

TOWN OF PROVINCETOWN - BOARD OF SELECTMEN

SPECIAL MEETING – OCTOBER 16, 2000

JUDGE WELSH HEARING ROOM

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Chairman, Betty Steele-Jeffers opened the meeting at 7 PM, noting the following attendees: Board of Selectmen members: Elizabeth Steele-Jeffers, Cheryl Andrews, Mary-Jo Avellar Excused Absence: Richard Prowell and David Atkinson

Other attendees: Vernon Porter – Secretary to Board of Selectmen, Debbie DeJonker-Berry -Library Director, Dale Fanning – Heritage Museum, Heritage Museum Board of Trustees, Board of Library Trustees and other interested parties.

The following are meeting minutes.

1. PUBLIC HEARING: TAPPÉ LIBRARY/HERITAGE STUDY

Joint Meeting with Library Trustees, Heritage Museum Trustees

Betty Steele-Jeffers - Read the Public Hearing Notice as posted noting that this Public Hearing is to discuss the Tappé Study only.

Jim Cole, Chairman – Library Board of Trustees

I believe that everybody is familiar with the how's and why's of this project and our search for a central locations for a newly expanded Library space that will meet the needs for the next 20 years. I would like to thank the supporters for their funding of this study; thanks to the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen and David Guertin and company for their interest and support that has brought us to tonight's hearing. The Trustees are eager to hear the public's questions and comments on this project that will be presented tonight and on the goal to move the Library to the Center Street building. All the Trustees value the many suggestions and an ideal already expressed by individuals over the last four weeks as we conducted walk-thru's of each of the buildings. For those of you who participated, we thank you. We look forward for more help and input from the community as we move ahead to begin this project and to bring this project to fruition by possibly fiscal year 2004.

I would like to present our PowerPoint presenters from Tappe Associates - Jeff Hoover and Charlie Hayes

Jeff Hoover and Charlie Hayes gave a visual PowerPoint presentation on the possibility of a swap of the Library/Heritage building.

Members of the Library and Heritage were invited to sit at the table with the Board of Selectmen.

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

Library – Pro's Con's and Comments on Alternative 3 of the Tappe Study (Model retained, stairs retained, and a larger addition.)

Betty Steele-Jeffers - the order for public comments tonight are:

1. **Pro's**,
2. **General Comments** (for those people who say that they know now if they are for or against but would like to say something)
3. **Con's**

IN FAVOR OF ALTERNATIVE THREE

Joe Sousa - the question is “not should we do the swap but when it should be done”.

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Len Stuart - swap would accomplish a lot and give much more needed room.

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Margaret Bergman - In favor of swap. Children’s room – would like a place where children can go in to a library setting where they are not in a hall or storage space or cramped quarters. Children need to get into the habit of going to a library to feel that they have a special place in the library as children. This plan will make a whole new generation of library users.

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Dan Towler – Fascinating study. Former Museum board member. Concern of less space for the Heritage and having to store the contents elsewhere. There is a lot to like in this swap but the obvious question is: Can the town afford this? Both are vital functions.

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Rachel White – in favor of swap. Cannot support the reduction of the mast. Worried about contents of Heritage and where things are going to be stored.

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Rachel Crosby – I am a Computer tech at the Library and am vividly aware of how cramped the library is for all the staff and patrons. We need to support this move.

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Carol MacDonald – Agree with Rachel (previous speaker). No room to work there.

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Jenia Kelley – Visit the Library every day and supportive of this project. Benefit the Town. Library being in a historical building is eligible for more grants from sources other than just the Library grant. More parking at the Heritage for the Library staff.

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Maghi Geary - one of the things that people here have not heard is that this study, in different ways, has been ongoing for the last 3-4-5 years with a focus group at the Library exploring a lot of alternatives. This building is the only town owned building that is available to us. Applaud this Tappe Study and the Library Trustees for this study. I would like to see us make this move.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

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Len Bowen – Question is “What is the best thing for the town?” Is it public, private or mixed use? Bewildered that this whole thing can be driven by the needs of the library.

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Diane Johnson - Echo what the previous speaker just said. Study paid for by the supporters of this plan and Tappe needed a way to come up for this to work. I am asking for all of us to keep that in mind and to perhaps to look at this study with a small grain of salt. Maybe if we looked at it from the prospective of what is best for the Town. Look at the study and take into consideration who is paying for it and where it is coming from and determine what is best for the town.

