

SAUCON VALLEY LIBRARY TASK FORCE MEETING

Date: Thursday, June 14, 2012
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township

Present: Lower Saucon Township: Jack Cahalan, Cathy Gorman, Allan Johnson, Kim Labrake, Tom Maxfield, Lynn Koehler, Mike Karabin
Hellertown Borough: Cathy Kichline, Tina Krasnansky, Joe Pampanin,
Hellertown Area Library: Allison Finkbeiner, Robin Rotherham, Rev. Lamar Handwerk, Mike Evangelista
Absent: Jessica Goedtel, Gail Nolf

Committees:

Demographic/Statistics:

Alison Finkbeiner
Lynn Koehler
Jessica Goedtel

Technology:

Gail Nolf
Mike Karabin
Jack Cahalan

Building:

Kim LaBrake
Joe Pampanin
Mike Evangelista

Finance:

Reverend Lamar Handwerk
Tom Maxfield
Cathy Gorman
Tina Krasnansky

1. Approval of Minutes from the May 10th Meeting

Jack asked if there were any additions or corrections from the May 10th meeting. None were acknowledged. Jack advised the minutes will be posted on the website tomorrow, June 15, 2012.

Jack reported Council's deadline for the Task Force report is July 2012. Jack requested from Council a one month extension to finalize the report and study information; Council approved the extension until August, 2012.

2. Committee Reports

a. Demographics/Statistics

Alison handed out and briefly reviewed the format of the preliminary report. She begins the report with an introduction of committee members, discusses the information collection process, verbalizes the findings, and formulates the conclusions to information. She would like to meet with the committee in the next month to formulate more conclusions. Jack thought the preliminary reporting was good and on the right track.

Alison mentioned information found in the 2012 BAPL annual report regarding statistic information on databases. She emailed Lynn for budget costs of the databases to calculate cost per keyword search.

Jack requested all members email him so he can place all the information in a similar format. Jack will prepare a draft report from the information for everyone to review at the next meeting.

b. Technology

Jack handed out and briefly reviewed the information and format of the preliminary report. He reviewed parts of the report such as the overview of the library Task Force and history of library services of LST. He will continue to work on the executive summary. One of the documents in the appendix will be the survey of the technology that the committee did of three libraries HAL, BAPL, and the Easton Area Public Library. Tom asked about the result of the 1992 discussion about leaving

BAPL that is in the LST History of Library Services. Jack said there was a discussion but no action taken at that time.

Robin asked about Technology Committee's findings and conclusions regarding item 2A. HAL does have word processing, spreadsheet and database presentation software on all workstations, is the recommendation to purchase additional software? Jack asked if software is accessible to all library patrons. Robin said yes, it is at all workstations. Robin also pointed out regarding item 3A that there is 24/7 access to their website and wireless access. Jack said he will scratch items 2A and 3A.

c. Building

Joe said that no committee meeting was held. He made some bulleted points of conclusions only and handed them out. He does not want to rehash any further building plans. He broke it up into two sections. The top being before looking at any build-out options associated with a potential merger, what stood out at HAL now in current form, and what deficiencies need to be addressed regardless of merger. The second section is what will need to be done or not after a possible merger. He feels there will be additions to the second list after meeting with the committee in the following month.

Lynn suggested taking a look at what is required for a Keystone grant. She briefly discussed what is needed for the grant as this would be a nice bullet point to have as a third section. Robin said that those points were addressed in a Keystone grant that the library did two years ago for the elevator. Lynn said she mentioned it for the information only from the 1990 grant as it would be helpful to the building committee for bullet point purpose, not for a financing/grant application point, but for a building perspective only.

Tom said building and Keystone grant should not be discussed together, and should be included in the finance section as perhaps a next step associated with the development process.

Kim said site issues will be addressed such as parking, drainage, etc. in the building committee section. Jack asked that they add more verbiage in the beginning and then follow with plans and charts but overall they did a really good job.

d. Finance

Cathy G. handed out copies of a preliminary report. She said the first section summarizes and incorporates all committees' information to discuss an operating budget. The second section reflects what township municipal aid would be as far as capital funding. The report ends with options and recommendations. She notes state grants are discussed to offset any capital improvements, but not used in the actual working budget as state funding is an uncertain unknown.

