



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 20, 2019 Agenda Item 1

Presentation

Presentation and update on Library renovation by Greg Lukmire of RRMM Lukmire Architects

Recommended Council Action

Hear the update and consider the proposed recommendation

Context with Key Issues

In FY16, the Takoma Park City Council provided the opportunity for significant improvements to the Takoma Park Maryland Library facility, by approving funds for detailed design development focused on options for renovation and building expansion. This process followed comprehensive space planning, and recognition that the then 65 year-old Library building was inadequate to meet community needs and Council goals.

The building assessment showed that the facility was too small to house its print collections, its mechanical and electrical systems were inadequate and failing, it was prone to roof leaks, and it lacked space for programs or for young adult collections and study space. Above all, the building was not ADA accessible, and any updating or renovation plans needed to be implemented in the context of ADA compliance. Without serious renovation, the building would eventually fail and become unusable as a public space.

As part of the schematic design process, a site survey and an engineering study were completed in 2018. The Library lies in a 100-year flood plain, and the engineering study concluded that the City needed a new flood plain delineation study to determine if the current flood wall, which was planned to be incorporated into the expanded Library building, was adequate. Based on the conclusions of the new flood plain study, it was determined that the floor of the Library needs to be raised to be about the level of the main floor of the Community Center. Greg Lukmire of RRMM Lukmire Architects has submitted new design options for a Library building that will meet the required elevation criteria while preserving the same footprint. These designs are all predicated on constructing a new Library on the same site, as an alternative to changing the parking lot elevation relative to the Library, which would cost nearly three times that of constructing a new building.

Thus the recommendation is to demolish the current Library and raise the floor level of a new Library to that of the Community Center.

In addition to being the most cost-effective option, advantages to not needing to retrofit the existing building include the following:

- Raising the ceiling height, one advantage of which is allowing sufficient space for mechanical ductwork
- Eliminating the wood roof framing, which presents a fire hazard
- More easily connecting the Community Center with the Library

- Relocating bathrooms where they are wanted, rather than tying them into existing plumbing, also allows for family and gender-neutral restrooms.

The Council is asked to hear the presentation by Greg Lukmire, and consider the options presented. Because they don't depend on modification of antiquated systems or constraints in the deployment of existing resources, they offer new opportunities to imaginatively recreate and enliven existing Library space.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All: The local public library serves residents of all ages, including a significant number of school and day care classes, offers free programs by noted authors and illustrators, reading readiness for ESL parents, book discussion groups for adults, extensive collections of print and digital resources, Spanish and French programs, public access computer use with dedicated staff. A larger, more comfortable building will enable us to address the needs of more community residents with evolving and up to date resources for years to come.

Environmental Impact of Action

Elimination of the health and/or potential safety hazards for Library users posed by fiberglass insulation, asbestos in the library foyers, mold where ceiling has leaked, wood roof framing, frequent loss of functioning HVAC during hot or cold weather, and apertures for birds, small rodents or insects to enter the building. Green building standards would be incorporated into a new building.

Racial Equity Considerations

The resources of the Takoma Park Library are free to all Takoma Park and Montgomery County residents, providing a level playing field to immigrant populations, children and seniors. Library programs are free to all, regardless of jurisdiction. The Library and Computer Center are open seven days/week and are within walking distance of five schools. A recent automatic renewal policy reduces the need to impose fines on overdue materials. The Library Friends and staff work with the ESL teacher at PBES to co-sponsor an immigrant family book club, and staff participate in the 'Books and Breakfast' program for ESL parents at PBES. The Library presents "Books to Action: a Social Justice Book Club for Kids and Families." A program room will enable us to provide more programs that address equity issues without limiting family and after-school use of our children's room. Also it will enable us to provide dedicated shelves and study space for young adults – a group that is currently underserved in our small library.

Fiscal Impact of Action

A new Library is a significantly less costly action than changing the level of the parking lot relative to the Library, in order to meet flood plain study requirements. Taking no action will result in further deterioration of the building, to a point where it will eventually become increasingly uncomfortable and eventually unusable as a public space.

Attachments and Links

<http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/library-renovation/>