

Date: September 4, 2019

To: Members of the Enfield Municipal Facilities Committee

Fr: Dominic Albanese, Chair, Enfield Public Library Trustees

Re: Enfield Public Library – Initial Library Space Inventory

Cc: Francine Lozeau, Shirley Green, Melissa Hutson, John Kluge, Katie Plumley-Stewart, Meredith Smith (and posting to the Library Web Page)

Dear Members of the Municipal Facilities Committee:

On behalf of my fellow Enfield Public Library Trustees, Shirley Green and Francine Lozeau and Librarian Melissa Hutson please accept the enclosed as our initial space Inventory for the Enfield Public Library. With this inventory please also find the two earlier Town Meeting considered Library Facility project designs:

- “Whitney Hall Renov-Addition 2006 .pdf” this is the Whitney Hall Renovation and Addition project that was considered and failed\* in 2006;
- “Stand Alone Library – 2009.pdf” this is the stand-alone Library that was considered and approved\*\* at the 2009 Town Meeting;

\*See the last page of the “Whitney Hall Renov-Addition 2006.pdf” for details about the costs and town meeting vote associated with this project;

\*\*2007 Town Meeting Approved 117 to 45 allocating \$400,000 from undesignated surplus for the new library project. Of that \$400,000, \$133,000 was used to pay for design and engineering costs associated with that new building. In 2015-16 an additional \$49,651 (from gift funds) was spent to update the 2007 design for presentation at the 2016 Town Meeting where voters would be asked to provide funds to complete the project. It was ultimately agreed to by the Board of Selectman, Library Trustees and the Budget Committee not to pursue a vote at that time.

We think that it is useful for each of you to have these previous project plans as they will give you a sense of scope and scale of prior library space considerations – especially given that many of the space dimensions are necessarily in-flux at this time. And, as I will discuss later, we seek your feedback on the currently approved stand-alone library plan as it relates to what the Facilities Committee will advance at Town Meeting in March 2020.

The four of us (Shirley, Francine, Melissa, & I) met three times during the week of August 26th and again on September 3rd to develop and refine this memo and space inventory. These public meetings were augmented by the distribution of the inventory for comment to several others who are keenly interested or have valuable knowledge of the Library. However, this inventory will and needs to further evolve as the path forward becomes clearer. Some thoughts for you to consider:

- The current Library is a little less than 3100 sq./ft – you’ve seen the current space so I don’t need to comment on just how cramped, inefficient, and confining to our mission it is. For a 50 to 100-year design, it seems like doubling the current space to something like 6500 to 7500 sq./ft is reasonable depending on how you apportion public and shared spaces like meeting rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, vaults, utilities and storage spaces;

- Melissa has spent considerable time “weeding” (discarding) books not checked out in years and yet our space is full with almost at capacity book cases. Past that we store books on the 3rd floor of Whitney Hall. While the world becomes more digital every day, no one sees a day that books will not be a major part of any library collection. We see particular growth in Adult Fiction, DVD/CD check-outs, and increasing programming opportunities for both seniors and children. All these activities need space to occur and to store the associated materials;
- There is a little bit of chicken or egg going on right now – do the Trustees plan/continue with a stand-alone building unique to the Library or do we plan for shared space with the Town Offices where we see opportunities for common spaces and shared utilities? We understand that this is the question you are wrestling with too. Given that, we are not able to give exact room dimensions and that is why, in part, we included the two earlier designs that are more-or-less in support of the overall space allocation of at least 7500 +/- Sq./Ft (costs for each are included as well). When we meet as a group on September 24th, we will look for some general direction about which configuration is preferred by the Committee. This will help us (and perhaps Town Offices) start to firm this inventory up. Past that, and this is very important: *The Trustees seek the support of the architect the Town is hiring to further inform both the design of the Library and the opportunities for developing synergies with others whom we might share space with;*
- The “Ownership” (for lack of a better word) of Whitney Hall is now documented and the Library seeks a full and fair partnership over Whitney Hall with the Town Administration – neither acting superior or subordinate to the other – Should the Committee’s ultimate plan include renovation of Whitney Hall it is the Trustees position (and I believe the Town Manager and the Board of Selectman would agree) that a “back-to-the-studs” renovation is required. “Back-to-the-studs” to the Trustees means that the character pieces of the building (unique woodwork, wainscoting, doors, stained glass, etc. etc.) would be removed and stored while the building is fully gutted “back to the studs”. This might even include making floor adjustments such that ceiling height of each of the 3 floors are more distributed and easier to heat/cool and allow for better penetration of natural light. Ultimately the character pieces would be returned to the new space after it has been redesigned and refurbished with new windows, insulation, wiring, plumbing, HVAC, etc.;
- The Trustees feel strongly that the 3rd floor auditorium must be addressed in the renovation – We believe that a stage is a good and useful feature – but we also believe that the space needs to be reconfigured such that it is useful to other Town/Library related projects when a play is not in session. This is not the case of the current space and again, using the skills of a trained architect, we believe that something can be created that meets performance needs as well as the needs for public space for meetings, storage, recreation, voting, etc. etc.;
- Several of us have talked a few times about the evolution of Libraries as part of broader community space. The Library as part of a bigger cultural whole if you will. There appears to be synergies with other town departments like Recreation, Heritage Commission, the Town Historian, and the never-ending need for good, safe, clean, well-lit public meeting space. More people are working outside a formal office and could use swing space - the Library already receives requests for things like small interview or training space, dedicated work space, even space for monitored family interactions (these kinds of spaces also present fundraising opportunities). Libraries are often visited by new people considering moving to Town and there is a growing demand for adequate space for both senior and children’s programming. While nothing has been explored in depth, a broader approach may be a conversation you want to think about in a 50-year facility design. This question is not intended to muddy the waters with more options, but it might be worthy of consideration and hence, with the Town Manager’s support, we’ve added some rows at the end of our inventory to facilitate a conversation amongst the Facilities Committee and others about the Library being part of a larger Town Offices, community and cultural space area;
- However, it is important to remember that **until we vote otherwise, the 2009 library building is the approved plan** (see: Stand Alone Library – 2009.pdf). In other words, the Trustees will need to take a public position and vote to endorse a path forward. With \$182,651 in public and private monies already invested in the 2009 design,

