

**WALWORTH TOWN BOARD MEETING – SPECIAL MEETING
31 JULY 2007**

Presiding President Ellen Diettrick called the work session of the Library Board of Trustees, Walworth Town Board and Friends of the Walworth Seely Public Library scheduled Tuesday, July 31, 2007 to order at 6:00 PM.

Present: Library Board of Trustees

Richard Crooks	Vice President
Donna Stalker	Secretary
Tina Burmeister	
Dorothy French	
Pamela Wolfanger	Substitute Library Director
Liz O'Toole	Youth Specialist

Walworth Town Board

Robert Plant	Supervisor
Tom Yale	Councilman
Suzi Hawkins-Mance	Councilwoman
Susie C. Jacobs	Town Clerk

Friends of the Walworth Seely Public Library

Jane Cala	President
Dawn Shwind	Vice President
Gail Houghtaling	Secretary

CURRENT STATE OF WALWORTH SEELY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Richard Crooks, Vice President of the Library Board of Trustees passed out a graph, titled "Comparison". Mr. Crooks explained that there were three different lines on this graph, one the population of Walworth, one the Library circulation and the other holdings (materials that are owned in Walworth, including books, magazines, videos, etc). Mr. Crooks gave some statistics that would be helpful, having to do with the circulation of the library. "Initially in 1995 the library had about 49,000, in 2000 up to 69,500 and by 2006 107,888. And already this year, the library is already at 53,000 and this is through the month of June. We had no library training when we were founded in 1963. By 1980 we had two library technicians on the staff. Our circulation went from 1963 to 1980 from 7500 volumes to 21,422. By 2006 we had six full time employees, one MLS, a paraprofessional and four other staff members including our pages. Our volume and population of the Town in 2006 was 8,712 people and our circulation has grown to 107,688. What I find fascinating is the number of people from other areas that utilize our library. In the month of May the Town of Macedon contributed with 772 people. The Town of Marion 292 a little over 6% of our total, Ontario 71. I had a listing here of about 20 some different towns whom our patrons come. The Town of Walworth, which made up a little over 72% of our patronage for the month of May 3,735 patrons in that one month. You're talking around 1000 patrons a week. That's pretty significant. Now if we look at all these statistics what does it say? It says that we have increased considerably faster than the population of the Town the amount of activity that this library has grown through in the past number of years. We all know that we are crowded. We know that the Town is crowded for space. Our challenge of course is to look at this and see what we might possibly do about it."

Deb Germain asked regarding the statistics from May by Mr. Crooks, "When you say Macedon, folks from Macedon were 772 in the month of May, are those

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numbers coming from addresses?” Ellen Diettrick confirmed they were from addresses. Deb Germain said, “In other words, I have a Macedon mailing address, but I live in the Town of Walworth.” Mr. Crooks stated that his guess was that they were a Macedon address rather than Walworth address. Deb Germain stated that the 772 could well be people from the Town of Walworth too.

Pam Wolfanger clarified this question. She stated, “When you apply for a library card, when you come in a get a library card, you are asked what town that your address is, also you school district so that’s all in your record. And so it is probably to whom you pay your taxes. “

**INTRODUCE DAVID BEINETTI, PRESIDENT
SWBR ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS OF ROCHESTER**

Ellen Diettrick introduced Dave Beinetti, President of SWBR Architects & Engineers.

Dave Beinetti explained that he usually does this when he is going before the municipalities to try and get a project reviewed by the Planning Board, the Environmental Conservation Board or doing an environmental impact so this is a little bit less adversarial. We are always trying to promote the project. And this is more of an exchange tonight so I want to encourage some opportunity to talk. I live in Monroe County. We have a family of absolute lovers of libraries. One of the libraries that you may be familiar with that we did many years ago is the Town of Bloomfield library, which is a very interesting library. It is fashioned after a house and it was a fun project we did many years ago. We are also involved right now in Oswego with a library, which is basically their city library. It is a public library. It is the oldest continuously operating library in the United States and is on the Historic Preservation’s list for New York State of the seven most important buildings to save in New York State. And so this old 150 year old building, built in 1850 had documentation from 1858 indicating that only 8 years after it was opened it was severely inadequate and way under the size of population. So it’s lasted all the way from 1858 until we started the renovation a year and a half ago in the same condition. Other libraries we are involved in, is a collegiate library at Roberts Wesleyan College, about 42,000 square feet. It’s going to be very significant and is designed very different than most libraries. We are also working at the U of R Rush Rhyees library, which again is a very old library and hence has particular problems associated with it. Other libraries I have been working with and continue to work with are the Fairport library and also the Mendon library. I think the Mendon library has, for the time being, given up. They have shelved their plans, it was a lengthy process. The Fairport library is a funny situation because they are fantastically successful. They have about 30,000 square feet. They are in the lower level of the Fairport Village Landing. They have great children’s programs and they do a lot of outreach in the community with library programs. And they are space bound and they don’t have anywhere they can go. They hired us about a year and a half ago to try to figure out where in the world could they expand. And they are in the historic area along the canal. So they couldn’t expand out and they couldn’t expand in so they were really up against it trying to figure out what to do. We have continued to work with them looking at all sorts of different alternatives, to moving them literally out of the village which as you can imagine comes with great consternation. But none the less they had to come up with some alternatives and so we looked outside the village, they looked in the village, and the latest proposal would actually situate them on the back left hand side of the large parking area that looks at where it is now. It looks like that has some traction to it because the local people and development folks who are involved in this project are kind of “town fathers” and are interested in that site. They like keeping it in the village,

