

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
NOVEMBER 24, 2015, 5:00 PM  
Park Rapids Public Library-Lower Level  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Acting Mayor Paul Utke called the City Council Workshop for November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Acting Mayor Paul Utke, Councilmembers Erika Randall and Ryan Leckner. Absent: Mayor Pat Mikesh and Councilmember Rod Nordberg. Staff Present: Administrator John McKinney, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, Public Facilities Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, Planner Ryan Mathisrud, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Karen Rose from Library Strategies, Mike Schellin from Kodet Architectural Group, Jodi Schultz, Jill Johnson, Steve and Dodie Egge, Ellis Jones, Maria Pretzer, Thomas Petschl, Jeff Mosner, Dick Rutherford, and Kevin Cederstrom from the Enterprise. Nick Damascus participated by telephone.

**3. DISCUSSION:**

**A. Park Rapids Library Survey Results Presented by Library Strategies:**

Chris Fieldsend stated we had a library study done by Library Strategies. Karen Rose is here to present their findings.

Karen Rose stated I'm here tonight with Michael Schellin from Kodet Architectural Group who is our partner on this project. We spent a couple of months assessing Park Rapids and your library needs. A lot of communities are in the same place that you are with aging buildings and with the use of libraries anticipated to change, what do you do with your library and how do you look to the future to provide the right services to your community. Our scope of work involved four steps. One was determining what are the library space needs for your community. We did that by accessing a lot of information from your community. We did an ADA assessment of this current building to find out if you were in compliance. The third study that we did was the functionality of the current building as a library space. Finally, we did some work on site assessment and the various options that are available in the Park Rapids community should you relocate.

Rose stated we always had the understanding that the community was anticipating three choices. One is renovating this current building. Looking to put the library in a current facility that exists somewhere in the city. The third option is building something new. The first step in that process is determining what space needs Park Rapids has for its library in the future. We get asked what's the standard or formula and how big does our library need to be based on our population. There's isn't a formula. The ADA used to provide a standard of square footage. They do have guidelines, but because there is such a transformative time in the library world right now they don't offer standards anymore and communities are designing all kinds of different libraries, whether they are focused on special technology, or children's needs and books. Every library has to determine how it

wants to use its library. Contrary to what people think, just because of technology, libraries are not going away. They are just being rebirthed into something else. They are typically becoming gathering places where resources, technology, and social gatherings combine into ways that are much more creative and outward facing.

Rose stated we used a lot of input sources. We did a community survey that was online. We interviewed various leaders, officials in the city, and individuals with economic development backgrounds. We did a day long visioning retreat in October, which a lot of you were a part of. We did a lot of data analysis on demographic trends, library usage trends, comparatives, bench marking against other libraries. All of this culminated. Then we did area site reviews by looking at other buildings and making assessments. All of that comes together in this report that hopefully starts narrowing the funnel for you to make decisions down the road for a new library.

Rose stated we wanted to show in the report how your community stacks up against Minnesota community averages. One thing that stood out in this community is the aging population. You profile a little older. The average rate in Minnesota for people over 65 years is 14.3%. You are at 23.6%. As you know there are a lot of retired folks around here. They have made this their place for retirement. There are also families, so there are a lot of children. Those are the two demographics that popped out to us, small children and the mature population. There is a higher rate of poverty too.

Rose stated your current library is about 12,000 square feet. It's heavily visited at 79,000 visits in 2014 for various reasons, but primarily to pick out books as well as to attend programs. You have a strong print collection and it gets circulated a lot. You are focused on print. It's not atypical of most communities. Print is still very strong. It's not going away anytime soon. There are eight computer stations used by the public available for internet sessions. They are used quite often. There were 669 meeting room reservations last year. There are a lot more usage statistics in the full report.

Rose stated when you compare Park Rapids against the Kitchigami System and the service population is 7%. Nick Damascus stated the service population is not something that is limited to the city limits that are using this facility. It expands much broader than that. In the case of Park Rapids, and looking around at the other neighboring Kitchigami Branches, which are about forty miles away from the Park Rapids Library, if you are twenty miles out you have a choice to go either to Park Rapids or to one of the other branches. It looked like there were two zip codes in that twenty mile ring around the city, that gives us a population of about 10,000, and then we added the other cities within that ring as well, which totals a service population of about 12,000. Also, you have 8,000 cardholders. That in itself shows that the cardholders out number the city population of 3,600. Mixing all that together is how we came up with 12,000.

