

**Elk Rapids District Library
Building Committee Meeting Notes
June 15, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm.

Present: Dick Hults, Chuck Schuler, Liz Atkinson, and Director Nannette Miller

5 members of the public were also present.

Hults began the meeting saying the Board has asked the Building Committee to look at options for a Plan B or C, which have not been defined. We will look at the pros and cons of vacating the current plan and looking for other options.

Atkinson said a priority is the fact that we will never own the building. The building is not ADA compliant, and she understands it will be cost prohibitive to deal with the historic structure. Hults estimated the original \$4.7 million is now probably at least \$5.5 million. Also, we wouldn't just be improving another entity's property, now it's two entities, the village and township, and we have no idea how or when that issue will be resolved. Atkinson also identified a "rather big elephant in the room", parking. We would actually lose parking spaces due to emergency vehicle requirements, and to add parking on the hill would cost more money. Full ownership and full say in what we do with our building is always more desirable. She thinks having a Plan B to compare is important, and she is in favor of investigating new construction. The question is where?

Hults stated that there are a lot of problems with the building, and now the ownership question, and parking, are all issues. If the township retains its 50% ownership, then three entities have to agree with the new "triple net lease" we need. We want full control of the project and the building for the term of the lease, not a real estate partnership.

Miller listed pros and cons:

Pros: 1. Tradition – the library has been there for 72 years. 2. Beautiful location. 3. We would restore and preserve some historic features of the house. 4. We would still have the porch, which people like. None of the pros have anything to do with library services and operations.

Cons: 1. More expensive to build because of renovation of 150-year-old building, parking, and it requires two architects, one specialist in historic preservation and one library architect. Building new would only require one library architect. 2. Need an elevator in current plan, which is expensive to install and a forever cost. 3. More expensive to staff because of service areas on two floors. 4. People were adamant about not adding asphalt to the island so adding parking will be another battle. 5. Every aspect of project would require village approval. 6. Design options limited by existing structure and SHPO requirements. Hults questioned the SHPO approval since that was before he was on the board. Miller said a promise made by the board at the time was we would not do anything to lose the historic designation, so we are bound by what SHPO will approve. Hults asked about increased cost of staffing on two floors. Miller

explained. She added a statement from staff, and said the pandemic has taught us that we need more flexibility in library spaces than the current plan offers.

Schuler wanted to get right to Plan B, and the big question is where would we put it. Have to find out what's available in Milton Township, ER Township, and the village. Hults asked if he had thought about trying to put it near the schools. That might be nice however value of property in village is sky rocketing and he's doubtful we can find any we can afford. He thinks if we went south or north into the township we could find some land that's more affordable. What will the sq. footage be of the building? Number 1, find a location. Atkinson agreed. Schuler wants to visit libraries in the area built in the last 10 years.

Schuler and Atkinson said it is cheaper to build a two story building. Miller explained that the ongoing operating cost of a two story building is much higher and forever. Schuler said that's hypothetical and wants to see statistics.

Hults asked if we should own the land, buy it or have it donated? Or have a long term lease?

Miller asked if Schuler would be open to sharing parking with the school, for example? All questions to be explored.

Hults asked how should we go about searching for land? Schuler has no idea and leaves it to Hults and Atkinson.

Plan B is to look for land to build a new library. Hults suggested we talk with the architects to determine square footage needed and potential cost. Schuler cautioned about spending any money on Plan B. Miller reminded everyone that if a small amount of money needed to be spent researching Plan B we still have approximately \$340,000 of the Heffer bequest that can be used. Schuler said that's all well and good if it's legal and we don't get in trouble with the auditors.

Recommendation: We begin looking for land for Plan B.

Public Comment:

Mary Lobisco – commended the committee for coming to an understanding that this option makes more sense both fiscally and functionally.

Dianne Richter – Referred to the strategic plan from 2015. She said C2AE told her the standard is 1.25 sq. ft. per capita. She also referred to the Library of Michigan statistics. Schuler wants to see hard copy of those statistics. Miller will provide.

Terry Kuffner – Mentioned the new library in Empire. Also said we shouldn't rule out a two story building.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.