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they're a real draw obviously for economic reasons. You come to the library, you go to the store and all sorts of things together. However, as successful as they have been it is in fact the thing that has really held them back. And this is somewhat true with the Mendon library and I suspect it is somewhat true of this library too. I have seen it and watched it, read the newsletters and everything else. All of these libraries, Fairport, Mendon and the Walworth Library have something in common. And that is they're very successful. They do a great job of taking care of the patrons, they do a great job with their programs and all three of them are out of space. Significantly out of space. The Mendon library population is around 9,000 and that's not dissimilar to Walworth, very similar in size to the amount of constituents. It has a little bit more space, but not much more and their shelves are their shelves are laid out similar to the shelves here, completely maxed out. All seven levels are maxed out, there is no more space to put anything else in and the boxes and books don't fit. Mendon is the same way and if you were to look closely Fairport is too. All three libraries have the same problem. Fairport library needs 40,000 to 45,000 square feet, now that's a large project. And their situation is similar but their having difficulty, as Mendon is, and I suspect Walworth is too, in securing support. Now why can that be? I think there is several different reasons for that and understanding them might help us to understand what we might need to do to go forward. The current situation as it would exist in most homes today, if you go to the research books is most people have Internet access. Or they have easy access to it through their business or through the schools. What's happening is the access information is becoming increasingly easy and so people are seeing libraries as really a pick up and drop off. It's really no different than Blockbuster or home video services, they can get access to a lot of things very easily. If they don't have the book I want here I can go online and I can ask for it and when it comes in you simply email and I come in and pick it up. I don't really need a library anymore, to a certain extent. The idea of coming in and sitting in a library and actually sitting here, reading and enjoying a soft seat by a window, which is what we designed in Bloomfield, is becoming less and less the norm. Interesting enough, the college libraries are going just the opposite. Where they used to be just stacks and volumes and volumes of books in it, now most of the collegiate libraries are Starbucks. Because now the kids want to go and it becomes a social place for them to be. So here we have this funny phenomena where the college level are becoming social centers and the Town libraries are becoming more "catch me areas for books and if you don't have it I can order it and get it in." So here we have a dilemma because what happens is that great services are provided and nothing is really given up. To the constituent they don't see any loss to a great extent, but yet to the librarian, the library staff and the town, knows that they've got a problem, they're out of space and they need more space. Norms today are at least one square foot per resident. This library is about 3,000 square feet, a little under one half the size of what it should be for the constituency. That's exactly true of Mendon. Fairport's situation is somewhat the same. If they get up to about 44,000 to 45,000 square feet they will probably situate themselves for the next 20 years. And all of these towns and the growth curves are all different.

Similar to Mendon the Wayne County folks would agree entirely that what they really like is to not have much growth. They like the rural character. They want to preserve the farmland, they like the development rights to be offered to folks so they can keep it farmland and all those sorts of things. Similar to Walworth – I took the time to go through the Wayne County Comprehensive Survey and it does give you some good information and some interesting statistics. Wayne County likes the rural character, clean air and water, the ability to walk, affordable housing, schools, cost of living. Some of the other things people listed about living in Wayne County included golf courses, country life, school, parks, peace and quiet, recreation and the library. So here we have a bit of a problem on how to move forward? Here's what I've learned in working with all of these

