

This set of minutes was approved at the October 30, 2006 Town Council meeting.

**DURHAM TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006
DURHAM TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Neil Niman; Councilor Mark Morong; Councilor Gerald Needell; Councilor Karl Van Asselt; Councilor Julian Smith; Councilor Catherine Leach; Councilor Henry Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Diana Carroll; Councilor Peter Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Todd Selig
Library Board of Trustees Chair Luci Gardner
Vice Chair Ann Windsor
Treasurer John Caulfield
Trustee Sibylle Carlson
Trustee Doug Bencks
Trustee Ed Valena
Susan Roman, alternate
Emily Smith, alternate
Doug Wheeler, past chair of Trustees
Tom Madden, Library Director

Chair Niman welcomed everyone to the workshop at 7:02 PM.

Library Board of Trustees Chair Luci Gardner said she appreciated the opportunity for the workshop on determining the site for a new library. She said as of July, 2006, there were 3,826 cardholders at the current Durham Public Library, which was up by 826 cardholders in the past 1 ½ years. She said patronage was growing by leaps and bounds, even given the current library facility. She said no one could dispute the inadequacies and shabbiness of the current space, and she said accessibility and visibility were key characteristics of a new site.

She said not knowing where the new library might be located, jointly or otherwise, the Trustees had come as far as they could with their plans. She said they couldn't do a site plan or fundraising without having a site. She said the Trustees had determined that a 12,500 sf library was needed, based on the programmatic requirements. She noted the costs involved with such a building had been provided, and also said information on funding, fundraising, and the operating budget had been provided.

Ms. Gardner said the Trustees had studied 12 libraries, and said comparative charts had been developed for the Council that showed where Durham stood in comparison to them. She noted that the construction costs for these facilities had been translated into 2007 dollars. She provided details on the comparison information, and said it indicated that Durham's current library was about half the size of the smallest

library, studied, and had about half the volumes per capita. She also noted that the State Librarian was unaware of any other NH town that rented library space.

Ms. Gardner said the Trustees were asking for dialogue and a timeline that evening. She said once a site was selected, the Trustees could begin fundraising.

Board of Trustees Treasurer John Caulfield provided details on his background as an accountant, and provided a worksheet for Councilors. He said the financial plan had 3 sections.

He said the cost of a new library would be \$3.75 million, including furniture and fixtures, and a nominal amount of land. He said the Trustees currently had \$363,000 in savings, and said with interest from those funds, it was anticipated the savings could grow to \$375,000. He said \$250,000 was provided by UNH at the time the Town library was separated from the UNH library. He said an additional \$100,000 had been raised through various donations earmarked specifically for a new library. He said it was expected that \$625,000 would come from various sources, which would leave \$2.75 million to be raised through bonding.

He said full funding for operations of the present library by the Town had allowed it to shift the focus away from simply funding day-to-day operations to other much needed services. He said the Trustees had raised \$15,000 for a new circulation software package, something that would enhance services to the community and that could be carried over to the new library. He said the focus for 2006-2007 was to build the library's collection, and said through fundraising, the Trustees were keeping things like this off of the annual operational and CIP budget requests.

Mr. Caulfield next discussed operating budget issues concerning a new library. He said it was foreseen that two new full time personnel would be needed. He also said that concerning the non-personnel line, while there would be no rent to pay for a new library, this would be offset by having to operate a larger facility. He said the net increase in operating costs in the first full year following completion of the facility would be approximately \$31,000.

There was discussion between Council members and Mr. Caulfield as to whether the operating cost figures quoted were incremental numbers, and there was also discussion as to how they would increase over time with the new library.

Councilor Van Asselt said the figures used were not realistic operating costs for the new library, and provided details on this. He said it was important to be realistic about what the operating costs were.

Administrator Selig explained that what the Trustees were trying to show with this exercise was the impact of a new facility, not the cumulative impact of library budget increases over time.

Councilor Needell asked if the Trustees were anticipating an additional \$650,000 from fundraising, and Mr. Caulfield said that was correct.

Councilor Van Asselt asked if the Trustees were all on the same page that a bond issue was the way to raise \$2.7 million, and was told yes.

Administrator Selig received clarification that the \$3.75 million figure for the library included \$250,000 for land. There was discussion about this.

Chair Niman asked how the \$650,000 for fundraising had been arrived at.

Ms. Gardner said the estimate for a new library a few years had been \$3 million. She said the Trustees had thought that raising a third of the total cost was within their range. She said they had also talked to the State Librarian about this, and said the average figures they were given regarding how much was generally raised through fundraising was actually less than a third of the total cost. She provided details on this, and noted that some libraries, unlike Durham, had huge endowments.

Councilor Needell said this figure was reasonably consistent with the feasibility study.

Chair Niman noted a study done in 1999 that discussed the fundraising potential in Durham for a new library.

Ms. Gardner said it was clearly a new day in terms of fundraising potential, based on the current patronage of the library, and the extent of activities and attendance of these activities.

Chair Niman said the person who did this report seemed to think there was insufficient support at that time for a fundraising campaign, and he asked if this had changed.

