

Old Library Accessibility Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2017

Members Present: Wendy Cote-Magan, Mark Mikitarian, Ken Swanton, Lucy Wallace
Guests: Austin Ludwig and David Pollak, Abacus Architects

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM by Mark Mikitarian.

Administrative: The minutes of the April 26, 2017 meeting were approved as amended.

The cost of additional survey work requested by Abacus is \$2,000. Lucy Wallace reported she had asked Julie Doucet to see if there were funds available in the Selectmen's professional services account to cover this request and that approval be on the agenda for the June 6 Selectmen's meeting. She also asked Julie to check with Tim as to his ability to sign the MAAB application for a variance and approve the \$50 permit fee. Requisite copies of the application can be made in the Town Hall. Wendy Magan offered to make the cds that are filed with it as well. David confirmed Abacus can continue its work in the near term without the additional survey information, but the sooner it is available the better.

Abacus Architects Update

Entry Options: David Pollak presented the four options they have developed: two involve (A101 and A102) restoring the front entrance with an exterior ramp and walkway and two (A103 and A104) would have the exterior entry be at grade with interior steps and LULA to access the first floor. The major difference between A101 and A102 was the former envisions a masonry ramp parallel to and extending 8'-10' beyond the front of the building while the later envisions a bridge for the ramp, with a similar extension beyond the building front. The purpose of the extension would be to require less of a pathway to access the ramp. The ramp will need handrails and a guard; David suggested materials and designs that could be used. He also suggested that there be a hand rail along one side of the path. The stairs to the front door would be a single flight, as opposed to being broken up with a landing. The benefit of this would be a shorter run of stairs and, therefore, less potential impact on the roots of the trees in front of the building. Issues surrounding the size of the interior vestibule were discussed. David was asked to prepare more detailed drawings of the interior vestibule options.

The Committee was in unanimous agreement in its preference of A102 over A101.

David then presented options A103 and A104. The Committee fairly quickly came to the unanimous conclusion that these were not preferred and agreed the architects should not spend more time on them. Lucy Wallace suggested that if early estimates of A102 came back significantly higher than anticipated we might go back and revisit these two options. David did not think, however, that there would be significant cost savings between these two (entry at grade) and the preferred first two options (ramp).

The Committee directed the architects to focus design work on option A102.

Code and MAAB Issues: Austin Ludwig distributed a summary of his initial review of zoning, code and accessibility requirements that could be associated with this project.

Building Code: Austin reported that the project would qualify as a Level 1 alteration as work is only for MAAB compliance. That said there will be a number of items to address. For instance, as the third floor is not for general public use, there needs to be clear signage “employees only” at the base of the stairs. The biggest unknown factor under the Building Code is if sprinkler and fire alarm systems will be required. As a Level 1 alteration, with less than 50% space reconfiguration, these systems generally would not be required. However, as the cost of the project will probably exceed 30% of the assessed value of the building, it will up to the fire chief and building inspector to determine the need to install them. Lucy and Ken Swanton should try to meet with the fire chief and building inspector in July to do a walk through and explain the project to them. The hope would be that they would not require installation of these systems. David noted that fire protection in a town asset is a good idea, but agreed the cost would be excessive. Lucy suggested that a tenant may, at a future time, want to do significant interior work (more than cosmetic) at which time sprinklers and fire alarms could be installed.

MAAB: The types of MAAB requirements were discussed, including those for which we could seek variances. Austin and David need to do another walk through of the building to confirm items such as adequate turning radius in the handicapped bathroom, door clearances, height of door knobs, etc. The controls for the elevator will probably need to be changed to make sure a person in a wheelchair can reach them. They are fairly certain the size of the cab of the elevator is acceptable. They will contact Mark to arrange a mutually convenient time in the next week or so to do the walk through.

Other Considerations: Mark reminded David that an estimate for the removal of the side entrance was also part of the RFP. David felt that could be an expensive undertaking and perhaps should also be postponed. The Committee got confirmation that if the side entrance remained and was marked as exit only it would not have to be accessible from the outside.

Ken asked about timing on meeting with the Historical Commission. David suggested Ken meet informally with the chair (who is his neighbor) to show him the proposed changes and then go before the whole Commission to present the proposal. This can be done when the next iteration of drawings has been completed.

Wendy asked about the cost of restoring the southern façade with windows in all of the arches. This could be done as an add alternate to their work.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.