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libraries. Obviously Greece was able to pull it off because they built a new library. Pittsford was able to pull it off, they built a new library and in all of these cases, the single thing that has made a difference more than anything else hasn't been an exciting design, it's not been a provocative site plan, it's not been anything to do with how it looks, it probably had a little to do with how much it cost because certainly we don't want to overspend, but it's had to do entirely with the fact that there is unity between all of the individuals involved. That's the single thing I'm going to say tonight, is that if you want to go forward and get an addition built on to the library or if you want to exercise the other option of building a library somewhere else on this great property, (most folks do not have this) most municipalities do not have a municipal center like you have here. So the idea of actually doing a new building such that you can free up space here for the growth that needs to happen for normal growth in any town or municipality, separate buildings are an option. My experience in this is that this is a harder sell, to do a separate building, but it can be done. An addition onto an existing municipal building is an easier sell to the constituents. Now the situation here is such that the bond on this building is paid off in 2010. It seems like it is well into the future but it is really on your doorstep. So that's probably a good thing from a financial standpoint. It takes three to four years to really pull off a project so if we're trading one bond for another, something like that, the timing is good to continue to move ahead, and to get things going. But what we don't need to do and this has been a subject of debate, when I first met with this group here and we had a couple of nice meetings, we talked about the situation. There tends to be eagerness "to want to go to the idea of getting something drawn up. What's it going to look like, where's it going to be, how much space is it going to be, could we put it on this site." What I have repeatedly said to everybody and it may sound tripe, but it is true, that's the easy part of our work. Architects do that all the time, figuring out how big it will be, what it will look like, what it will be built of and how much it will cost. That's the easy part. But the hard part is making sure we have funding for it and that we have support within the community. So I'm coming back to the word unity. The most important thing, I think that I can counsel anybody on, and any of these other towns that had to go through the same thing, is that the Town Board and the Library Board need to form a unified collective together with the residents of the town to go forward and agree together that this is important and is a priority for the future. If that really can be forged, than the issues that we have to overcome, the schedule, the financing, the bonding and all that sort of stuff is fairly easy. If there is a breakdown in the unity it just won't work. If you have some dissension or some questioning, not sure why you are doing this or the needs or priorities, my experience is, that is exactly what happened in Mendon. They had been working on it for ten years. They have now set it aside and just can't go forward because they have such breakdown in the unity. Is your library different from a lot of others, I would say, "no". Is the story different than a lot of others, I would say, "no". What's going to be the thing that makes this happens is the unification of all the folks here tonight.

Ellen Diettrick stated "that it doesn't happen overnight. Mr. Beinetti commented "no it doesn't happen overnight." He said not to go back and reminisce about the Oswego situation from 1858 to 2007 but it varies. Pittsford, if you go back and think through what they went through, and I don't know all the bits and pieces, but what they attempted to do is combine the community/senior center and that fell, they were up against a school that year, that school is built that year on Calkins Road and Clover Street. That school, I think, was 75 million dollars. They were up against an amazing amount of situations between the school things over the school budget, they had the community center, they had the

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library and they had the courthouse situation and you can't do it all. And you can't all do it at once, so it got voted down so you have to wait until it is appropriate. It does take time. It can take five years, ten years or it can take fifteen years. And in the meantime, if it takes a long period of time what do you do? You do the best you can with what you have, you've got great service, you've got great people and the Board has to figure out on a prioritization basis what can they do now. There is always something you can do with the dollars you have to work with. It's not a tale of woes to say it will never happen.

Supervisor Plant asked if the students at the college libraries now, with the large sitting areas and big windows to look out, are going to be looking for the same type of library at the public level seven to ten years from now? Mr. Beinetti replied that this is a question that is tough to answer. We spend a lot of time trying to analyze what the generations are going to need and desire. He did state that one thing they have determined in their research is that social interaction is huge with the current generation. You can see it with the text messaging, Internet, electronic access, wireless etc. It also means that what is at the college level libraries would probably be influential in the town library. And far more work, at the college level and workforce is being done collaboratively. Mr. Beinetti summarized by saying that group work areas are definitely going to be a need.

Councilwoman Hawkins-Mance asked, "How, as an architect, do you plan for future space?" Mr. Beinetti said it is really hard to. Councilwoman Hawkins-Mance asked if Mendon failed because they wanted too much space. Mr. Beinetti explained that Mendon failed because the Library Board set it aside and said they were exhausted from finders trying to do this. And they sat through a change in administration, which was not easy. Basically, the library organizations of the country and New York State, it has always been about what one square foot per person. Some communities will find that they want 1 ½ square foot per person. They would be deciding that they are going to exercise some decision-making, and pull into the library some of the things that are missing in other facilities. The goal is to always try to build a 25-year building. Mr. Beinetti stressed that what you don't want to do is come back to the constituents 10 years from now only to have them say you just did this library 10 years ago and you're telling me it's already out of space. To a certain extent that is what we've got here.