Trustee Emily Smith said she was the retired vice president of a University foundation, and she said that traditionally, about 90% of funds came from about 10% of people. She also noted that in order to fundraise, the Trustees needed to have a plan and a site.

Councilor Needell said the same questions raised in the report still remained in the community. He noted that the Durham community had always been confused about the break from the UNH library, which hurt fundraising. But he said what was proposed by the Trustees didn't really go against this.

Mr. Caulfield said it had been almost 10 years since that report was done, and said there was a lot more awareness now of the library as a stand-alone operation, and that people had seen what the Trustees had done with the space it had.

Chair Niman said he still heard comments from residents about the split with the UNH library, which surprised him. He then asked if the Trustees had a strategy if in 2009, the necessary funds had not been raised.

Ms. Gardner said the Trustees had thought about this, and said this was why they needed a site - in order to do a site plan and feasibility study - so they could then do fundraising. She said it would take at least a year to raise the money, but said these other things had to come first.

Chair Niman said he was not questioning this, and just wanted to know what the plan was if the funds weren't raised by 2009.

Trustee Doug Bencks said that was why they all needed to be working together, in order to be able to do a feasibility assessment of what the Trustees could fundraise for, and in order to determine when it was appropriate to go forward with the bonding request. He said together they would figure out the right sequence for making that happen.

Councilor Needell said the bond issue was a significant hurdle, noting that unless the support for the library was there, it would be hard to attain a 2/3 vote. He said there would need to be a lot of things settled in order to get to that.

Mr. Bencks said the hope was that with this bond issue, there was a fundraising element so the Trustees would be able to say to the voters that there was matching money out there that showed a commitment to the project.

Trustee Ed Valena noted there had been surprise when there was a 77% vote for the conservation bond.

Councilor Van Asselt said it made sense to do the fundraising and then the bonding.

Trustee Emily Smith provided details on capital funding projects she had been involved with. She said funds were often given over a period of a few years, and said the pledge commitment rate was ordinarily quite high.

Councilor Van Asselt noted that construction costs were going up significantly, and he asked if the numbers provided took this into consideration.

Mr. Bencks said these numbers didn't reflect the kind of inflation Councilor Van Asselt was talking about, but he agreed this was a real issue these days with cost estimating. He said the Trustees hadn't looked far into the future with these numbers, and he said if fundraising took longer than anticipated, and bonding also took longer, the Trustees would have to review the numbers.

Councilor Van Asselt said projecting construction costs out even three years was scary, and said it was important to be realistic about this. He said if it was really a \$5.2 million building because it was 5 years down the road, this would impact fundraising and bonding.

Trustee Emily Smith said that was what brought the Trustees to this work session with the Council. She said everyone knew the new library was long overdue, and she said she hoped that rather than worry about what would happen 5-10 years from now, the Trustees and the Council would come together and make this happen. She said every time they stalled, it only made constructing the library a tougher challenge.

Councilor Van Asselt said a fair question for the Trustees and the Library Director was what they were trying to accomplish with a new library in Durham.

Library Director Tom Madden said he had worked in a number of town libraries. He said in communities that had had libraries over a long period of time, these libraries were places that people in the town had grown up with, and used throughout their lives for a variety of reasons. He provided details on this.

Durham Public Library Director Tom Madden spoke before the Board. He described the limitations of the current library facility, but said staff and volunteers did a lot with what they had. He noted that the Plaistow NH library they had visited had a collection the same size as Durham's, but housed it in a 13,000 sf. building, which allowed them to have other things like a children's room with a craft area, an area for staff to prepare for working with kids, and a meeting area in the local history section.

He spoke about the fact that a new library in Durham could become a kind of community center, which could be used for a variety of purposes

Councilor Needell asked what difference it made that the UNH library was in the Town of Durham.

Mr. Madden explained that there was not a lot of usage of the Diamond Library because of the parking issue. He said an academic library and a town library were two different animals, with the academic library driven by curriculums, and the town library having to offer a little of everything. He also said there was no going back to the way things had been in the past.

Councilor Needell asked what interaction there was between the two libraries, and Mr. Madden said the main interaction was students coming to the Town library for information on children's literature.

Councilor Henry Smith said he had spoken with someone on campus about the idea of a new library, and said this person didn't think much about the idea because he used the Diamond Library. He discussed whether people who worked at UNH made use of the Town library. He also asked if the 12 facilities the Council had been provided information on were combination or stand-alone libraries.

Trustee Doug Bencks said they had tried to look at a variety of facilities, explaining that there were some libraries that were part of a complex, although they were not necessarily physically joined, such as the Pelham and Londonderry facilities. He said the Trustees had also talked to communities that had shared facilities, but didn't have new construction. He said in most cases, there was some kind of meeting room, regardless of whether there was a shared facility or not.

Councilor Henry Smith asked why the Pelham library, built in 2003, had a project cost that was so much cheaper than the estimated cost of a new library in Durham.

