Taft Public Library Trustee Meeting Notes

2/1/12

Attendees: Bob Carlson, Carrie Grimshaw, Bill McHenry, Kathy Carlson, Carolyn Peterson (6:50), Don Morin, Stewart Roberts & Karla Johnson (of Johnson Roberts arrived 7:45)

Meeting called to order at 6:38.

Our primary focus of this meeting is to meet with the architectural firm, Johnson Roberts Associates, Inc. of Somerville, Massachusetts.

The first hour of the meeting was to finalize common questions for all architectural firms to be interviewed for the possible renovation / conversion of St. Michael’s Church to Taft Public Library.

Stewart Roberts & Karla Johnson arrived and introductions were made. They presented a brief slide show with discussion of:

* Their firm & prior experience converting religious facilities to other facilities
* Budget summaries of many of their recent projects (25+ projects) and were able to stay w/in budgets by about 1.21%
* Review of the current location w/ photos
  + Positive attributes include the main floor of the church
  + The basement area
  + The outdoor green
* An informal plan was presented to show their vision of the end result
* The informal plan doesn’t include the amount of linear book space as indicated by Carrie at the initial meeting
* The benefits of hiring this firm
  + 60+ library projects
  + Experience w/ adaptive reuse
  + Cost control
  + Will engage with the community (local access TV, invite the townspeople in the library), collaborate with Trustees
  + They will try to create an inviting feeling, natural lighting staircase; bathrooms would need to be redone

Questions presented:

Q – What is your process for dealing w/ potential environmental hazards?

A - Exploratory demolition might not be a bad idea to prevent any surprises in the construction phase or later.

Don recommends that we be independently diligent to the exploratory demo when negotiating the purchase.

Q – What is LEED?  
A - Leadership Energy & Environmental Design from the US Green Building Council. It is a program that we would have to buy into & a commissioning agent who is there to save $ & headaches down the road.

Don recommends we speak w/ Mark Reil to see if LEED is the right choice for this project as it is not required, but does have benefits.

Q – What next?

A – Multiple phases; if J&R did get the project, they will help w/ bidding process with contractors, etc. & will stay involved during construction & meet w/ general contractors & follow-up to help us with the schedules of payment, etc.

Q – Can you do the initial phase of this project w/in the $10,000?

A – The cost estimate typically costs $5,000, so it doesn’t leave much for other fees.

Q – Have you ever worked in a community such as Mendon where finances are such a volatile issue? If so, what do you advise?

A – Yes. Keep the focus on the need of the building; present it to the community as a need; keep the process transparent for the community to see what we are doing. Also, you can keep the project to the minimum and do only what you need to do now. Keep in mind there are 2 costs – project cost and operating cost & we provide general guidelines for the operating costs in the initial phases. Should the firm be chosen, by project end they will be able to help us project operating costs to provide the community realistic estimates.

Q – Can you roughly estimate the cost of this project?

A – You can estimate $100 - $150 per square foot including the elevator (6,500 sq. ft. x $100 = $650,000)

We agreed TPL will get back to JR Architects within 2 week timeframe. JR was agreeable with that time frame.

They departed the meeting at 9:00.

Discussion followed about the rectory & the issue presented about it being usable. General discussion followed about a variety of points including costs for other aspects of the project

Don recommends that we look to the town to help. There are people in town who can help for example, with the LEED commissioner, etc.

Discussion of references to obtain about the firm. Carrie will make contact w/ a few libraries to inquire about their experiences w/ JR firm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20.