Alison asked a question regarding a comment on the last page under item 1 where it says that there would be a limit or delay in acquiring reference resources and delay in access to leisure reading material. Cathy said they felt that this issue should be noted in the document because of the size of the building and resources you have there will be financial consideration and also limitations. For example, instead of having 5 books, you may only have 1 or 2 with consideration of the population it serves. BAPL or bigger libraries may have larger demographics and therefore the financial consideration is all relative.

Cathy says she does think these issues should be noted in the final document that they were discussed and some the Task Force came to this consensus.

3. Findings – Conclusions for Final Report

Jack will forward to everyone a combined list of all the findings and conclusions created from each committee's reports so that by the next meeting issues can be deliberated. Jack said he wants to make sure, by the final vote, everyone is comfortable with the final findings, so out of that vote if there are significant issues they can be highlighted and included in the executive summary. Jack said that he will have a mock-up of the final reports to bring back to the next meeting.

Survey data results and comments will be a separate section of the report. Any articles and information received will be in a list in a reference section at the rear of the report.

By the next meeting in July most information will be assembled and polished for the next meeting on August 9, 2012.

Jack reviewed upcoming meetings--August 9, final report and vote and that is what will be presented to the Township Council on August 15th, and then HB council on August 20th, and finally the HAL Board of Trustees on August 28th. Jack asked who will volunteer to attend the meetings? He said he will volunteer. Tom said they should have a representative from each committee at each meeting. Jack said they could have one person present the executive summary and one person from each committee be a spokesman and answer questions. Kim requested from Jack an excel spreadsheet for the events, dates, and times, be distributed so each committee can coordinate schedules for representation at each meeting.

4. Open Public Discussion

Jack opened the meeting to other business. Lynn asked Kim about the plan for the methodology on the decision making process other than just a vote. Kim said, basically the only way you can do it, is by the points that Jack asked everyone to bring together so he can send them out for the next meeting. Each committee needs to go through and list their top five. She said some committees may have more points they feel fit, but everyone must have five. These can be reviewed and discussed and either agreed on or not and the only way to do it is by a vote because, at this point it, it has to be majority rules for each point. She asked would everyone agree with that? She said or else we will keep discussing and discussing all the way through, so if we go through it by committee, each person has to agree what goes in the report. Lynn said is everyone supposed to make recommendations? Lynn said are we recommending if is feasible or not? Jack said that is up to what each person's comfort level is. Kim said that is true, but once all the points everyone has is in one place, at that point, if anyone feels strongly about making a recommendation, it will be put on the table and discussed. Kim said Jack has always said from the start, it is all information, and if it comes to a conclusion everyone can agree on (it may be a phased conclusion) and have the majority agree, yes that is something we should strive for. Kim said then the executive summary would state the heavy facts and recommendations and then everything follows behind that for documentation and appendix. Lynn said the scenario is then, if there is a strong majority that this is a feasible thing, the recommendations then go to LST, they would talk about it and eventually make a decision which may not come at that meeting, and then the next presentation is HB council on the 20th, then the HAL Board on the 28th, but none of those meetings will be decision making meetings, they are presentation meetings. Kim said, I would assume, at each of those meetings Council or the executive committee at that meeting will be basically saying that they are taking this under advisement. Tom said depending on if you distribute at that meeting or if you pre-distribute information prior to the meeting. Kim said if you pre-distribute they have time to review it prior to and then you present it, they will have time to prepare questions. If you just come in and say this is what we are doing and here are your copies, it will all go under advisement. For the next meeting, it is put on each group's agenda to be discussed. Lynn said we will have it ready, so in theory, they could have it in advance. Jack says whatever you want to do, we can get it out. Kim said, yes, if everything is gone through at the July and August meeting and is done, it can be done. Jack said it will be a big report when you see it, so copies will be available for council members and trustees. Jack said beyond that we will have to figure out how to get it online for everyone to look at. Tom said the report minus the recommendations. He said the recommendations should be part of public record made at the time of presentations. He said I think I kind of know what Lynn was getting at, is that we are not recommending whether it should be done or not, but whether it is feasible. He said that should be as far as we go, the decision making bodies do the rest. Everyone agreed.