Mr. Bencks said that speaking theoretically, some of the libraries they had looked at had built the cheapest building they could, rather than addressing issues like keeping operating costs down, ease of maintenance, building longevity, and creating buildings with a good feeling to them. He provided details on this.

Councilor Julian Smith observed that Durham became a town in 1732, and he said the 275th anniversary was a time to take pride in how far the Town had come, and would be a good time to start to tackle a campaign for the library. He said there were currently 3,826 cardholders, also noting that some library cards were shared, and asked how many people the Library actually served

Mr. Madden said there were about 2,100 patron visits per month, and said this was happening in a small library. He noted that when the Lincoln NH library put on an addition, it saw circulation increase significantly.

Councilor Julian Smith said when he became a Library Trustee, he asked people if they used the library, and many said they didn't because they didn't like where it was located. He said he believed the patron figures would go up, based on this, and said he was mentioning this because of the bond issue idea, and the likelihood that it would get support. He said he hoped it would.

Councilor Morong said the upside of the current library was the parking. He also noted green building trends, using recycled materials, etc., and said his sense was that it probably added to the initial cost, but resulted in energy savings down the road. He asked if these per foot costs that had been provided to the Council included consideration of these things.

Mr. Bencks said in terms of energy efficiency, they absolutely did. He said they were trying to come up with numbers that resulted in low operating costs, which was a different approach than going with the lowest initial cost. He said with a long-term building, sustainability was important. He said all of the design considerations needed to be looked regarding the long term, life cycle costs. He also said there were plenty of materials out there now that could be used without adding to the cost. He noted that one saw added costs with certain top end materials, but said he didn't see them going with these materials.

Councilor Morong noted green building ideas like daylight harvesting in the siting of buildings, and lights that could be dimmed relative to natural light, and said those ideas would be the way to go.

Councilor Van Asselt said he wondered if it made sense that the Trustees should be thinking about a bigger concept than a 12,000 sf library. He provided details on this.

Councilor Needell said the Trustees were addressing the need for a library. He said Councilor Van Asselt's question was fundamental, and said he didn't think they all could move on until it was resolved what it was they all wanted to come out of this process. He said they couldn't really look at sites until this was resolved.

Councilor Leach said she wouldn't narrow the concept down to a library/Town Hall, and said she thought the concept should be a little more global.

Councilor Needell said the key thing was that the Council and the Trustees had to determine what they wanted.

Mr. Madden provided details on how a library could provide some community functions, and asked if there was something beyond that that people had in mind.

Councilor Van Asselt described various functions at the Amherst Library, including a wonderful computer facility, monthly art show of local artists, a coffee shop, a great reading room, an after school program mixed with a reading room, an historical area to look at artifacts, etc.

He said the list could go on and on, and said Durham was void of that kind of facility. He said that for years, the Durham Courthouse was filled with historical information, and said that now, most kids in Durham had grown up without seeing that information.

He said he was not sure a library in the traditional sense was sellable in Durham, but said a facility that included a library and a whole lot of others things would be. He asked if there was a way they all could think bigger than a library and Town Hall.

Trustee Windsor said the Trustees agreed with him, and said they thought of the library as the Town center. She said the libraries they had studied brought so much to the community that was way beyond a traditional library, and said it was a place for the people of town to gather. She said they were looking at the idea of a facility that would accomplish this for Durham. She noted that the Plaistow and Londonderry facilities had wonderful meeting areas that could be used by more than one group at one time, and she said their programs were many and varied.

Councilor Needell said what he heard Mr. Madden saying was what Councilor Van Asselt had just said, and said he didn't see what was missing in the Library Trustees' vision.

Councilor Leach said it was more than just a meeting room issue, and said meeting rooms didn't necessarily make the building a community center. She noted that the Council would be hearing from the Parks and Recreation Committee about how recreation opportunities were lacking in Durham, and said that perhaps a larger vision was something to at least talk about

Mr. Madden said it was the programs that could be held in meeting rooms that were key. He said a good amount of space was needed for this, but he said it was up to the Library to do good programming.

Councilor Needell said the entire library was essentially meeting space, and said it wasn't simply a matter of having tables and chairs for reading, and a room or rooms for meetings.

Chair Niman spoke about UNH's Memorial Union Building (MUB), where there were various activities, organizations that used meeting rooms but also had offices where people could congregate for various purposes. He said a community center wasn't just a 1000 sf room for meetings, but was places where people could go to hang out, establish an identity, and have as a home away from home.

Councilor Needell said those ideas were fine, and said if the Council wanted to impose on this discussion that there should be community functions separate from the library function, it should do that.

Chair Niman said he wasn't sure if he agreed with Director Madden's vision for the new library in terms of the idea of having computer workstations. He explained that there had been a problem with bats at his house, and said he got on the Internet to find information on bats. He said to get acceptance from the public on the new library, the Trustees had to convince them that a library was still relevant.

He said perhaps computer workstations weren't the way to go with a new library, and suggested that perhaps things like a wireless network and allowing borrowing of laptops would be a better way to go. He said these kinds of things were some of the bigger questions that would have to be answered, from people who didn't want to spend \$4 million on a new library, who said technology had changed, and

who didn't see why some form of social order that was no longer relevant in today's age was being imposed on them.