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Betty Steele-Jeffers - Point of clarification on where this study originated from. This did, in fact, originate to many people’s dismay from the Board of Selectmen as part of our goals. It was not a popular decision by anyone and we as a Board was somewhat criticized for having put that forward as a goal. What was at the beginning of the PowerPoint presentation were the statements that the Board of Selectmen had asked. The Library supporters did fund it but the basic question that were presented were presented by the Board in our set of goals from last year. Just to set some of your minds at ease, we had come up with those criteria to begin with.

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Pat Schultz - Unless people are totally informed it is not fair to expect them to make major judgements such as this. I walked through the building and I have never seen a public building that the town has owned for 25

years, that is such a disgrace as the Heritage Museum. All for new up-to-date modern Library that will answer our needs for the next 25 years. I am not for spending the kind of money that we are talking about on that building. I think it should be in the private sector where the Town is making money out of it in tax revenue. Provincetown cannot afford to do this project. What about the cost of additional personnel, cost of maintenance? Other ideas must be explored before bring this to the public for a decision. Manor is an ideal spot for a Library. We can get land from the State. We should not be in the Museum business. I'd rather see \$6M go to housing for people who cannot afford to live here anymore. We were promised, as taxpayers, that if the museum was not financially self-sufficient within 5 years it would be put on the market and sold. I compliment the Library and their Trustees. Best intentions by the library people – but we simply cannot afford it

- Betty Steele-Jeffers - This is a public hearing to get input from the public. This is not a decision-making evening.

- Howard Wolbarsht - Computer area should not be in the Library. What about using the Methodist Church?

- Debbie DeJonker-Berry – response to computers in Library. Did not use microphone - inaudible.

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AGAINST MOVING THE LIBRARY TO THE HERITAGE MUSEUM

Austin Knight - \$6M is a great deal of money for two buildings – why not go to the School. Did not hear the approximate cost to the Town on this. We need to know all the facts before any decisions are made. Town people said they did not want to do a study – yet the Selectmen and the Library Trustees had the study done. I think it is a very limited study and there should be other options offered. What other options have the Selectmen looked at? Betty Steele-Jeffers – *I will repeat. This public hearing is to discuss the Tappe Study only and to get input from the public.* Austin Knight – Well, in the Tappe Study you are asking us to go along with it. Betty Steele-Jeffers – *no we are not.* Austin Knight – what I am saying is what is proposed is a significant swap of which a significant amount of cash is going to be asked for in order to do it. Betty Steele-Jeffers – *We are asking for comments. This is information gathering. We have not made a decision and we have not brought anything forward. This is your opportunity to tell us what you think about this particular study and the option being presented tonight.*

- Rick Holland – Read statement into record. (See attachment #1)

- Gordon J. Siegel – Point of information. Tappe study never said that we should do this – they said that we could do this. Grants – are still part of our tax dollars. In the plan it calls to all approximately 1,000-sq. ft. to the building that currently houses the Library. The Library has advocated that they can raise \$1M towards this move into the Heritage Museum. One of the questions I have is – why don't they take the \$1M and add the 1,000-sq. ft. and renovate the building where they are currently in. It is not broken. There are more important things going on right now that needs our attention. To move into a dilapidated building and start excavating the basement – who know what problems they are going to encounter? Also voters spoke clearly not to spend money on this study. I understand that you did it anyway. What I do not understand is that in the package I just received, starting in fiscal years 2004 over \$200,000.00 is earmarked to be used to move the Library to the new location at Center Street. So, if we are discussing this – someone was a little premature with the typewriter. (See attachment #2)

- Alice Foley for Robert Vetrick - Read a statement into the record. (See attachment #3)

Alice Foley – Read statement into record. (See attachment #4)

Ruth Gilbert – 12 years ago we were spending money at every budget meeting for repairs to the Library. We spend over \$1M on the Library within 9 years. This facility was never adequate but we continued to dump money into that building when many people said stop – find a new facility – build a new library. Total cost of this project is going to be approximately \$10M. So please keep this in mind I urge everyone to look at the Truro library and see what \$2M will buy.

- Rachel White – Truro library not that great. Need to look at affordable housing. Did not come to microphone and was at back of room. Most of her comments were inaudible.

