

ALEXANDER MITCHELL LIBRARY
FACILITIES TASK FORCE

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

September 28, 2009

RECIPIENTS OF THIS REPORT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- City of Aberdeen City Council Members
- Mayor Mike Levsen
- City Manager Lynn Lander
- Alexander Mitchell Library Board of Trustees
- Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This Supplemental Report has been prepared by the Facilities Task Force which was appointed by the Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation on June 18, 2009 (the "Task Force").

On August 19, 2009, the Task Force issued its Interim Report concluding that the existing Alexander Mitchell Library could not adequately provide library services to our community and that there was substantial community support for construction of a new public library.

After issuing its Interim Report, the Task Force continued its work to examine the future location of the library.

The original Interim Report issued by the Task Force on August 19, 2009, together with this Supplemental Report, represent the final report of the Task Force.

INFORMATION GATHERING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the efforts set forth in the original Interim Report, the Task Force conducted two community listening sessions on September 8, 2009.

Members of the Task Force made individual site reviews of various alternatives. Members have also continued to receive advice and suggestions both from city officials and citizens.

TASK FORCE FINDINGS

Through its efforts, the Task Force has adopted the following conclusions:

1. The current Alexander Mitchell Library is unable to meet the needs of our community for library services due to insufficient size and structural deficiencies.
2. Rehabilitation of the current Alexander Mitchell Library does not appear to be the best alternative.
3. There is substantial community support behind the construction of a new public library.
4. The public strongly supports locating the new library in the Aberdeen "core."
5. It would be prudent to locate the new library on or near the bicycle path in Aberdeen to facilitate use of the library by non-drivers including children.

6. A new public library containing approximately 40,000 square feet would be adequate to meet the needs of our current population, although, it should be constructed in a manner to permit expansion in the event the community experiences significant population increases in the next generation.
7. The community favors construction of the library on a single floor rather than one with multiple levels.
8. The community strongly supports constructing a library without a basement or, at least, a basement to be utilized by patrons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the conclusions reached by the Task Force, the Task Force recommends that the former Bethlehem Lutheran Church lot, now owned by Blackstone, be acquired and that this block be utilized for construction of a 40,000 square foot single-level library with provisions to be made for a future 10,000 square foot addition.

A discussion of alternative sites follows in descending order of preference.

1. Bethlehem Lutheran Church Site. The Task Force has concluded that the most desirable location to construct a new public library would be at the site of the former Bethlehem Lutheran Church. This block contains approximately 105,544 square feet and is bordered on the west by South Washington Street, on the north by Third Avenue SE, and is adjacent both to the Federal Building and the portion of the ARCC known as the Washington Building and the Civic Arena. The block is owned entirely by Blackstone Developers, LLC, except for a parcel described, to wit:

Lot 2, Hagerty & Lloyd's Second Subdivision to the City of Aberdeen, Brown County, South Dakota,

and, commonly known as 212 Third Avenue SE in Aberdeen. This parcel, a home on a 50' x 150' lot, is believed to be owned by Roy James Frey and is occupied by William Frey.

The Task Force has chosen this parcel as its preferred site for a number of reasons. First, at the community listening sessions, the public signaled a strong preference for this site over any of the alternatives. The community clearly wants a downtown library site. The location of this parcel, being adjacent to the ARCC, provides an excellent opportunity for coordination with the Parks and Rec Department, especially in children's programs.

The most difficult aspect of this site for the Task Force to reconcile is its cost. At the time the Task Force began its investigation, the real estate was listed for sale at a price of approximately \$1,100,000.00. The Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation has obtained an option from Blackstone to purchase Lots 1, 3, and 4 for a total purchase price of \$700,000.00, with an understanding that if the option would be exercised, that Blackstone would donate the remaining lot, Lot 5, to the City of Aberdeen.

Although the task force believes that the parcel is at least fully-valued at \$700,000, as is discussed below, the acquisition of this parcel at \$700,000 is not significantly more expensive than any of the other parcels being considered.