Councilor Needell said if these were the kinds of questions that needed to be answered, it was important to get them on the table, because otherwise they all were wasting their time. He said the questions and the parameters kept changing. He said it was fundamental to decide what the scope of the project was, before going any further.

Chair Niman said there was a 12,000 sf library concept, but he said perhaps some of the functions could be done elsewhere, including Diamond Library functions, so perhaps Durham only needed a 8,000 sf library.

Councilor Needell said he would not want to second-guess what the library said it needed.

Chair Niman said that was a legitimate position, but said some people might say a 8,000 sf library was all Durham could afford.

Councilor Julian Smith said there were various ways a library could be used, but he asked when they were going to specifically discuss the issue of a combined library/Town Hall.

Katie Ellis, Library Board of Trustees alternate, said there weren't any functions other than perhaps video games that weren't mentioned as functions the Trustees would like to see for a new library. She noted that Amherst was an example of a library the Trustees had liked, and said that was what the Trustees had outlined. She said the idea of a youth center was included in this.

She said the description of the Diamond Library and a separate MUB was an example of the difference between a public library and an academic library, and she said a public library was more like the MUB than academic libraries they had seen.

Councilor Julian Smith said he would like to shift to a discussion on a combined Town Hall/library. He noted a presentation a few months ago that took into account the needs of the Town regarding its Town Hall, and said there had been no further discussion on that.

Councilor Henry Smith provided details on this previous discussion on the needs of the Town Hall.

Councilor Leach asked if this was the Trustees' preferred option, and if so, why.

Trustee Carlson said the town of Stratham had a combined facility, and liked it very much. She said the two entities shared public meeting rooms, and thought this was cost efficient. She said the design allowed easy interaction for citizens to use both facilities, and said both the library people and the town people liked the arrangement.

She said this was the Trustees' preferred approach, and said one of the possible locations for this combined facility was the Town Hall site, and the other was Mill Plaza. She said the Mill Plaza location was the Trustees' first choice. She said the Trustees would like to know how the Town Council stood on this, because they were eager to get on with it.

Councilor Van Asselt said he didn't want to simply see a merger of the library and Town Hall. He said if there were a Durham community center, which included town government offices, a library, and ten other functions, he would then say spending \$5 million was a good idea. He said he was trying to think in a much bigger context than a joint library/Town Hall facility, which he described as too narrow.

Trustee Carlson said in another words, Councilor Van Asselt saw three aspects to a project instead of two - a Town Hall, a library, and a community center

Councilor Van Asselt said that was correct, and said he saw the library as part of a community center.

Trustee Ed Valena asked Councilor Van Asselt what the 10 functions were that he would like to see relating to the community center aspect.

Councilor Van Asselt suggested functions like a Meals on Wheels program; an after school program; art after school; and a monthly art program. He said room was needed for that kind of programming, and he said he would prefer to think of a facility which included the Library and also got at the Town Hall needs, and that also had expandable possibilities for the kinds of things Durham currently didn't have.

Mr. Valena asked if Councilor Van Asselt wanted such a facility to be pedestrian friendly, close to the downtown.

Councilor Van Asselt said absolutely. He noted that his brother had recently visited the area, and he said he took him to Portsmouth's new library. He said he didn't have any place to take him in Durham

Trustee Carlson said it was shameful there wasn't a decent public library in Durham, or a place to go, even though the Town was incorporated in 1732.

Councilor Morong said he didn't see why a Meals on Wheels program was needed for so few people, but said he thought Councilor Van Asselt's overall vision was good. But he said to have it all in the short term would be very difficult for the taxpayer. He said it was important to look at what the Town needed right now, - a library and possibly a Town Hall, and not to talk about the community center right now. He noted the Town couldn't really afford the library/Town Hall, but did need them.

Councilor Needell said he wanted to talk about a combined facility, and to make a decision on whether this was the direction that was a requirement for future consideration. He said the CIP didn't mention the Town Hall part, and he asked if a new Town Hall was a necessity in the next five years. He noted there were problems with the current Town Hall building, and said if a new building needed to be considered in the near future, it made sense to have a combined the Library/Town Hall. He asked where things stood with this.

Administrator Selig said a new Town Hall had not been in the CIP in the past, but said it would appear in the CIP this year. He said in the short term, they were looking at having to spend \$20,000-30,000 to address safety issues and handicap access issues. He said in the next five years, \$130,000 would be needed for storage space, and for additional workspace. He provided details on this, noting among other things that older documents were currently disintegrating because of the inadequate storage conditions.

He said even after these improvements were made, there would still be an older facility that did not meet the Town's needs, but he said for the next 10 years, the Town could limp along. But he questioned to what extent the Town would want to make these kinds of improvements, if there was support for a joint complex.

