



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

400 City Hall Annex
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
www.stpaul.gov/parks

Telephone: 651-266-6400
Facsimile: 651-292-7405

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December 9, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION AND COMMUNITY REVIEW MEETING

December 8, 2011

Meeting notes by Brian Tourtelotte, Project Manager

The meeting was held from 6 – 8 p.m. at the Arlington Recreation Center, 665 E. Rose Avenue. Attendance was not taken, but is estimated at 90 – 100 people.

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Al Oertwig, President of the Payne Phalen District 5 Planning Council, welcomed attendees. Mr. Oertwig noted that this meeting is hosted by the City for review of the design plans.

Councilman Dan Bostrom greeted the group, and expressed excitement that this project is moving forward.

Tom Russell, Manager of Finance and Planning for Parks and Recreation, recognized attending dignitaries, including Councilman Bostrom, and Libraries Deputy Director Debbie Willms and Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Kathy Korum. Other City and project staff in attendance were also introduced. Most of these people would be either part of the presentation, or will be stationed around the room for discussion after the presentation.

Project Design Development Phase Overview

The City Parks and Recreation Department and Public Libraries, with the help of District 5, has received a lot of community input from the focus group meetings, online survey, and play area design meetings. We also get feedback directly from the District 5 Council. We look forward to continuing working together on this project.

District 5 has provided comment cards so that you can leave us additional feedback that we will review and post on our website. We also will be compiling notes and all the images from tonight and posting on our Payne Maryland Project website. The web site is listed in the FAQ sheets that were on the table as you came in, so make sure you pick one of those up.

We will be forming work groups to continue to work on some things for the project. The groups include: Public Art, Re-Use of the Library, and Program Development. At the end please stop at one of the tables in the corners to register to be on one of these work groups.



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The project has had challenges of making sure we incorporate key program elements and keep high-quality materials while remaining within budget.

In a few months you'll see construction activity at this site with the demolition of the Arlington Recreation Center, Bradshaw building, and the Payne Avenue Hardware. Then full construction will begin early summer.

Design Development Plans Presentation

Chris Gibbs, Project Architect from HGA Architects and Engineers, made presentation of the project site plan and building design plans. Site plan features include the Town Square plaza, the sports field, children's play area, volleyball and family area, and parking. He noted that a portion of Rose Avenue would be removed, with a cul-de-sac built at the end of the remaining portion. Built into the site is good lighting on the walks and parking lot, and security cameras

The building floor plans are for a two-level building, the main (street) level, and a lower level. The main level entry is from the Payne Avenue side, with a reception desk centered on the main corridor. The corridor will feature place to sit, information, and public art displays. The library is on the Payne-Maryland corner, with an area for book stacks, a reading area and study area, a children's area, and a community learning (computer) room. There is a large community room, sized for about 125 at tables or 160 in chairs, which faces the Town Square. It has a kitchenette for the programs there and other support rooms. Two meeting/classrooms are across from the library. The fitness room has views outside, as well as into the walking track and gym. The walking track is on the main level above the gym, and can be accessed from the corridor or fitness room.

The stairway to the lower level enters a waiting area outside the gym, and facing the recreation staff reception desk and office. The waiting area is large enough for teams waiting to enter or spectators. On the other side of the staff office is the teen recreation space and technology workroom. The technology room is the subject of the innovative program development grant received by the Libraries for this and other sites. The gymnasium is a full-sized gym, with a divider so that it can have two events going.

The exterior views of the building reflect input received at the Aug. 24 community meeting. The architects heard that the building looked too big and massive, and that the materials needed to fit the community. So this design has eliminated the second floor, and changed it to look like simple scaled-down boxes. The material is changed to brick common to Payne Avenue, and incorporates windows that relate activities inside and outside, with opportunities for public art. They also heard that the corner of Maryland and Payne is very important, and the view of the building should reflect that. So the corner is designed with dramatic windows for beauty outside and making a bright and exciting reading space inside. Seen with community building references, the building height is similar to the surroundings.

The building has opportunities to display graphics that recall historic images and events. Some of the historic views of the street or buildings are possible, and events or people can also be depicted.

A time of questions for clarifications was allowed. Questions sometimes included opinions on specific plan elements, and generally were in areas of:

A. *What is the building size, how has it changed from Aug. 24, and what are the sizes of the library and gym?* This plan is about 6,000 sq. ft. less than Aug. 24 at about 45,000 sq. ft.; the library stack space is about the same as existing, but other spaces larger; and the gym is about 7,000 sq. ft., and like other full-sized gyms. The gym will be divided with a curtain to make it 2 separate sports spaces. Even with the size change, the budget has not.