Rose stated in comparative the service population in this library if you compare 7% of the population it gets used more than the other libraries as far as print circulation, internet sessions. 7% of the population uses 24% of the internet sessions. That was another profile that we wanted to share with you. As trending in a lot of communities, when the economy went down in 2008 library use went way up. You see that in circulation and visits. People were coming here for resources. That trend normalizes in the past five years. That's typical in many communities and you're seeing that here. The uptick in circulation was the anomaly. We are seeing that all over the country. The trend stabilizes overall in the long term.

Rose stated you had a lot of children participating in programming. There were a lot of proctoring sessions, which is a trend we see in a lot of libraries these days. When people do online college they need a place to proctor their tests. A lot of them will come to the library. Kids also need study space.

Rose stated we did a survey which was very well responded to. 35% of the respondents said they use the library on a weekly basis, which is a lot. 13% of the respondents were not library users. We wanted to get that voice as well. Because your community skews older the library users do as well. Almost 64% are over fifty years old. 40% of them are retired. 70% are not city residents. Most people check out books, 81%. That's a lot. Books are still very important in this community, as well as CDs and DVDs. A lot of people go to the book sale. 42% attend meetings. That's also pretty strong. We heard in the survey that people desire more technology, access, but primarily training on new devices that they have. They bring in their devices to the library and hope they can get help with it, or they come in for help with the internet. They'd like more adult and teen programming and more things for tourists. A lot of people suggested you need more space for meetings, programming, for reading, for small group study, and more parking.

Rose stated we took that information and had a day long retreat. We had a great team to work with. There was a lot of energy in the room and a lot of great ideas and discussion. We kept hearing more space, more space. We also had an interesting discussion about the fact that the library is used by everyone and that internet access is important. Sometime people sit outside the library building when the library is closed to access the internet. Some libraries roll their eyes at that, but this community embraced it and said why don't we make a patio with charging devices so people can come and charge their devices on this outdoor patio and extend the library out and make it a gathering space. I thought that was a fabulous idea. It was very fun to be a part of that conversation. We also did a thumbnail on what sort of a library would you like it to be, an old Carnegie style or an Apple Store look. By far the people preferred the old Carnegie feel, a place to go read and be comfortable with little alcoves. That will come later when you are actually looking at building design. That will be a much more involved session with the community. They'd like more parking. We talked about outreach to assisted living centers, the DAC, to some populations that don't readily have transportation to the library. We talked about bookmobiles. Everybody likes those. A lot of ideas came out for bringing the library out of the building and going out in the community in schools and all of these places I've mentioned. The library already is a part of a lot of your community events, but being much more present and out there.

Rose stated we also talked about location, downtown versus somewhere else. We talked about having a town day, when people come to town to do all of their errands. The library is typically one of those stops. It appeared to us in the survey that the downtown location didn't seem as important to us. Although some said they would use the library less if it wasn't downtown. People had it in their minds for a site like Pamida which is close to downtown. In the retreat we heard that downtown is important. It's a community hub. They come here as a social interactive place and as part of their town day. It felt much more important to that group. It was suggested that a new library could be a catalyst for more evening activity. If you had evening programs, libraries become a draw for nighttime activity if you wanted to energize that.

Rose stated our company focuses just on libraries. We don't do strategic planning and leadership development. We always bring a librarian in on our team. Nick Damascus

is that person. He did most of the space needs assessment. He will walk us through that information.

Damascus stated your service population is 12,000. We are confident with that number. There are some guidelines for the physical collections for libraries. You have very strong usage of your collection in Park Rapids. For a basic collection, it would be 34,800 items for a service population of 12,000. Right now you have 28,000 items. A moderate collection would be 42,000. An enhanced collection would be 49,200, and an excellent collection would contain 62,400 items. You are also in the Kitchigami Regional System so your collection is not just necessarily what's on the shelves in Park Rapids. Minnesota has a really strong network, so your collection is also anything that's on any shelf in any library in Minnesota. That comes into play when you look at these standards and guidelines.

Damascus stated our space recommendation for print is broken down by square footage. So for 34,800 items at ten items per square foot, ten volumes per square foot, including some other items like videos, audio, magazines, and computer stations, you'd need 15,120 square feet. If you were to do a building plan they would measure for the exact number of shelves you need. That would be a much more detailed approach if you were at the point of remodeling. You'll have to guess into the future to determine how many computer stations you'll need because Wi-Fi is the wave of the future, as well as public seating, staff workstations. You have a building that is not very flexible. It was built as a bank. The walls are there and they are going to stay there. The meeting and programming space, you may want to take advantage of the other spaces in the community before making your final decision. That's another conversation that would need to take place. When you take all these factors into consideration, and applying some standard formulas, you're looking at 15,120 square feet. Looking at what you currently have and giving some recommendations of where you'd like to go with that. When you start your building program you can tweak these numbers. With the Legacy Programs that are available in Minnesota you can get some really large turnouts, and to take advantage of that programming since there's seventeen years left on that amendment. Some of the programs have been pushed elsewhere that the library hasn't been able to accommodate. There were recommendations for some smaller areas. Using lower shelves to accommodate the aging population equates to not having your collection as dense as it will be spread out more, and therefore you will require more square feet of space.

