

Ramsdell Library Designer Selection Committee
March 28, 2019, 12:00pm
Town Hall, 334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA

Meeting called to order by Ed Abrahams at 12:00 pm.

Attendance: Ed Abrahams (EA), Amanda DeGiorgis (AD), Holly Hamer (HH), Patrick Hollenbeck (PH), Pedro Pachano (PP), Sean Van Deusen (SD)

Audience: 4

1. Approval of Minutes: HH motion to approve, PH second. Vote 6-0.
2. Discussion of the criteria for choosing a designer for ADA Improvements at Ramsdell Library per M.G.L., SS 44-58 and possible alternatives.

PH states that the Committee will be calling the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to speak with Jeffrey Dougan at 12:15pm.

SD started discussion by referencing the Construction Project Manual he handed out at the last meeting. SD stated that the thresholds have changed from \$10,000 on designer/\$100,000 on construction to \$30,000 on designer/\$300,000 on construction. SD walked committee through process of writing RFQ, advertising the RFQ, committee going through the applications and choosing a firm to complete work. SD handed out a sample RFQ from the Sharon Library as well as a draft of the advertisement for Ramsdell's RFQ. Committee decided to request someone with historic building experience but will not require historic library building experience. Committee would like someone with ADA experience as well as making municipal buildings ADA compliant.

PH stated that he is confused. He has been told by MBLC that a Building Program must come before anything else. He said that a Building Program would identify Ramsdell's needs for the next twenty years and that it is different than making Ramsdell ADA compliant. EA asked if that means we should stop the Committee and switch to do the Building Program instead. PP added that the architect will create the Building Program as part of the design process.

12:15pm: Committee placed call to Jeffrey Dougan (JD), Assistant Director for Community Services at the MOD. [Call was on speakerphone for audience.]

PH gave JD a brief run-down of Ramsdell's history and the fact that it is a historic building but not ADA compliant. EA pointed out that Mason Library is accessible and that money had already been allocated to begin addressing the issue at Ramsdell.

JD suggested several things needed to be looked at. In Massachusetts, it is required that both ADA and the State Architectural Access Board be used in making required changes.

ADA carries an obligation to have programmatic access but not every building needs to comply. Unique features (i.e. hours, programs only at that site) require accessibility. This can mean relocating programs or removing the barriers. Both ADA and the State Architectural Access Codes must be met but the more stringent of the two is what is put in place. JD stated that on the assessor's card it notes that Ramsdell was built in 1906 but work has been recorded as done in 1971, at which point it would have been required to make accessibility improvements. This was not done and it now leads to an outstanding liability.

EA asked if we needed to follow the process or if there was now a greater matter of urgency to the process. JD stated that it was more important to follow the process. Ramsdell is historic so modern measurements may lead to a variance of some sort. A qualified architect can help with those issues. A historical variance would not relieve the Town of ADA requirements. Even a temporary ramp would require a variance from the Architectural Access Board. JD advised that a study needs to be done and the Town should avoid postponing it further.

PH asked JD about the money question. What if construction is over \$100,000? What does that trigger? JD explained that the ADA and the Architectural Access Board differ. ADA requires that anything over \$100,000 requires 20% to be put towards access issues. The Architectural Access Board has three different levels. The first one is if you spend under \$100,000 and the improvement is under 30% of the property value, you are required to have all work be to current code. If you spend more than \$100,000 but are still under 30% of the value, you will need to be to code and provide an accessible entrance, restroom, telephone and water fountain. If you go over 30% of the value, the entire building must be brought into compliance.

PH asked if that applied to work done on electrical systems only. JD stated that are some exceptions to the second rule [roof, windows, sewer and HVAC] where work would not trigger it as long as those things were under the 30% of the total value.

EA then thanked JD and JD reiterated that he is not an enforcement agency and that he is here to assist us.

Phone call ended.

EA stated that the Trustees are going to have to decide if it can continue to have Sunday hours and other programming at Ramsdell given that we are in serious violation of ADA and the Architectural Access Board. EA also said the Trustees need to decide what they want to say to the designers. EA advised that we should work to complete the RFQ document for the next meeting.

PH stated that the MBLC will be in the area on April 9th and might be available for consultation on this. PP suggested that we ask in the RFQ for the last three project

details of any firm interested. Also reinforced that someone who has done work in public buildings would be very helpful.

Next meeting set for 12pm on Thursday, April 11 at Town Hall.

3. Discuss timeline for advertisement of process.

SD stated that it will take 3-4 weeks from when the RFQ is done for the advertising process. Then the Committee will go through the applicants.

PH will send some library building program examples for the next meeting. HH asked if the CPA money the Trustees were applying for is still valid. SD said yes as it can apply towards this process. HH asked to keep the options of using MBLC money versus Town funding open.

4. Citizen's Speak Time

Audience 1: Asked about study done ten years ago, which was estimated to cost \$1.5 million to do complete renovation. HH stated that recession hit and the plan was moth balled. Audience member speculated that it was probably now three times as much to do the renovation now.

5. Adjourn

AD made motion to adjourn at 12:50pm, HH second, Vote 6-0.

Next Meeting: April 11, 2019 at 12pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda M. DeGiorgis".

Amanda DeGiorgis, Library Director