

WALKER LIBRARY NEIGHBORHOOD INTEREST GROUP
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004, INITIAL MEETING

Introductions: Helen Spry, Citizen Appointee, Library Board
Keith Sjoquist, Citizen Appointee, City Council
Ed Pluimer, Citizen Appointee, City Council
Christina Melloh, Citizen Appointee, Library Board
Kit Hadley, Director, Minneapolis Public Library

Neighbors: Jill Bode, CARAG
John Dietrich, LHENA
Caroline Griepentrog, LHENA
Mark Hillyer, CARAG
Michael Lauper, ECCO
Kay Roseland, EIRA
Andrea Scharff, EIRA
Gary Thaden, LHENA

The citizen appointees shared a brief introduction to the Walker Library Task Force mission. The neighbors were then invited to share comments and questions, a summary of these comments follows in the order in which they were received:

“Don’t mess with my library.” It would be out of commission for two years. This is not good. If I could testify, I would be in favor of no change. However, I am open to listening to the option recommended by the Task Force, but please fix the parking.



Do not love this library. It needs sunshine. My 3 year old is not thrilled to go there. I am relatively new to the area. Envision something vibrant. More could take place at this location, for example library above and commercial below. It could be really cool.



Love the library. I am a design and real estate developer. I recognize that any financial package for a new library is going to be complicated. I will participate in the RFP process. Recommend RFQualifications, because the outcome could be more useful. When considering parking requirements, consider transit and the pros and cons of parking. What is the desired density? What are the zoning requirements? Variances are almost always necessary for any development. Is there any NRP money available from the neighborhoods? Neighborhoods should be considering this option.



Two comments: We lost our opportunity to take advantage of the mall and park space, with the Park Board. A new library seems difficult due to the economics resulting from the serious height restriction. The library needs to be here. Transit is great.



There is angst. The recent neighborhood developments do not match the neighborhood. Green space is critical. The library has already looked at the issues. Communities supported the roof fixing years ago. The City Council is ramming this issue down our throat. Fix it.



I am concerned about the environment. We do not need more traffic in this location. I am worried about aesthetics. I am in favor of fixing the roof. I feel like this is the only green space. Fix the parking lot and enhance the building at the street level. Make it possible to have a coffee outside in a park setting.



Wrote a letter a year ago in favor of keeping the library open and at this location. Features: accessible for pedestrians, drop books off easily, ideally hop in and out. Height should be seriously considered. I am in favor of increasing the height. Green space is a good thing. If we don't find a solution, the library must remain as is. It is too important to the community.



I do not like mixed use. Hate the current building. Fix the roof now.



I love the green space point. It is wonderful.



Keep in mind the library parking lot provides parking for desperate neighbors during the summer months, if street parking is full. It would be great to provide this option for snow emergencies.



We seem to be repeating ourselves. There was a repair to the roof in the 1990s. How long will the next repair last?



Let's invite a coffee cart to serve at the street level of the library.



Engage more surrounding players, including the YWCA, the Midtown Greenway Coalition, the Park Board, etc...

**WALKER LIBRARY Discussion
East Isles Residents Association Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 2004**

At the November East Isles Residents Association meeting, Helen Spry and Christina Melloh, both members, shared a Walker Task Force update with the neighborhood and shared the comments from the November 9, 2004, Walker Library Neighborhood Interest Group discussion. The following comments were received from various EIRA members:



Received as an email follow up---

I've lived in the ECCO neighborhood for 20 years, the Linden Hills neighborhood for 13 years and now live in East Isles and have been here for 3 years. I'm a huge library fan and user and miss the original Walker Library (across the street from the present library) that I use to go to as a kid when I attended Calhoun Elementary School (which use to be where Calhoun Square is now).

I've always found the library dark, dank smelling, dirty & grimy feeling when I'm there. The original Walker library was spotlessly clean, the floors shined and the smell of books made a trip there a treat. This library seems to have no light and I always feel like I'm in an old dingy basement when I'm in there. In fact, I no longer read in the library because I find the ambiance so depressing and dirty, that I just pick up my books and leave as fast as I can. Is there anyway to clean the library up-with some renovation-maybe fresh paint, more windows or better cleaning? I'm always amazed that the windows and glass doors never seemed to be clean there--not sure why that is, but that just adds to the dirty feeling to me.



Received by email--- Walker Library Neighborhood Library Committee:

This past winter I spoke in favor of having the library board go through with providing the resources to fix the roof under the assumption that there were no viable developers for this site. I am thrilled now to hear of the possibility of having a new potential mix development on the corner of Lake and Lagoon that includes a library. If there is any way that this can be done, it would be an amazing addition to our neighborhood.