The Task Force believes that the favorable location of this parcel justifies its purchase, even at that purchase price. Even if another site can be purchased for approximately \$200,000 less in acquisition costs, over the anticipated 50 year life of the new library facility, the additional \$4,000 per year appears to be a rather small cost to pay to have the library located at what the Task Force views to be the community's preferred site. Demonstrating its interest in having the project constructed at the most desirable location, the Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation has agreed to secure this site for the construction of a new public library if given a commitment by the City Council.

Although this site is the site most strongly favored by the Task Force, some concerns about the site have been raised and should not be disregarded. Currently, portions of this block are being leased for parking to Federal Building employees. Construction of a library at this site, with an appurtenant parking lot that is dedicated for library patrons, would be expected to put additional pressure on the already limited parking available in this part of Aberdeen. Likewise, the Task Force understands that the Parks and Rec Department of Aberdeen also views itself as lacking adequate parking for its programs. The Task Force is concerned that a parking lot built as a library parking lot could be dominated by people who live and work in downtown Aberdeen, or by those attending functions and programs in other facilities including the ARCC. While the Task Force believes that locating the library on this block could be done in a manner to permit adequate parking for library patrons, the parking that would be constructed adjacent to the library should be prioritized for use of library staff and patrons during library hours.

2. Central Park. The Task Force's second site in order of preference is the parcel now known as Central Park. It is bounded on the north by First Avenue SE and on the east by Kline Street. It is located to the north of the old Roosevelt Junior High School.

This is a block containing approximately 90,000 square feet and is currently owned by the City of Aberdeen. Portions of the parcel are subject to a reversion in favor of the Karl Lee family in the event the real estate ceases to be used for "recreation" purposes. The parcel has recently been seeded to grass, trees have been planted, and it is one of few green spaces in downtown Aberdeen. This site was quite clearly the second most popular site among Aberdeen citizens attending the Task Force listening sessions. The Bethlehem Lutheran Church site was generally preferred over Central Park simply because people did not want to see the loss of this green space from downtown Aberdeen.

One clear advantage to this site is that it is already owned by the City of Aberdeen. The city attorney can better address the questions of whether library use complies with the restriction. Central Park would appear to provide many of the same advantages for a new library as the former Bethlehem Lutheran Church site in that it is adjacent to the ARCC, it is located in the downtown core, and it would be easily accessible by those without automobiles.

3. 411 Harrison Street (old Henry Neill School). This is a parcel that the Task Force learned about on the day of the listening sessions to discuss possible locations. This parcel is approximately 90,000 square feet and is owned by Harrison Street Partnership, LLC, and has been represented by Jason Grebner. It has been listed for sale for \$630,000. The parcel is located on the north end of the site of the former Henry Neill Elementary School and is north of the Arby's restaurant on Sixth Avenue in Aberdeen.

This parcel would provide adequate square footage for the library and its parking needs. This parcel has not been favored by the Task Force because it does not appear to meet the community's objective of locating the library in the core. A library one block off of Sixth Avenue, however, may be desirable and while it may not be as easily reached by those on foot as a library downtown, a location just off of Sixth Avenue offers other advantages.

Unlike the downtown locations, however, this location far removed from the ARCC would make closely coordinated projects between the Parks and Rec Department and the library more difficult. The community would seem to be missing an opportunity to maximize parking opportunities in the area of the ARCC and Civic Arena by locating this facility in a different part of the community.

4. K.O. Lee West. The block located to the west of the former K.O. Lee factory is bordered by First Avenue SE on the north and Harrison Street on the west is a block comprised of 97,770 square feet. It is currently listed for sale at \$499,000.

The Task Force has determined that this would be a satisfactory site, although not its chosen site, for construction of the new library. The location is several blocks to the east of what is generally thought to be the Aberdeen core. The location is located on the current bike trail and the driving public would have easy access to the site from First Avenue, a major east-west thoroughfare. This site is approximately four blocks from the new YMCA and about five blocks from the current ARCC. This distance would probably prevent some of the program coordination that would be so much more easily promoted if the new library was located at either the Bethlehem Lutheran Church site or the Central Park site.

5. Coventry Building. The former Mutual of Omaha office site, now known as Coventry, is located at 3010 Milwaukee Avenue NE. The Coventry building comprises approximately 29,000 square feet and is located on a large parcel comprising 9.73 acres.