your review and commentary is both useful to the Trustees and it would add credence to a path forward that does or does not include that currently approved building. If you determine that this building does not fit into your ultimate solution then we'd like to know that and factor it into our public deliberations. If you think the 2009 could be part of your overall plan then we would like to discuss that as well. The Libraries audience is broad – patrons, donors and tax payers. And to the point - we need to carefully and transparently communicate to all how/why we move forward – this is particularly true if the 2009 plan is abandoned. We believe that it is vital to the future of our fundraising efforts (and the likelihood of town meeting success) that whenever possible the Library Trustees, Facilities Committee, Town Manager and Board of Selectman speak with a common vision;

- To date the Library has raised almost \$1,050,000 in public and private monies from more than 440 donors for the new stand-alone building. A rough accounting of funds currently available to the project include:
  - o Private Donations in CD's and Savings: \$349,650 held at Mascoma Bank at favorable rates;
  - o Capital Reserve Funds-Library Building Fund: \$293,047;
  - o TIF District funds allocated (2014), but not approved, for site improvements associated with the building of: \$150,000
  - o We have both active pledges that are still being paid off and a \$100,000 pledge from the Mascoma Bank Foundation which will be fulfilled when we reach 80% of our fundraising goal;

*The Library Trustees are fully committed to restarting our fundraising efforts.* We suspended our fundraising as the Strategic Governance and the Barrett Facilities Study was undertaken. Once you have established a path forward and the Trustees have endorsed the Library portion then we can communicate with our current donors and start talking to potential new ones. Please know that any deviation from the current plan requires the Trustees to go back to each donor and get their approval to use their gift for the new project. And that each donor has the right, and we are prepared to fulfill, any request to return their gift if the new project is not something the donor can support. Given that (1) there is agreement of the various governing groups on a path forward; and (2) the new library space is adequate, thoughtfully designed, and cost effective; then we believe that all or most of the donors will stay with us. Not only will we keep most of our existing donor base, but we are quite optimistic that we can successfully secure new commitments from prospects who we have not yet approached. This is yet another reason why all parties need to be in sync as much as possible and communicate with a common voice. It seems possible that another \$250,000 +/- could be raised. Please do not consider this a promise or commitment at this time. However, it seems like a reasonable place holder as we move forward and the Trustees are committed to doing all the fundraising, they can to ease what we ask of Enfield's tax payers.

At this time, we do not plan to do a presentation on the 24th. We hope that after you've had a chance to review this material that we can go around the table hearing people's thoughts and answer any questions. Ideally, we'll leave that night with a general direction (stand-alone building vs. something we share with Town Offices, and a most likely location) such that we can continue to firm this space inventory up for you. We see this as an evolutionary process and we look forward forming a partnership with the Committee. Melissa, Shirley, Francine and I appreciate all the time you are putting into this effort and the creditability your work will bring to the long-time goal of improved library space in Enfield. Shirley has been very complimentary about your thoroughness and thoughtfulness and the Trustees and Librarian are highly optimistic that we will develop a plan that will end with a successful vote in March. The 4 of us look forward to meeting with you on September 24, 2019.

Thank you again for your time working through these materials.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Library Trustees and Town Librarian,

Dominic C. Albanese  
Chair, Enfield Public Library Trustees