

Brooks Memorial Library Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee, Dec. 8, 2021

The meeting was wholly online because of a propane problem at the library that required shutting the building for most of the day.

Present: Leo Schiff, Starr LaTronica, Kate O'Connor, Howard Burrows, Jane Southworth, Karen Tyler, Jeanne Walsh, Olivia Mastria, JoJo Kauffman, Sue Fillion, Ann Varilly

Called to order by Karen at 4:50. Minutes were approved as written. No changes to the agenda and no public comments.

Continuing Business: Next Steps in Planning Process

Update on revised survey

Olivia displayed and fielded questions and comments on the revisions to the draft. Sue added her insights as Town Planner. We discussed several of the questions in detail to clarify their intent and likely usefulness.

We also discussed the question of where the survey fits in to the planning process and who was the target audience/people most likely to complete the survey. Sue explained legwork that has been required when Planning has used surveys to reach underrepresented groups. It's more substantial than what we might be able to do as a largely volunteer effort. Several committee members shared thoughts about using a variety of tools to include a variety of people.

Sue noted that this survey isn't going to help us identify people's inclusion in under-represented groups. Focus groups might help us do that.

Town Planner, Sue Fillion

The Planning Department has demographic and economic information that might be helpful. Household size is smaller, more low-income people in the community, senior community has grown. More people of color in the community, especially younger people. New entities in town, e.g., Multicultural Community Center.

Of course, we'll see differences since 2017 because of COVID. Still, we have a really good template from what we had in 2017. Activities can be great, e.g. SOAR. Public engagement has changed in COVID, but you can do a lot with zoom.

Question: guiding values, vision, and mission of the library, where does that come in? Should there be internal trustee/staff discussion before public outreach? There was some discussion

about this. Sue sees vision and mission as more board-level work. Jane noted that the vision and mission discussion might change if we step back during the planning process and question what we think we know about those things.

Comment: the existence of the demographics will really help our planning process. Sue encouraged us to find the Housing Survey results on the Town website <https://bit.ly/3EFA6cX>, and she will send us documents.

Can we map our users? A practical question. Sue will consult with some of her staff. Also, an ethical/legal question: can we do that in a way that protects patron privacy? Yes, as long as we're just doing rough mapping and not identifying people and their addresses.

How can the library's plan contribute to and benefit from the Town Plan? There is not a new Town Plan in the works at this time; it will be a couple years yet. The Planning Department will help with information as best they can and will help us get our survey out into the community.

Sue encourages us to think about the benefits of working with a consultant.

Update on exploring potential of a paid consultant

Feedback on discussions with potential candidates

- Starr and Ann reported on discussions they have had with consultants. They'll meet with another next week. We had a detailed discussion about consultants and why or why not we might need them. Howard requested an "annotated list" of the people interviewed and would like to see that happen sometime soon.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

- Sue could help us with that. Also, depending on price, we might not need an RFP. We will see about engaging a consultant without an RFP.

Next meeting: January 18, 2022