees are still hoping to raise.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 27, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment at 6:55 p.m.

Documents Submitted

- January 23, 2023 Meeting Agenda
- CPA Application for Gleason Public Library Interior Renovation
- Schwartz/Silver Conceptual Drawing Set 2022-05-19
- Schwartz/Silver Conceptual Design Renderings
- Schwartz/Silver Conceptual Project Estimate
- Project Timeline – planning, fundraising, and construction
- Project Budget – sources and uses of funds
- Fundraising Slide Deck
- Floor Plans
- Construction Phases
- Gleason Public Library Meeting Room Policy