A public participant asked if the 1 to 2 square foot per person is a New York State library standard, and not just a suggested amount. Mr. Beinetti explained that it does come from the library association. Mendon hired a library planner and he came in and did a fairly elaborate analysis of what they needed. He came up with 12,500 square feet. Mendon rounded it up and thought they wanted to build 15,000.00 square feet. Mr. Beinetti went on to give a description of some of the other libraries and the square footage. He mentioned that when developing a new library, you put in mind roughly \$200.00 per square foot. And this is a Municipal Public Sector Multiple Bid law and it can go up from there. The least expensive way to do this would be an addition.

A member from the public asked when looking at new plans, do people incorporate growth space? Mr. Beinetti advised that this is prudent to the project. He agreed that you would want to give yourself some elbowroom. He advised that the best long term solution may be to turn the space over entirely and build a separate building which now gives you two or three size growth potential in the next hundred years. This may not be the cheaper solution but may be the best solution. You don't want to back yourself up in a corner.

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People of the town already understand the why. But people any day of the week can walk into the library and say they don't see the need. Pam said this is part of the problem. In many ways, libraries are their own worst enemies, they just keep giving. Historically, libraries do a lot with little, but that is their job and we just keep giving more and more for less. Mr. Beinetti stated that the town is the same way also. You continue to give the best of what you can and you're going to work with what you have. But then you get to a point where your ability to improve the quality of life and to serve the constituents will come to a point where something is being given up or not able to be offered.

Mr. Beinetti advised that another way to look at what we might do here is to try to figure out how to bundle a higher level of response. In other words, rather than just adding on to the library, should the town look at a more well rounded need all the way around and look at the project as a more holistic project and not a single.

Councilman Yale mentioned that there was some discussion at the Town Board meeting where they wanted to make sure the library did not become disjointed with their needs. He advised that the town has significant shortage of space issues as well. The recreation programs are in a crunch. Some of the offices are fairly crunched. Your concept of looking at something together is very real. Deb Germain stated that along the same lines and based on prior experience before we go much further, what becomes really important is to find out what the people in the town want and not just from copying the people who use the library but from surveying everyone in the town because if you don't do that you will find out painfully so that the bottom line is whether their taxes go up. She stated that you have to get out to the public and find out what it is that will make them vote "yes".

Mr. Beinetti agreed entirely. He stated that you might be able to make a big pitch concerning what is in it for the people. He stated that Walworth is a highly educated, highly mobile population and said it is important to find out what their needs are.

Deb Germain said you want to appeal to as many people as you can.

Councilman Yale asked Dorothy French about prior work regarding surveys. She indicated the timing was not good, as it was just after the September 11 attacks. Mr. Beinetti stated that we should not just survey but make sure you ask the right questions. He suggested that the Town might wish to contact a company that would generate the questions in a neutral, non-judgmental manner. Councilman Yale agreed that people should not give an opinion without knowing the whole issue.

Mr. Beinetti said that this may take a year or so but you have to go through the due diligence. This is an important step and his counsel typically is to not make a mistake of creating some sort of an image or a layout, floor plan of a building, he felt this would be sure sudden death, because now you are presuming and it looks like the residents had little or no input. Councilman Yale agreed.

NEXT STEPS?

Councilman Yale made a suggestion that people from the Library Committee, the Town, and the Town Board get together and try to work out and bring questions after identifying those overlapping needs and put together some concept of strategies that could be used to bring out to the people. And see where the

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support is. One of things they are going to ask is what is it going to cost? It's always a cost benefit question.

A question was asked what do we do first, the chicken or the egg? Do you take a survey and find out what people are looking for and then tie it in to what you're looking for or do you present them with plans? Councilman Yale said that he thought we should present them with some different strategies, and ask them about these, but also give them the opportunity to propose alternatives. Supervisor Plant stated that Williamson sent out a survey and asked the people if they would support this project or what parts of it would you support? Mr. Beinetti stated that you are going to have internal issues and then there will be external issues. Once those are done, you then make the options known. Here is what we believe will make the most sense, here are our options. It's all info gathering and it takes time.

Mr. Crooks asked if there was a percentage of response from surveys that are community wide. Mr. Beinetti stated that this depends on how hot the issue is.