- Betty Steele-Jeffers - Closed discussion to public @ 8:45 PM and will have a discussion with the people seated at the tables. Feel free to make any comments you would like to make. We do need to decide where we go from here. I think there were valid points raised on both sides and I repeat, for the last time, this is not a decision-making evening. This is beginning of continuing discussions. There are many things that have to be discussed on a broader plain than maybe we have and I would be interested in looking at some more information gathering tools that would hit the basic population before we do anything for Town meeting.

- Thank you again for coming tonight – this is a good crowd. Thank you to the people who participated in the walking tour. I feel that was a way for the general public to take a view that they might not have had but this is not the end – this is the beginning of a continuing discussion. Thank you to Tappe who had to take a long time to answer the questions that the Board of Selectmen had presented.

I open up the discussion to the Library – Museum Trustees and Selectmen

- Cheryl Andrews – Few questions for the Tappe’ representatives (you do not have to give me the answers now – send them to the office). 1) The addition that was proposed under the alternative (larger addition) can you give me a specific dollar value for that as well a square foot number. 2) The larger basement excavation – give me dollar figure as well as square footage.

- For those of you from the Finance Committee – send a message to Mr. Howland – it would be helpful to me if he could explain how he came up with the 7200 sq. ft. designated for the Rose Dorothea. We came up with about a third of that.

My goal is to figure out what this town wants to do with the building that lives at Center Street. I personally feel it is one of the most difficult decisions that I will face or the Town will face in the next couple of years. I hear a collective agreement that the building should not be in the shape that it is in right now and I am glad to hear you that. I happen to agree. We need to figure out what to do with that building. So far I heard two reasonable suggestions – one is to sell it and one is to turn it into a library. So far I am leaning towards a library – not necessarily the way it was presented tonight – but I am leaning that way. I would suggest that when we get though that we go forward with an article for town meeting looking for funds to put a library there – that those of you who feel that we have lost our minds and think we should sell it that you put a competing article forward to authorize us to declare it surplus and sell it. That’s the way town meeting works and it is not that we are not listening. It is our job to listen and the reality is that there are a number of voices on this issue. We can’t listen to everybody because we do not all agree. I would like us to figure out what to do with the building because what we are doing with it right now is a disgrace. I hope you all can keep that sort of general flavor of what we are trying to do instead of getting a little angry at each other for different views of what we should do with it.

Betty Steele-Jeffers – I must apologize to the public as I did not ask if there was anyone from the public who would like to make a comment on the Heritage Museum going into the Library building. I will open it up for comments at this time.

- Rick Holland - Just a comment that in the Tappe study all the artifacts are not going to the library.

- Pat Schultz - Town should not be in the business of having museums. Any facility must be self-sufficient. We must be prudent in spending our money. (Not at microphone some words inaudible.)

- Comments closed to public at 8:55 PM

Back to the group at the table.

Dale Fanning - I would like to clarify something in terms of the collection. We are like any other museum - #1

we cannot possibly display the entire collection. #2 we are displaying about 2% of the collection – as is the case with any museum. When have to store the rest – and this is typical of any museum.

Mary-Jo Avellar – I agree with a lot of the comments tonight especially with the comments made by my colleagues. I think people do not understand, from our perspective, is that investigating these space requirements of the Library, in particular, have not been a spur of the moment idea. Four years ago we went to the library and sat down with the trustees and looked at the space and decided that we had to investigate the possibility of finding additional space because it was obvious that the program could not be conducted there in that location. Any one who has taken a course or needs a place to study cannot go to the Provincetown Public Library and do that because there is no longer, for whatever reason, there is no quiet space for anybody who needs to do any kind of work at all. You cannot get to the School Library because it is not considered a library anymore – it is called a media center. The children’s center - there is no room for the children’s programs. In the summer time it is wall to wall people. Space is simply too small for the children. There is no place to study.

We look at the Annex, we looked very seriously at the High School. It is a nightmare. Everything we looked at up to this particular point led me to reluctantly conclude that a swap may be – and I will say reluctantly – that a swap may be the only solution. No one has shown me where there is some land to buy or if anyone has a piece of land available to sell the town or give the town adequate to the needs of the library. Everybody criticizes us for undertaking this but nobody has given us any alternatives. As far as the Truro Public Library is concerned – with all due respect to Truro – I do not think it is so great. We need a working functional library. If everything is going to be viewed as running things like a Corporation (NASDAQ kind of mentality) then I do not think there is going to be anybody left in Provincetown that you are going to want to sit around and talk to on a cold winter night – because I am not going to want to be here either.