Councilor Needell said this helped set the direction, and said there were some large benefits to committing to a combined facility. He said if the decision was made that this was all they were going to consider, they could move ahead. He said he was satisfied with the goal of meeting the needs of a Library and Town Hall, and said that would by function be a community center. He said if they wanted to add facilities to this in their discussion, these things would have to fit into that model. He said he would like the Council to move forward, and he said the third aspect might fit, depending on other considerations. He noted that a combined facility would limit the site options.

Councilor Leach said the site had a lot to do with whether there was going to be a combined facility. She said in her view, if they thought Mill Plaza was an option, that would be her preference as well, but she agreed it was important to know if it was.

Trustee Carlson said a combined facility would save money in the long run.

Chair Niman said an alternative could be to do the project in smaller chunks that residents could better absorb. He said if the goal were to get a new library as soon as possible, the Davis property would be the prime property to consider. He noted that only a library could be put there. He said if the goal was to do a combined library/Town Hall, it would take more time to get a bond issue through, and he said there would be more challenges in terms of sites that could be used.

He said with the Town Hall site, there was an existing building and a parking lot, but no greenspace, no room for expansion, proximity to a gas station, and a busy corner. He said it would be very difficult to put a combined facility on the Town hall property, and said some people would say the Town should forget about this location. He said if the objective was simply to get a new library, the Davis property was the way to go.

Mr. Valena noted that there was a long history of site selection, and asked if they all wanted to talk about this.

Break from 8:35-8:43 pm

Mr. Valena described the process the Trustees had undergone, in looking at other sites, and said they were left with the sites they felt were viable: the Town Hall site; the Mill Plaza site; the Kyreages site, the SAE property, and the Davis property.

Chair Niman asked if the Trustees were interested in the SAE property, and Mr. Valena said it was an option, noting its location and proximity to local schools. He said the Trustees were the most excited about the Mill Plaza opportunity.

Chair Niman said he had been as well, until he had seen the letter from John Pinto, the owner of Mill Plaza.

Administrator Selig explained that a number of people had met with Mr. Pinto about the idea of a collaborative effort to redevelop the Mill Plaza site. He said although Mr. Pinto was still interested in this concept, he would like the Town to develop a master plan for the site, get community buy-in, and then approach him about being part of that effort.

Administrator Selig said that reading between the lines, he thought that although Mr. Pinto had been skeptical about doing business in Durham, he was intrigued, based on the discussions that had taken place, but was not really interested in committing a lot of his own resources unless the community was really clear on what it wanted, and there was sufficient support to bring the project to fruition.

He said Town entities needed to have a discussion on this, and said one idea was to have a planning charrette. He noted that resident Nick Isaak was involved with a NH planners' organization that did charrettes at minimal cost. He said beyond that, community dollars would need to be invested in looking at the community development idea, including both a business model analysis and how the library would fit into this. He said there would also need to be someone, long term, to sell a concept to Mr. Pinto and other large landowners in that area. Administrator Selig said it had been hoped that Mr. Pinto could do this conceptualization on his own, but he had turned the tables on the Town.

Mr. Valena asked if it would be possible to meet in the middle with this, noting that, typical of New Hampshire, the Town wasn't in the business of designing uses for peoples' properties. He said perhaps an offer of a certain amount of funds for a master plan was possible, as part of a negotiation process.

There was additional discussion about how the letter from Mr. Pinto should be interpreted, and about some kind of planning process that might be appropriate.

Chair Niman said resident Dick Gsottschneider, who did this kind of thing for a living, had estimated that such plans and specifications would cost about \$100,000, and knew of firms that did this.

Councilor Needell said if it was the vision of the community that this plan had so much to offer that it was a direction that should be investigated, the question needed to be asked as to whether the Town was at point where it could make this choice, and could either negotiate with Mr. Pinto, or go it alone on this. He said the downside of this was that if it took a year or more to find out if the Town was going anywhere on this, it was possible that that year could be lost. He asked if this was a risk the Town wanted to take, or if it instead wanted to go with one of the safe plans.

Councilor Henry Smith noted that the Trustees had indicated it was their favored choice, and the question was how long the process would take.

Chair Niman said the Council needed to decide whether it would put up the money for this. He said he would vote to do this because he felt there was \$40-50 million of taxable value that could be unlocked at the Mill Plaza site with a successful development plan. He said a discussion was needed to see if others agreed with this. He also said the Council would have to go to the Trustees on this, and ask if they were willing to wait..

Trustee Gardner said part of the question still was whether there was to be a joint building. She said some of the money for the project would perhaps come from the sale of the Town Hall property, which would mean the Town Hall would need another place to go. She said if the Town was really invested in this, and there would be a joint building and real money put into the study, of course the Trustees would wait. But she said there had to be a default site, so the Trustees knew they were not waiting for nothing, especially given fundraising issues. She said she thought the letter from Mr. Pinto was realistic, stating that after all he owned the property, but that he sounded open to the development ideas that had been discussed. Ms. Gardner said it would be the best chance to revitalize Durham that she had heard about, and said she hoped it could work.