The important element that I see in this situation is keeping the library in its current location. Since relocating the library is not the issue, it would be wise to look at the long-term picture, thus dealing with a couple years of not having a library at this exact location.

There have been wasted opportunities along Hennepin Avenue for mixed-use development in the past few years, and it would be a shame if this were another opportunity that doesn't become a reality because of thinking short-term. This project is a potential great fit with the "Housing Principles" adopted by the City Council in 1995, and the Minneapolis Plan that was adopted by the City Council and Mayor in 2000. Please refer to the neighborhood section of the Minneapolis Plan that discusses mixed-use development extensively. In particular sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 4.9, 4.11, 4.18.

Thank you for your time



I agree the roof should be fixed. I like the idea of more green space.



It would be great to have a mixed-use development on this site with a new library and a commercial and/or residential addition. The city is rapidly developing, and we need to optimize space usage.



Received by email---

PARKING. You know my concerns about the need for adequate nearby parking, free or more reasonably priced parking fees at any meter/in any ramp, longer allowable parking times for library patrons if metered or with a ramp (1 hour limits don't cut it, interfere with internet/computer research use -- perusal of book selections -- magazine/newspaper article reading, etc., and lead to unnecessary parking tickets ... or who knows, "booting"), etc.

Another neighbor wants me to convey, on his behalf, his concern about **PARKING** -- he wants to be sure that whatever happens with the library, library patrons do not lose any of the parking now available. Otherwise, he will have to go to the East Lake library, which he has used in the past.

See below for reasons why some of us still will need "the car" over the years for jaunts to Henn/Lake area and elsewhere.

BUS reliance limitations. Not everyone can get handily to a bus year-round for any/many purposes, much less to get to/from a library. (I wish I were as close to a bus as the Y is to the Greenway! When the woman from the Y lamented having no connection/access to the Greenway, I drove around and then looked on the map and it's clear the Y's connection/access to both the Greenway, current bus lines, and the transit hub is A LOT better than the access of many E. Isles residents to any of these systems.) Anyway, from my home on the north end of E. Isles it's a bit of a hike up to Hennepin Ave. and I recall carrying heavy brief cases to a job in downtown Mpls. which wasn't too pleasant, especially on inclement weather days. As I've aged, with increasing neck disc compression, flatter feet/falling arches, possible osteoarthritis in the ankles, lugging heavy stuff around is ill-advised by the medical community! Thank goodness I don't have "knee" deterioration, or "back problems" so common to many. Also, Kenwood residents don't have great bus service at all to/from the Walker Library or the Henn-Lake area. I would hazard to say this could be true for Lowry Hill residents, too, depending on where they live, and some in CIDNA.

HANDICAPPED concerns. As for "lugging" stuff around -- not everyone can walk a lot or go up/down stairs lugging heavy loads like books or groceries, etc. to/from various locations. I do think a revamped library needs to be handicap-friendly! I know concern remains about cutting short the time that handicapped-sticker cars/vans can park in downtown Mpls. I think we want to be sure that we don't cut short the time handicapped-sticker vehicles can park

at/near the Walker. If some of us have trouble getting to our meters in time, now, that problem increases for others with even greater mobility concerns.

WALKING limitations. Especially for seniors, with advancing osteoporosis, walking in winter with icy patches, but actually walking anytime/year-round, generally gets more difficult with age, and hip fractures are an increasing cause of actual deaths among seniors. Once they're hospitalized with the hip fractures, when surgery occurs, all sorts of complications set in -- I know from hearing the stories from my parents and their friends one who died from a hip fracture when she tipped over while gardening in her backyard.)

BIKE RIDING. We do want to retain bike racks at/close by the library for bikers. However, bike riding has its limitations, too, given MN weather and all the motorized vehicular traffic in our area can make it dangerous if one has to travel too far by bike; and unless you have a really big "basket" on the bike, you can't lug too much stuff (e.g., many books, groceries, etc.)

I could go on, about the need for improved Internet service at Walker (too few terminals for the number of patrons, computer equipment is too old, etc.).



Received by email---

I feel strongly that we should do whatever possible to keep a library available at the Uptown location. It is heavily used by folks who need access to good transportation.



Received by email ---

I am interested in participating in the efforts to develop the Walker Library. I have lived in Uptown for the past 16 years and would love to have a great library that I go to often. Please include me in any community meetings or if you need help in any way.

EIRA e-mail contributors:

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