Rose stated we're recommending 12,000 to 16,000 square feet, with more meeting space. When you talk about collections, the trend now is to have that in lower stacks so you have better site lines across the whole building. A lot of libraries are putting their stacks on wheels so you can move them around if you have a big program. When you want to use that space you can put them all in a corner. There's a lot of ways people are accommodating flexibility.

Jeff Mosner stated we were looking twenty years out when considering a new building. So when you looked at the service population, was that projected twenty years out? Damascus questioned are you asking looking at the twenty year projections, how does that fit into how the space is responding to it and the actual size of the building? Mosner stated you came up with 12,000 for a service population based on those two zip codes. I would think the demographics show there's going to be growth in the population of those zip codes. In the last ten years it was 11% growth. Was that taken into account? Damascus stated yes. I used an overall county projection. You go from 21,000 to 23,000 projected out for Hubbard County.

An audience member asked are you assuming that the demographics will remain the same as far as the aging population. Will that continue to remain the same? Damascus stated yes. The geography of where you're at on the lakes and the fact that people are retiring there. There is the assumption that would continue to happen. Rose stated it isn't foreseeable that there is any new industry coming in that would bring young families to the area. If there were then that would factor in. Something could happen differently in the next ten years that would skew your population profile differently. What you typically have to do is look backwards to trend forward.

Mike Schellin, with Kodet Architectural Group, stated I was responsible in the report for three items. These are really the nuts and bolts of what you currently have, the ADA assessment, the facility conditions assessment, and site options. It's really just the pros and cons to allow us in the future as we move forward to make informed decisions based on some of the things that came up. For the ADA assessment we took the current building and matched it up against the 2015 Minnesota Disability Code Guidelines. It's a brand new code and it is more stringent than most of the other codes, the IDC or the international building code. This is a standalone report. You will need this for any remodeling or project that is done. The code requires that you have an action plan moving forward. Does the whole building have to be remodeled to meet the guidelines? No. You can get by with certain things that you have done. But a major remodeling may trigger certain items that are on the higher end of the price or scoping that may trigger those to be done depending on the dollar amount of your renovations.

Schellin stated in the report we listed some priorities, such as some of the exterior things, getting into the building, and when you travel from floor to floor. Can a disabled person access all of the services that are provided by the library? We also looked at the concrete things, like exiting, fire and safety. We started at the outside of the building. You're required to have two handicap parking stalls. You do have those, however there are minor things like a four foot aisle that needs to be restructured. So there are always those lower end things that can be done. There are certain things that get in the way of the clear floor space of a lot of the door handles and light switches. In the children's area there are things on the floor that could easily be moved. There are high priority things that are easy to do. The other things that are on the other end of the spectrum are things like the upstairs bathrooms. They are currently okay to meet some of the guidelines, but if a major renovation were to happen those restrooms would have to be completely redone. They are just slightly out of code. For example, the clear floor space in front of the toilet is required to be five feet. You are short on that. There is some wall shelving that protrudes out. That would be in violation. If someone were sight impaired they could hit themselves on that because they can't see it. In the basement restrooms the towel dispensers and children's changing tables would be easy to change. The book drop would be harder to change. Typically, you would have a vehicular and a pedestrian book drop. This one doesn't meet the pedestrian book drop.

Schellin stated this action plan is your guideline to move forward. You can see that any major renovation a minimum of 10% will have to go towards ADA upgrades of just your building costs. Some things might be low on the list, like the stairs. They don't meet ADA guidelines but since you have an elevator, it moves that to the low priority area.

Schellin stated the second piece of that is the condition of the building. We took a look at everything from the conditions of lighting to the mechanical and electrical systems, as well as door and toilet handles. We noticed some things that might need to be taken

care of right away. There was a leak in the meeting room ceiling from a pipe. That has been taken care of. Things like that are minor maintenance. Overall the building is in good condition. The building is getting a little older and there are some maintenance issues that will have to be put on the docket in the next three to five years. Any minor renovations could kick in some of the code issues. The energy code is one. We're finding with the new stringent energy code for installation in the walls, etc, we're having to come in and add more installation, LED light fixtures. The percentage of efficiency we get out of mechanical, heating, and ventilation systems do kick in when we do a remodeling project. You have to meet the state code. We had a priority list numbered one through four, and A through C that marked whether that was a high priority one, or whether it was a life/safety issue that needed to be taken care of. Those are outlined in the report. You can pull those out of the report and use those on their own as you go through the process.