Administrator Selig noted that this development idea had come out of a library site selection meeting, where some guests had suggested the Plaza location for redevelopment. He said the idea would be to remove one or both buildings on the site, and as part of the redevelopment, to cooperate with larger landowners abutting the site on Main Street. He provided details on this, and said it was possible some or all of these people would be interested in being involved with the project. He said one of the challenges downtown was that there was insufficient parking, and said a redeveloped Plaza could include enhanced parking with a parking garage, which would work with redevelopment of some properties on Main Street. He provided additional details on this.

He said if the library/town office development could be incorporated into such a project, a TIF district could be developed. He described the tax advantages of this approach, and said the “working group” had been looking at this as a viable way to achieve various goals. He said there could be some 2-3 story structures as part of the redevelopment, noting that an analysis would be needed to see if there was a market for this. He said another question was whether the Town would be interested in this kind of redevelopment. He said Mr. Pinto’s strategy was smart in that he wanted to see if the Town was serious about this. He provided details on additional possible funding sources for this kind of project.

Trustee Susan Roman said she read the situation the same way Mr. Valena had. She noted that she had negotiated a rental agreement with Mr. Pinto, and said he struck her as being a good businessman, who was willing to negotiate and meet in the middle on ideas. She said if the Town voted to put a certain amount of money toward this project, she thought Mr. Pinto would as well.

Administrator Selig described the difficult issues involved in trying to find an appropriate site. He said an interesting part of the Mill Plaza idea was that if the Town could get new taxable development, those tax dollars could help pay for the facility, as part of a TIF district. He said the downside was how long it would take to work through the process of addressing the various issues involved. He said it was more challenging time-wise than looking at a safer site.

Administrator Selig said although the Library Trustees had said the Mill Pond Center was not on the table, he believed it was still fair game for discussion. He said the site was not optimal in terms of location, but was affordable.

He noted that since he had been in Durham, there had not been a lot of progress on the library issue, but said this now appeared to be a great time to possibly make some progress on it. He said the current Board was poised to be successful, noting there were fundraisers, businesspeople, architects, etc. on the

Board. He said another asset was Library Director Tom Madden, with his excellent experience and ability to articulate a vision for the library.

Administrator Selig said that concerning the idea of a third aspect of a new facility, in fairness to the Trustees, the Council could only ask them to go so far in terms of broadening their plan. He said a library could be more than just a library, but might fall short of a community center concept that some people were looking at. He said the Town needed to take a hard look at the other kinds of offerings it wanted to provide in addition to a library, and then needed to develop a master plan of what would work for Durham.

Councilor Needell said regarding the Mill Plaza redevelopment idea, and the idea of a library/ Town Hall as part of this, he saw the Town property development that might be part of the larger redevelopment effort as a relatively small part of the project. He provided details on this, and said it was important to understand the level of interest of the Trustees in the project.

Trustee Carlson said if the Plaza were redeveloped, the Trustees wanted to take advantage of the opportunity.

In answer to a question from a Board of Trustees member, Chair Niman said Mike Davis had said he would be interested in trading the Grange for the Cutter property, with a few additional dollars involved. He said if the Town said it wanted to do this, this could happen soon.

Trustee Windsor said this idea should be examined very closely, stating that it was an attractive idea, and that she would be uncomfortable if it was ignored.

Mr. Valena noted that Mr. Davis's interest in this idea was related to the concept of redevelopment of Mill Plaza.

Chair Niman explained that Mr. Davis wanted to tear down the buildings he owned on Main Street, and replace them with one or two new buildings, with a break in the middle. He said there would be retail on the bottom, residential on the top two floors, and a Laundromat on the back. He said the Grange property would allow Mr. Davis to go further with the building, and get more units, and he provided details on this. He said Mr. Davis was also interested in the Mill Plaza redevelopment idea, and he provided details on this as well. Chair Niman said Mr. Davis would either go it alone or work as part of the redevelopment process, and said he didn't know what his time frame was.

There was discussion on this.

Chair Niman said one way to approach things was to reconvene the "land development working group" to get greater specificity, so that by the October 23rd Council meeting there could be a presentation on different options, and the cost of moving forward with each. He said if that was in place, the Council could then have an extended discussion on this, and could see how much they were willing to commit to this project. He said the Trustees could watch this process, and at that point could make a decision regarding going with the Davis property, etc. He said that should be the number one choice if a short-term solution for the library was the goal.

Trustee Doug Bencks noted the uncertainties involved with passing bond issues and doing full fundraising. He said the TIF concept was very compelling, in that there was a funding mechanism that was potentially more solid. He said he would think there was desire to see real movement in how a library could be part of redevelopment of Mill Plaza.

Chair Niman agreed, and said if a plan could be put together to show economic value for development in the center of Town, he would love to see that happen.

Councilor Needell said if in 5 weeks the Council decided to move ahead with this, the library would still be in limbo for a year. He asked whether once a redevelopment plan for Mill Plaza came forward, and once a site for the library and the town hall were decided on, the new library could be put on a faster track than other aspects of a redevelopment project.

Chair Niman said he thought so.

Councilor Morong asked how it would be determined what footprint would be needed for the library and also a Town Hall on the Mill Plaza site.