Lynn said this week she was at a wonderful place called the Foundation Center in New York taking courses about nonprofit management and fund raising and the topic this week was collaborations. She found this interesting because of what is going on here, hence all the questions about the process. She said what the biggest thing she got out of it was, basically, as we think about what we are doing, what is the desired outcome we hope to get from this? She suggests that when you are going through the various committee reports think about this point, what are we trying to get to? She said realistically we learned this is feasible thing on paper, not making an opinion or a decision, but what is the desired outcome for the Task Force, the

feasibility of consolidating, when should it happen, what is the result we want to happen. She will try to get the information to everyone in a link online.

Kim said she agrees with where Lynn is going and the word feasibility. She said when everyone crafts their piece, we should all have the same focus, by committee, so the core of what we are trying to give as our recommendation is about feasibility and not about making the decision. She said if we keep feasibility in our recommendations in focus, this will keep the information to a point and not just a lot of information.

Lynn said, from the aspect of demographics, the other thing she learned was, identifying what the problem was, seeing what is good for the community, and what does the community need. She explained you get a lot of that information from demographics and statistics as far as who is using the services. She said, you should also think about what is the goal for the community, for the township. Kim said that is where Lynn crossed the line, as that is the decision for council to make, not the Task Force. She said it is up to the Task Force to say this is a matter of what can and cannot be done, not what should or should not be done.

Mike K said we are giving them all the information they can possibly compile and, after we are done, my assumption is that the Library Board, the Township, and the HB Council are going to have a lot of communications and meetings to see if they can coordinate the whole program. Kim said to decide what is best for them, each group. Mike K said this is the reference they will use discuss where they go from here. Tom said both Councils are set up to receive public information, so that is where the people are going to go to voice what they think is good and bad. Jack said we (Cathy and Jack) have a similar situation, as they have done a regional police feasibility study, which, is being reviewed by the Council, and Jack and Cathy have to ask the Council what they want to do next with that. Jack said data is in the report and it is up to each group (Library Board, LST, HB Council) to decide what is best for each community.

Allan asked so is our recommendation just going to focus on the feasibility of Hellertown and LST combining with HAL for library services?. Kim said yes, that was the Task Force goal. Allan said we are not going to talk about the options of sharing and various other things? Jack said they are going to report that there are other options and Lynn was going to prepare that. Allan said we are only presenting the options and feasibility of Hellertown and LST joining HAL for library service. Lynn said she did not attend the BAPL board meeting, but did ask to be placed on their next meeting agenda to discuss other options. Allan asked do you mean other options for the BAPL to function with LST with what they have now? Lynn said yes, specifically, the options would be like the basic ones, not meaning to have library service or not, she says that was brought up. She said one option is the feasibility of consolidating with Hellertown; the other option is staying with Bethlehem, and then the other option is splitting the funding, giving half the money to Bethlehem and half to Hellertown. Within that option, Bethlehem would have the option then to also decide what to do with the state money because she heard but did not believe it, but it is true; if Lower Saucon goes in with Hellertown our state money does not follow us. She said BAPL keeps the money. Robin said that is correct. Lynn said the BAPL keeps the state money, it is up to BAPL how they distribute it, and they can distribute it to other libraries if they want to. Robin said they can only distribute district aid and cannot distribute their direct aid. Lynn said not according to Jim Hollinger. Robin said I don't believe he said that Lynn. Lynn responded yes, he did. Robin said she will call him and find out because she doesn't believe he did. Lynn said if we split, the library can decide how to distribute the aid, but the district aid is different and they have to be fair. Robin said they have never shared aid in the past. Lynn said then there is a choice, do you want half the money or no money. Jack advised Lynn that this issue has been discussed and it is his opinion that this is not something the Task Force should make as part of our recommendations. That is the Council's decision to make after they get the report and decide what they want to do. He believes Council would ask the Township Library Committee, not the Task Force, to come back with these recommendations. He said that would be more appropriate and is not for this Task Force. Lynn said that is not what I'm saying. The Task Force has a specific task, but if they decide we can look at other options, or are there other options, and we would say these are some of them.

