

Old Library Accessibility Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2017

Members Present: Wendy Cote-Magan, Mark Mikitarian, Lucy Wallace
Guests: David Eisen and David Pollak, Abacus Architects

The meeting was called to order at 11 AM.

Administrative: The minutes of the March 30, 2017 meeting were approved as presented.

Kick Off Meeting with Abacus Architects

The architects explained two drivers of the project's potential costs: exterior construction and interior code compliance upgrades driven by exterior costs. Their aim is to keep the exterior costs as low as possible so as to minimize interior code compliance costs.

The architects noted two accessibility frameworks: state and federal. The state AAB requirements will be triggered by the cost of construction (if in excess of 30% of the assessed value of the building). Variances can be applied for and Mark Mikitarian indicated that the Town would want to apply for those that could be justified due to the historic nature of the building. Federal ADA law requires that facilities open to the public must be accessible and, if not, the Town could be subject to a federal civil law suit.

The architects then explained the building codes that will apply to this renovation project: The International Existing Building Code (IEBC) and the MA Building Code which incorporates most of the IEBC. Under the IEBC there are 3 "areas of work" that drive the level of accessibility and other code compliance matters. Basic building repair, such as installation of new windows, is not subject to IEBC. Level 1 covers non-structural work, Level 2 covers work impacting up to 50% of the interior of the building, and Level 3 covers work exceeding 50% of the building interior. David Eisen believes that this project would fall under Level 1 as it is only for exterior accessibility. He also noted that towns generally undervalue their public buildings and so suggested we ask the assessor to confirm the current assessed value – for instance when was it last revalued.

Assuming that the cost of construction will trigger the need for full compliance, Abacus will compile a list of all non-compliant issues. Based on this we can decide those for which we will apply for variances and those that must be addressed. In the case of the former, we will need supporting documentation from the Historical Commission to file with the application. Mark noted that it is critical for Abacus to show the cost associated with each item, both those for which we will seek variances and those that must be addressed.

Mark reviewed the proposed timeline and deliverables with the architects and asked for clarification of OLAC's role. The architects first step will be to gather more information on the building, specifically the survey of the property and building's location (which has recently been completed) and review of the building construction plans. Then they will do a code compliance analysis.

David Eissen proposed another option for improved exterior accessibility: entering the basement at a location just past the existing exterior stairs and then use the elevator and stairs for interior movement. The Committee was not particularly receptive to this suggestion and asked that Abacus not pursue this option at this time.

The architects walked through their time line for work from May 1 to August 1. The first steps will be to cover code analysis and design option(s). They will present several options to the OLAC for feedback and from that further refine preferred option(s) and prepare cost estimates. The preferred option will be finalized and cost estimate further refined. In order to begin the code analysis they will need to confirm that the elevator and bathrooms are compliant. After the meeting they did a walk through and David Eisen confirmed that the building plans he had been given were complete and accurate.

Mark asked about the need for a sprinkler. David Pollak said the IEBC would not require a sprinkler because the work is only to provide exterior accessibility to the building. That said, the local building inspector and fire chief would need to concur with that as they will be responsible for signing off on this matter.

Administrative

Mark will be the point of contact between Abacus, OLAC and Marie Sobalvarro, Assistant Town Administrator.

Summer meeting schedule:

May 24 at 3 PM

June 13 at 3 PM

July 11 at 3 PM

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will be in the Upper Town Hall, either large room or small meeting room.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.