Chair Niman said there had been discussion that the library might be sited at the back of the property near Chesley Drive, and he provided details on this. He noted that if the decision was made to go with a parking garage as part of the redevelopment, perhaps the Grange would be needed in order to gain access, which meant it would become a valuable piece of property.

He described other possible concepts, but said there was no specificity yet. There was discussion on this, and about the fact that there were a lot of ifs to the Mill Plaza redevelopment idea.

Chair Niman also explained that in order to generate the tax dollars as part of the TIF concept, they might need to expand beyond the Mill Plaza district, and he provided details on this. He said someone would have to be hired to look at these things, to see if the whole thing would work or not.

Councilor Morong said the Town Hall site was worth more as a commercial property than as a Town Hall.

Chair Niman noted that if the Town had to buy a property in the Plaza, it could perhaps sell the Town Hall property, noting it was currently worth about \$800,000 to a million dollars.

There was discussion about whether there would be public interest in this kind of project. Mr. Valena said he had talked to a lot of people about it, and had only heard two people speak against it.

Former Library Trustee Chair Doug Wheeler said there were many advantages to doing the library at the Town Hall site. He also spoke against the idea of economic development of the Town Hall site.

Chair Niman said he had at one time imagined some kind of economic development near the Oyster River on Route 108, and said the Town Hall/library concept would have been great as part of this. But he said the road design that had occurred was such that one couldn't really access the water easily. He also said this was the busiest intersection in Town, and it was hard to walk in the area. He said access

issues were a real problem. He said the Mill Plaza idea was exciting because it could bring so many things together. He provided details on how it could be a dynamic “location” for residents, students and visitors to come to, noting this was something that was presently missing in Durham.

A member of the audience asked what the Town’s vision was for itself. She said figuring out a place for the library was secondary to figuring this out.

Chair Niman said the Master Plan said the Town wanted a town center, but he said a town center wasn’t possible on this corner now. He said the best shot for realizing this idea was to do something downtown, and the only thing that made economic sense right now was re-development of Mill Plaza. He noted that the changes to the Zoning Ordinance were such that he believed Mr. Pinto would redevelop the Plaza, either with the Town or without it.

Councilor Morong said the Town Hall site wouldn’t necessarily have to be sold to a Rite Aid type company, noting the Town had some control over how the site could be used.

Councilor Needell asked how they could get back to the discussion on the library.

Chair Niman said the Library Trustees had to decide if they wanted to wait 5-6 weeks, or would rather say they wanted a sure thing with the Davis property, or wanted a Town Hall/library at the current Town Hall site. He said he was trying to flesh these things out.

Resident Annmarie Harris said she had recently seen the SAE property, and noted a possible neighboring property. She noted that this area had been rezoned for development, and said if a new Town facility was put there, it would be an anchor property near the schools, would be within walking distance from the neighborhoods, and would also reduce troublesome behavior by UNH students. She said the Mill Plaza redevelopment concept brought up the issue of bringing students closer to the Faculty neighborhood, noting there might be student housing associated with such development.

She said she wished they would revisit the idea of the SAE property. She provided details on the property, and said it would be great location to develop, and would be an anchor for redevelopment in a key area of Town. She noted that there was a developer already interested in student housing for the site, and also noted it might even be a property that was appropriate for a taking of some kind.

Administrator Selig said the Pettee Brook parking lot was also a possible site for creating a joint municipal parking structure with a multi-story library/Town Hall and commercial development. He said the same was true for the Store 24 lot. He said he knew the Trustees had talked about this sites in the past, and said there would need to be community support for these sites.

Mr. Valena asked about the idea of having some kind of work session, if there was desire to push forward with the Mill Plaza project.

Chair Niman reiterated that work sessions could toss the ideas around, and if as a result of this there was consensus to redevelop Mill Plaza, someone would draft a communication for the Council, and there would be a formal motion to expend certain funds for this.

Councilor Leach asked if the Council could perhaps reach a consensus on this that evening. Chair Niman said he would first like to reconvene the “working group” that had been looking into the Mill Plaza concept, noting they might have some further ideas to contribute. He said Mr. Pinto would be contacted as part of this, and said there might therefore be further information to provide at the October 23rd Council meeting.

There was discussion on whether a consensus could be achieved at the present meeting.

Councilor Julian Smith said the Council had just seen the Pinto letter for the first time, and he said the letter deserved an answer. He suggested that if there was interest in developing a library/Town Hall immediately east of the east end of Plaza on the landlocked Kyreages property, it should be determined if Mr. Pinto would guarantee the Town access to that property.

There was discussion on the complexity of these kinds of considerations, and the difficulty of getting into the specifics at this point.

Councilor Van Asselt said if there was interest, he encouraged Administrator Selig to get back to the Council with financial and other information on Mill Plaza. He encouraged the Trustees to have a number two place in mind, stating that if there was urgency, Mill Plaza was not the answer.

Councilor Leach said she didn’t understand why the other sites would necessarily have to be taken off the table if there was consensus to move forward with the Mill Plaza idea.