Allan said are these the options you are going to discuss with the BAPL? I thought you were talking about options you were going to discuss with the BAPL board? Lynn said yes, yes, yes. Allan said that is not what we are going to do, that is what you are going to do with them. She said I am discussing it with both of them. Jack said if the other options are other options for library services, it is just going to be the list and

you are going to write it up. He said, getting to how the Lower Saucon Township, not Hellertown, nor the HAL, is going to fund its library services in the future is not something this Task Force is going to do. Lynn said how do you define the future as we are talking about the future now. Jack said the future we are talking about is next year and the year after and down the road, which Lynn said yes. Tom said, I guess we just want to recognize those options. Lynn said I am talking about plan B and not telling anyone what to do. Tom said, maybe you should stop exploring those options and say here are some things we can talk about in the future but in your role as a BAPL Board trustee. Jack said put on your hat for the BAPL Board for those options, but not here on the Task Force as the Township representative. Lynn said but here's the thing to just be clear, she said the role of the trustee, which she is, is a public office and takes an oath of office to protect the trust of the BAPL. Tom asked Lynn how does that conflict with your role here? Lynn said it does but as trustee it is her role to protect the trust, but if she is specifically directed otherwise then she must follow those instructions, ok, because I am a representative.

Mike K asked, if I can backtrack a little, when we meet with the Township prior to our meeting with the HAL Board, we said we are going to have this down in a document for all the board. Then, we discussed giving it to them at the meeting? Kim said we have the opportunity to give it to them sooner. Mike K. said my problem is, if we give it to them before the meeting, at least at the meeting, whomever is going to be at the meeting will be there as a unit and that will give them chance to review it. If we give it to them before the meeting who will answer the questions? Jack said the final report should be finished by August 9th, so we can give it to council for August 15th which will allow for the opportunity of Council to review it. Mike K. said, good as we are available at that time, and after we are done with our presentations, we don't not want to keep going back. All agreed this was a good point.

Robin asked Joe or Tom to answer a question as far as looking ahead to budget season. Do you think the Councils will be able to make a recommendation before budget season starts? Cathy said I doubt it. Jack said November 15th is the deadline for the Township to notify the BAPL. Tom said so probably not. Robin said so then we are safe to say that the township will continue to fund Bethlehem in the next year then. Tom said I don't want to speak for everybody, but time wise, I am thinking yes. Lynn asked do you think they will have an answer by the end of the year. Tom said yes, most definitely by the end of next year. Lynn said so it will be no for this year? Tom said he feels that it will be yes this year for the following year. Lynn said so the courtesy of the one year notice will be available them. Jack said, as Tom mentioned once before, once we give them this report, they are going to want more information. They are probably going to come back to the Township Library committee or some other group in the Township and ask them to come back to with some recommendations, because he doesn't think they are going to take the report and be prepared right away to take a vote.

Kim asked if anyone wants to speak or has any questions. Kim said the next meeting then is the 12th and she asked if we are meeting at six again. Jack said it's up to everyone. Kim said we moved it to six to see if we would get some audience members. Lynn said it wasn't noted or publicized so unless people look at the website they wouldn't know there is a meeting going on. Kim said it was in the Valley Voice and on the Patch. It was agreed to continue with six o'clock.

Lynn asked, are we voting on the 12th. Kim said what we are bringing to the 12th meeting is the final compiled lists of conclusions and recommendations to look over with the group. Jack said within a week he will send out a list of all the findings and conclusions presented here tonight. He said this way everyone will have one big list to look at and be ready for the next meeting to break down that list. He asked for Allison and Tom to send him their reports and Cathy and he will put them together as far as a mock-up report. Lynn asked, my question is, are we making the recommendations in July or August? Kim said July and then the August meeting is the final agreement and vote. Cathy said minor revisions and changes can be made for the final document in August. Lynn said my question is, is it July or August, which is the meeting the Task Force will make the recommendations? Kim said the final report must be done by August 9th. Lynn suggested the votes should be on the agenda. Kim said that is why we are saying final discussion is next meeting and final vote in August which is the final report.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Next Meeting Date – July 12, 2012 – 6:00PM