Mr. Beinetti said that the important thing to realize is that what might look like a fairly benign question to you or I when we work on the task force to create the questionnaire might in fact, do just what Councilman Yale said, in that you will get an askew response. He felt it is probably money well spent to bring in somebody and craft a neutral questionnaire.

Susie Jacobs commented that even with a questionnaire and the time that it may take us for the study, in a year or two taxes could take a hike and the possibility of change in administration could turn it down. She asked what is the purpose of going through an expensive questionnaire, why not put it out for a public referendum? Councilman Yale stated that you are going to spend if this gentleman comes in and does a design for us. Also, you are going to spend a lot of time in that design and if the answer out in the community is "no way" you don't want to spend this money. Plus you get them to buy in ahead of time with a questionnaire.

Ellen Diettrick stated, and everyone agreed, that we have a more demanding public than ever before. Three or four years ago they would have said yes but now everything is being questioned.

Ellen Diettrick made a suggestion regarding how to phrase the questions on the questionnaire so that it touches the residents directly. Discussion ensued among those present with them deciding it would be up to the committee to be open to all types of questions.

Mr. Beinetti said that based on his experience is that the Town Board takes the leadership responsibility, it sends the right signal. It is always a question as to whether the library leading the charge is somewhat self serving and while it may be right and correct in your information the way the public sees it is that they think the leaders of the town have the fiduciary responsibility for first and foremost, the money and how it is spent, the taxes, the health, welfare and safety of the residents and the services provided so that if the Town Board were to establish the composition of this task force and then assemble it and begin to oversee it over a period of time. You might want to consider having an independent facilitator from another town come in to act as the facilitator so that the Town Board can have independent participation. There might be a couple of people from the Board, a couple of people from the library and the Town Board

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should establish any other departments who might have a representative and there should be some community representation. The Town would figure out who would be additive to the group and not detractive, you don't want to fill it with plus minus neutral folks and have constant bickering but at the same time you want people who are honest in seeking the right answer. You're not trying to steer them one-way or the other. The Town Board would be able to recommend a group of ten people, any more than that would become unruly. You set an agenda and have a time frame and off you go. Healthy communication begins to set the tone for this project. But the Town Board should be the one to carry the flag on this and be out in front. Councilman Yale stated that unfortunately he has to agree with that.

Mary Russo made a comment that she had a thought that before anything happens. When you're thinking about the questionnaire we need to state what we have currently. "We have a library this size, we have government offices this size, we share the same building, the Town offices have this much space, and we need this much space because. The library has this much space and we need this much more space because. Because we have loads and loads of books and records and storage needs and we have nowhere to put anything. We have no room, no meeting rooms, and no office space. We just need to tell the people what we have and what we need and make sure that people understand that the library doesn't just want to expand, the offices need more space."

Jeff VanLare said that he agreed this is a twofold issue. He spoke with Supervisor Plant the other day who stated "he has needs" and this is probably why the Town Board should take the lead so that you address the town needs prior to the library needs. You have to figure out exactly what you have to have for now and what you need for the future.

Councilman Yale said that he would make such a recommendation and suggest that he toss out for comment the make up of this committee. He would propose you make a committee of two Town Board members, one person from the Friend's organization, two Library Board members, one person from Recreation and two people from the public at large. He was asked if he would have someone from the library staff? And what about Recreation and Parks Committee? He had no comment for this. He went on to say that he thought you would have more validity without staff on this committee. This committee is not a "decision making committee". In his opinion they would coordinate questions to put forth some ideas that then will go out to the general public. This committee would have called in the various department heads and talked to them about needs and pull some of these needs together. One of the thoughts out there is that you can't create just a meeting room for the library that is going to stand vacant often. But if you had maybe recreation and library in the same proximity and they could share that function. And maybe as the library grows and recreation gets pushed out then the public buys the need for a larger recreation center and it becomes an organized progression of buildings. Not just one now but a series towards the future.

Councilman Yale offered the following motion for the Town Board to establish a committee created with two Town Board members, one member from the Friends Group, two Library Board members, one from the Recreation Committee and four members at large to represent the various sectors of the community to be appointed by the Town Supervisor.

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Seconded by Councilwoman Hawkins-Mance.

Adopted: Vote Ayes 3 Nays 0

Councilwoman Hawkins-Mance requested that she be appointed to the committee. Councilman Yale stated that the Supervisor would be looking for a representative from the various committees present today to be appointed to this newly established committee.

Ellen Diettrick thanked all who attended and meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susie C. Jacobs
Town Clerk