Councilor Morong said the Mill Plaza prospect was interesting, and said the Davis property was worth having as a backup. He also said if the SAE property came back on the market, he wouldn’t throw the idea of developing that site away, stating that it was a good location, and was a great looking building that could be reconfigured and enlarged.

Trustee Luci Gardner said she liked the Mill Plaza idea very much, and said the number one backup site was the Town Hall site. She said the needs report indicated that the Town Hall site could house a combination building, and she spoke about why the other possible locations didn’t make sense.

Councilor Leach said in her opinion, the Town Hall site would not be a place that went with the concept of a community area/town center, noting it was further from downtown than Mill Plaza. She said this wasn’t a drawing place, and said for the sake of the library, Mill Plaza would be a better location. She said perhaps the Trustees needed to know how many members of the Council thought the Town Hall site was a good site.

Councilor Henry Smith said he agreed the Town Hall site wasn’t as good as the Mill Plaza site, but he said it would be his number two choice.

Councilor Leach asked Administrator Selig to speak about whether a new Town Hall building was really needed.

Administrator Selig said the present Town Hall building was not ideal for the use, but he said they could continue there for 10 years if some improvements were made. He said there would definitely be a need

for a larger building beyond that time, because of staffing increases, etc. He also explained that if it was likely the Town Hall site would be the site for a new library, this would by definition mean a joint facility would be needed, and would bring into question the idea of spending money on short term improvements.

Councilor Leach asked Administrator Selig whether he would prefer to see the Town hall site developed, or if he instead would prefer to see something developed in the downtown area.

Administrator Selig said although the Internet had provided more convenience to residents in terms of access to Town services, many residents still wanted to come to Town Hall. He said he would like to see the Town office downtown somewhere, and said a library/Town Hall would be good for the downtown, for many reasons, including exposing the student community more to residents of Durham. He also said combining the two facilities made sense from a fiscal perspective.

Councilor Julian Smith asked if there had been consideration of buying a big enough part of the Mill Plaza site, in order to do develop a library/Town Hall in the east corner.

Administrator Selig said this had not been considered, noting that there had been no definition given to any of the possibilities, including this one.

Chair Niman provided some detail as to what would be involved regarding what Councilor Julian Smith had posed.

Councilor Julian Smith said he thought a timetable of some kind was needed. He said some pressure was coming from the Trustees for a decision. But he said if they couldn't find a home for a joint facility, he wanted the library to be at the Town Hall site.

Councilor Morong said he would like to see some energy put into the Mill Plaza idea, but he said he would also like to see what the situation was with the SAE property, and would like to keep that property and the Davis property on the side burner. He said he didn't favor the Town Hall site, and hadn't in the past. He said he would prefer to see a facility moved closer to the Town core, and would like this intersection to be taken out of the mix. He said if moving closer to Town wasn't possible, he though the Business Park was a site for a facility with all kinds of possibilities.

Councilor Needell said he was puzzled as to what a backup site meant, how it would be dealt with, and what it would be for. He said it should be determined if the SAE site was available. He also said if the Mill Plaza idea was in play, the Davis property was so intertwined with that idea that it was hard to know if it was in play. He said if the Trustees felt they were comfortable with the Town Hall site, he was willing to accept that, or another site the Trustees wanted to bring forward. He noted that the Davis site was close to the Town Hall site, and asked if this proximity could be useful.

Councilor Julian Smith said if the Trustees got discouraged with the Mill Plaza process, and said they therefore wanted to buy the Davis site, the Town Hall would stay where it was for a long time. He said a joint facility on the Town Hall property, closer to the historic center of Durham - the land along the river, and the historic Courthouse building - was the correct approach to take. He noted that more and more Town facilities in Durham had moved away from this area in past years, and said the Town Hall

and Court house were anchor properties. He said he was happy to stay with the Town Hall site, and said there was a lot to recommend it.

Trustee Carlson said the Trustees' enthusiasm was with the Mill Plaza site, and would shift if necessary.

Councilor Leach said perhaps the Trustees needed the opportunity to think further about these things, in order to decide what they want to pursue

Chair Niman said he was committed to moving forward with the Mill Plaza concept, and was very excited about it. He said he would do what he could to further that effort. He said he was hearing that the Council was very interested in the concept as well, and that when some details were worked out, would commit some dollars to it.

Councilor Van Asselt playfully asked Mr. Bencks if perhaps UNH could provide some land for a project.

Mr. Valena asked if there was some way to fast tract the process Chair Niman had described. He said there was no reason it had to move along slowly.

Chair Niman said they would try their best.

Administrator Selig said this project would be costly, and provided details on other major projects that would be coming forward in the future, including a new Fire station, and improvements to the Police Station. He said the Town had to broaden its taxable value in order to be able to offset some of these additional costs. He said it was no longer reasonable to say there should be no new construction in Durham, and to hope the Town infrastructure people wanted would be available, unless residents wanted to see their tax bills go up.

Chair Niman thanked the Library Trustees and others at the meeting for their input, and said they would all fast track things if at all possible.

Adjournment at 10:16 pm

Victoria Parmele, Minutes taker