The Coventry building is an excellent facility that offers many advantages. It was well built, is well appointed, is attractive, and has been well maintained. The lot is spacious and would offer many opportunities to include a green area around the library. Parking could certainly be accommodated. The location of the Coventry building is ideal for many uses. The community, however, was clear in preferring a central location for the library which is not offered by the Coventry building site. This site is farther from the "core" than any site considered in this report.

While it is undoubtedly a much more structurally sound facility than the existing Alexander Mitchell Library, it only offers approximately the same square footage. It is believed that the Coventry building could be acquired through a purchase at a price of approximately \$5.5 million.

If the objective is to provide the community with a library containing approximately 40,000 square feet, acquisition of the Coventry building would require an addition of approximately 10,000 square feet. Even if that addition could be built at \$150 per square foot, and the existing facility could be retrofitted to a library at a cost of \$30 per square foot, the cost of retrofitting and utilizing this building as a library would likely equal or exceed the cost of entirely new construction.

ANTICIPATED COSTS

The Task Force has concluded that construction of a new library if comprising 40,000 square feet for a single-story structure including necessary furnishings, fixtures, and equipment will cost approximately \$7,000,000 exclusive of land acquisition.

The Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation has an option to acquire Lots 1, 3, and 4, Blackstone Addition, City of Aberdeen (the Bethlehem Lutheran Church site). In the event the City Council signals its commitment to construct a library at this site, the Foundation is prepared to complete that sale and donate the parcel to the City. Likewise, in that event, Blackstone has indicated that it would donate Lot 5 to the City at that same time.

While the Task Force recognizes that the City Council and its officials have more experience in projects of this type than this Task Force, it would appear that the acquisition of this library can be accomplished as follows:

Land Acquisition	\$711,500.00
Alexander Mitchell Library Foundation Donation	<u>(\$711,500.00)</u>
Cost to City	-0-
Construction	\$7,000,000.00
Grants and Anticipated Stimulus	(\$1,000,000.00)
Sale of Existing Alexander Mitchell Library	(\$1,000,000.00)
Additional Foundation Contribution	<u>(\$ 200,000.00)</u>
Net Cost to City	\$4,800,000.00

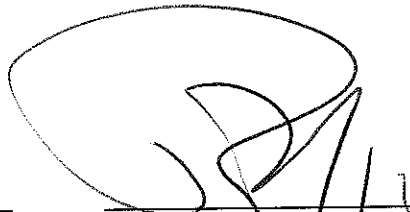
CONCLUSION

The Task Force has witnessed great support for the construction of a new library. While there are several viable alternatives, after weighing all of the various considerations, it is the Task Force's option that the most desirable location for a new public library would be at the site of the former Bethlehem Lutheran Church often referred to as the Blackstone parcel.

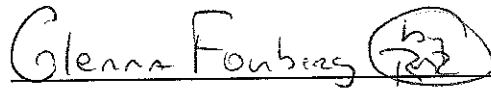
This parcel is centrally located and is easily accessible. Its close proximity to the ARCC would promote continued joint activities between the library and the Parks and Rec Department.

Respectfully submitted,

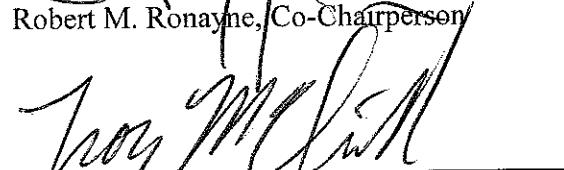
Richard Thomas, Co-Chairperson




Robert M. Ronayne, Co-Chairperson



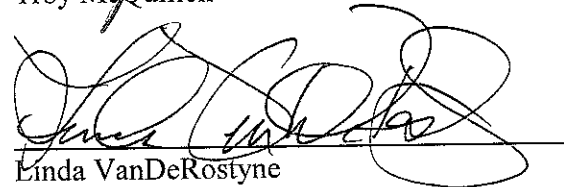
Glenna Fouberg



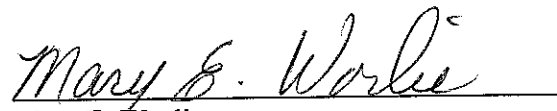
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