For me, personally, this was a tough one but I had to be persuaded to do it. I think I made the right decision to have this study undertaken. I was not happy with the way the study began. I was critical of Tappe for the direction they took at the beginning of it but now I am at the point now where I honestly do not see any other alternative. Nobody can convince me that the library can adequately serve the public now. I am still open to anything else that you might have to present to me that is new and different and affordable and feasible. The Dwyer’s will just not sell their property – period.

Betty Steele-Jeffers - This is not an idea that came out of the blue. It has been talked about for a long time. I am going to let Cheryl Andrews comment on the memo we had from David Guertin, re: Truro Library - comparing square footage cost. If Finance people do not have a copy of this memo – you might want to get a copy.

Cheryl Andrews - the point is – is when someone keeps saying – look at Truro – it implies that there is some grand thing that Truro did. What this memo does it looks at what Truro did and guess what - it is 7,000-sq. ft. library. First you have to compare apples and oranges to apples and oranges not lemons and limes. So you find out what the square footage cost is. The cost for square footage at the Truro Library came out a little bit higher for some reason than the projected cost that Tappe provided us for a restoration project, which is amazing. Admittedly, Tappe said you do not know the true cost until you get a bid. So, even if their numbers are low you can still say it is a wash and there is not a huge difference between what Truro did building from the floor vs. what we are talking about. That is the main point, at least make sure you get the facts. While looking at other new libraries in other towns – look at the cost of the square foot construction costs are because there is nothing out of line with what we are talking about here. The only questions will only be is whether we want a Library there and the second role is what size.

I heard one of my colleagues talking about making a decision tonight. I know with probably 99% certainty that I am not going to support the plan you saw tonight exactly as it is, ever all in one package on Town meeting floor because I agree with what I am hearing and we cannot afford it like this. The idea is to show you what come out of the study and you folks tell us what you like and what you don’t. There are parts of that that I like and there are parts that I do not but at least let us try and get the facts right. I wanted you to know about that memo concerning the Truro Library so that you may get a copy.

Betty Steele-Jeffers – What I would like to do is take the minutes and the written comments that we had from the people not in favor and go through and look at whatever questions were raised and come up with a response to those. I think that would be a fair thing to do and to get that information disseminated and even in the pro comments there may be things that need a further clarification that the Finance Committee might like to hear or other members of the public would like to hear. I think that will likely take 2 or 3 weeks.

- I would ask Board member or interested parties at the table what they would like to do. Any comments from the Library Board of Trustees as to what you would like to do? I think this is a good turnout, good points raised, and we need to come back with some answers.

Cheryl Andrews – I would like to see a Board discussion first so that we can list out questions we have and what information we want so somehow we can decide what we would like to support and then talk with these folks.

- Marcia Fair - I agree. I was going to say the same thing about the square footage in Truro because they had a 40% cost over run where they had faulty figures to begin with. Even if we had a 40% over run with what the estimates costs are at this point they would be, square footage wise, less than what Truro ended up spending.

- Arthur Pike – The other thing that I would add to what Marcia just said – there is about 2 acres of land that the Truro building is sitting on which gives space for parking. The Town of Truro owns that land already so the library incurred no cost for the land ... and that is part of the whole package too.

- Anita Berman - Want to comment on what a gentleman said earlier about the number of meetings that we have held. The view of the public always was is that we want to keep the Library downtown - explore every possibility and every time we turned around it was just impossible. This is the first site that we have explored that seems to be what the public wanted. I also do want to say for the record that I resented comments about our Library Director wanting some sort of a shrine on Commercial Street. We have the finest Library Director that any town could ever expect to have, any of us who use the library or worked with her at the Library knows this for a fact, and she had absolutely nothing to do with our selection of this site. So, I think that whoever made that comment was definitely out of line.

- Marcia Fair – We have been talking about continuing to have walk thru's of the buildings. The Library has paid for advertisements that we place in the paper preceding all of these walks on Monday evening as well as for this Public Hearing – and we will continue to do that. We need public input and agree with you that we need to answer point -by -point all of the questions that we have as well as the public has.

Betty Steele-Jeffers – Thank you to Tappe.

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Motion to adjourn by: Mary-Jo Avellar at 9:15 PM

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- Minutes transcribed by: Vernon Porter, Secretary
October 26, 2000