- B. *Why did we select brick for the building exterior, and can we consider details like cornices and gables? Can we make it look more 'East Side'?* Brick is what you see most of on Payne Avenue, and experts know that of durable low-maintenance materials it has the lowest life-cycle cost of any material. We are looking at potential details, but there is a balance with the budget, and gables tend to be very expensive. We are trying to balance honoring the past and looking to the future.
- C. *Is it possible to make windows like the old library, what is the glass in the windows, and what are the gray things above the windows in the illustrations?* The arch-top windows in the old library were standard in 1900, but now the artisans are not available, and would be extremely expensive to reproduce today. The windows are insulated thermo-pane glass, and the gray above the windows is a material that is not brick, and we haven't really determined what it is.
- D. *Can the reception desk be placed more in line with the main entrance to make it more welcoming, and can we see some information about interior finishes?* The location of the reception is central to the corridor and should provide easy access to information. We have a board made up with some of the interior materials and finishes we are looking at, which we can discuss if you come to the corner.
- E. *Are there windows on the east side of the building toward the field and play area?* We are trying to find a way for staff to go directly out to the east, but currently the walls are solid walls. We might have to try cameras aimed that way.

Programs Development at the Payne Maryland Project

Joanna Brookes, Branch Manager of Arlington Hills Library, discussed how the library program will change. The old building is about 4,000 sq. ft. on the upper level, with a large room and restrooms on the lower level. It has limitations and presents challenges for users, and is making technology upgrades difficult.

Focus groups told us that they would like to see lots of opportunity for computer connections in a busy, easy-to-use space. They also wanted multi-generational spaces, with teens having a separate area with technology connections for research, homework, video editing, blogging, etc. Children need to have a space in the library, and even outside the building, where they can be involved in holistic learning, and even computer connections. People also want casual and quiet spaces to sit for reading or other activities; and people should be able to use the library with their own computers.

We see the new building design supporting all these. The resources in the library will be much improved, and the educational side of the library will use the classrooms and other spaces of the building. These are rooms that the library currently doesn't have available.

Gwen Peterson, Recreation Services Manager for Parks and Recreation, discussed the changes to programming for the community. Working with Libraries staff much will be available that isn't anywhere else. This will support the after-school programs, senior programming, and youth programs. Since much of that is new in this community, we are open to working on what all that programming will be, and need the community to help us determine what is important.

Focus groups told us that kids need a safe place to come with friends and family, to learn and to have fun. People want this to be colorful, and to incorporate community volunteers to provide programs that are important to them.

A time of questions for clarifications was allowed. Questions generally were in areas of:

- A. *What is the vision for use of the fields?* Youth football and soccer will be played, but not a competition size space.

B. *How far will kids be coming to the center and how will they get there, and how will people be integrated into the programs?* Kids are traveling farther, some still walk, but others use the circulator bus program. Everybody is welcome, and we have adaptive recreation and other programs that will be incorporated as needed. It will be important for us to hear what programs are important for the community.

C. *What is the children's area of the library?* It will be an area that can let children be active, and learn as appropriate to them. We will use a holistic approach to selecting materials and even computer access for them. The area can be closed off and made available to program use during hours the library is closed.

D. *What is in the fitness center, and what will be the cost?* We are working with a contract vendor who supplies equipment on laying out what will be in the room. The City has a number of these fitness centers in our recreation facilities, and charges a membership fee of \$25 per year to use the facilities.

E. *What will the hours of operation be?* Our Council has supported our request for more staffing hours at this center, and we will be working out schedules of the center as opening comes closer. It will probably be consistent with other large centers.

Open comments from the Community

The microphone was opened to community members for an opportunity to express their comments on the project. Two comments were delivered, paraphrased here:

A. The community has needed a major project like this for a long time, and we need this to work.

B. With the traffic on Payne and Maryland avenues, this is the most visible corner on the east side. This building should cause people driving by to say "Wow!", and to me it doesn't.

After the second comment, a question was asked of the attendees to give a show of hands as to whether they liked the appearance of the building in the drawings, or not. Summary assessment of Leslie McMurray was that it appeared to be evenly divided.

At the end, attendees were reminded that they could fill out comment cards (see summary of comment cards) and leave them for the staff to receive, and that they should go to one of the corner tables to sign up (sign up for work group on line) for being involved in work groups for 1) program development, 2) public art development and programs, and 3) involvement in future re-use of the Arlington Hills Library building. They could also ask more questions of the architects and view boards with interior materials representation.

The meeting was adjourned.

See drawings presented at the community meeting:

Site Plan

Play Area Plan

Main Floor Plan

Lower Level Floor Plan

Town Square View of Building

View of Main Entry and Book Drop

View of Building from Maryland Avenue and Payne

View of Building from Maryland Avenue toward Reading Room corner

Partial Aerial view of Building Northeast corner