Schellin stated during the retreat a couple of options came up for remodeling the current facility, or moving. We took three of the options that seem to be in the forefront. One was remodeling the existing facility, the current site. We already have the condition of the building. Can we go back now and fit in the 15,000 square feet in the current building? We currently have a floor plan of 12,000 square feet. What does that look like for remodeling for an addition? What does that do to our site? Another site that came up was the old Pamida. A third site was the old water tower. We were given the 2008 downtown study. It looked at moving city hall and the library into a city complex on the water tower site. We looked at that to set down a 15,000 square foot library in the middle of the site.

Schellin stated we listed the pros and cons and the facts in the report. The facts include the zoning and what the land and building values are. We also noted the radius circles in location to certain other city functions, like the school, home schooling facilities, elderly assisted living, and downtown, within one-half a mile, walking distance. We looked at what would it be like to walk from the high school to the library. Some of the pros on the current site are we are within the half mile from the school. We are within the downtown corridor. This location is familiar to patrons. It's been here since 1994. Some of the cons include its land locked. You can't expand here without losing parking.

Schellin stated the water tower site was based on the 2008 study that was done. We brought some of that back. It would be familiar. It's within walking distance from downtown. You'd have flexibility in a new building.

Schellin stated the Pamida site is the least viable option that we looked at. Putting a library into a big box store, you're really just building a building inside of an existing building. Big box stores just aren't set up for acoustics, reading spaces, library lighting. It would be the land that you would look at and not the building. It is a large site. With a new building you'd have flexibility. It's further away from downtown and the schools, and it's not recommended or conducive to a library.

Schellin stated the other piece is we took two of those options and did a budget analysis. We took the 15,000 square feet and put some dollar amounts to it. You find that the report calls for 17,000 square feet with an addition, instead of 15,000. With a remodeling you have some inefficiencies. To take care of the inefficiencies you'll have an increased square footage. There's a certain percentage of space that you're paying for because the existing walls and the vault would have to stay. The new sites we just looked at flopping a 15,000 square foot building down. The unknown there is probably your land costs and the rate of development. To develop that piece of property you're looking at a considerable timeline, whereas a remodeling in the existing facility would be a lot quicker

and a lot shorter. We'd also have the cons of either phasing the new construction so the library can remain in use for patrons or how do you move them. Those are the pieces that we looked at after we gathered together all of the information.

Fieldsend questioned the new construction on the water tower site, you believe the construction would be \$3,780,000.00, regardless of where you put it? Schellin stated yes. That's taking a general round number of \$250.00 per square foot. That number can go up or down quite a bit depending on your quality of the building. \$250.00 a square foot is what would qualify as a long term building. Something that is going to stand in the community for a long time. Somebody will always say I can do it for less, but generally in the long term the longevity of the building will be compromised. The land costs and site development would be unknown, like parking lots, lighting, things like that.

Dick Rutherford questioned did you take into consideration how much it will cost to tear down the water tower? Schellin stated no we didn't take a look at that. Rutherford stated that would be real important. Schellin stated we built around it so it could stay. There's no reason to take that down. Rutherford questioned who is going to repair it? There are costs to taking care of it right now. It needs maintenance badly. Schellin stated the site development study really took a look at the needs of the library, to replace a library with a library. It did take a look at needs, building-wise for the 15,000 square feet.

Rose stated we were hoping this would start the funnel so as you are looking at this, there are still a lot of decisions to be made but it gives you some parameters as far as what some preliminary costs might be. You have an onboard ramp to start thinking about what this library could look like. The next steps are a building program, financing, the interesting play is most of your users would not be funding a capital library. We talked about that at the retreat that the 3,900 that live in the city would bear the cost of the building. However there is a lot of overlap funding going back and forth between the county and the city, and the system too. Your financing would be interesting.

Schellin stated on the building side what we found you need is 15,000 square feet, with a building of 12,000 square feet, could a remodeling make a major impact here currently on this site? I think the answer is yes. The next step would be to take the two options that are identified as moving forward and program what would it look like if you added new spaces on. What does that do to the parking and how do we solve that issue. Do we park next door? Those are things that we could look at in greater detail. 15,000 square feet would fit on this site if we took the parking out. That's an important piece that we found out.

**4. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Leckner, and unanimously carried to adjourn the workshop at 6:00 p.m.**

[Seal]

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Acting Mayor Paul Utke

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk