

WOLFEBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY LANDSCAPING

COMMITTEE MEETING

DESIGN CHARETTE I

BRADLEY ROOM

Wednesday, September 21, 2021

Linda Wilberton opened the first stakeholder meeting of the day at 9:10 a.m.

In attendance were Joyce Davis, Steve Farley, Deborah Long-Smith, Susan Poirier, John Sandeen (virtually), Cindy Scott, Doug Smith, Linda Wilberton, and Nancy Bell. Present from Horsley Witten Group was Brian Laverriere, Designer, Brian Kuchar, Lead Architect, and Kellie Knight, Associate Designer. Also present were several abutters and members of the public.

The minutes were tabled.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Powerpoint presentation by Horsley Witten Group

Brian Laverriere greeted everyone and gave an overview of the plans for the day. Following the arrival and set up, the initial stakeholder meeting will be followed by an open house to which the public is welcome from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., followed by production hours and a second stakeholder discussion from 2:30 to 3:00. After the 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. production hours, a final presentation of design materials to stakeholders (virtual and in person) will be held from 5:45 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. Framework diagrams (big picture diagrams) were placed around the room for perusal. Brian Kucher stated that the plan for today is to come up with a design draft.

Framework #1: The Loop

Brian Laverriere started at the front of the building showing an area of 80% perennials and 20% ornamental grasses. Also noted were the pedestrian walkways and circulation. Restoration of the historic cow path with educational signage was suggested. The use of native plants was emphasized. The importance of replacing the flagpole in the front of the building was brought up. In this plan the invasive plants would be cleaned up to allow the area to feel natural. It would require three years to remove invasive plants and take approximately 30% of the budget. Slides were presented showing various styles of perennial gardens, boardwalks, walking paths

and seating areas. It may be possible to use a fundraising plan that would allow donors to donate a board with their name on it for the boardwalk. This could be part of a phased approach. The possibility of a walkway in the wetlands that incorporated gravel or stone dust as well as a boardwalk was also mentioned, although stone dust requires more maintenance than gravel. A slide of a stone amphitheater was shown.

Framework #2: Meadowlands

This segment of the presentations emphasized the use of ornamental grasses and perennials to create spaces where the perimeter of the property would match the front and side of the building providing unification of the design. In this plan, there would be 80% grasses and 20% perennials. An additional tree island would be added in the parking lot. This plan would soften the entrance corridor and trees would be planted along the parking lot for additional softening. Ornamental grasses would be planted along the side of the building adjacent to the Public Safety Building. More slides were shown to illustrate the appeal of ornamental grasses and to demonstrate the block planting technique. A different version of the stone amphitheater was shown. Questions were raised about the comfort and safety of stone or granite used in an area for children to relax and listen to a story.

Framework #3: The Green Belt – A Pioneer Front

The direction of this plan utilized native shrubs and shade trees to show a historical use of the land. The front of the building would contain shrubs and trees. The wetlands extension was shown near the front of the property with plantings taken from the current wetlands in the back of the property. Canopy trees would be planted to provide shade. In this plan not all the invasive plants would be eliminated but used to create an educational opportunity with signage to describe the plants. A native buffer including ferns and birch trees was mentioned. A change to the handicap access of the main entrance was proposed.

DESIGN CHARETTE II

Meeting opened at 2:30 p.m.

In attendance were Kathy Barnard, Joyce Davis, Deborah Long-Smith, Susan Poirier, John Sandeen, Cindy Scott, Doug Smith, Jeanne Snowdon, Linda Wilberton, and Nancy Bell. Present from Horsley Witten Group was Brian Laverriere, Designer, Brian Kuchar, Lead Architect, and Kellie Knight, Associate Designer. Also present were several abutters and members of the public.

The designs were pared down to two options.

Option One focused on aspects from The Loop and The Meadowlands with mixed plantings. The perennial garden in the front would have a layered look, with 2-foot-tall plants in front increasing in height towards the building. Evergreens or lilacs could be placed at the edges of the building. Placement of the flagpole was discussed. The granite bench could be moved to the front of the building. The perennials would cover 75% of the plantings, and 25% would be ornamental grasses. Grasses would also be used along the border of the Public Safety Building. An informal walkway is being planned along the back of the parking lot. This plan would remove all invasives. Perennials could be planted along the border behind the parking lot mixed with grasses. Decorative ground covers could be placed along the front median. Three (3) parking spaces will be moved to create a tree island. The through islands would be covered with decorative grasses to discourage pedestrian traffic. An informal decorative curb could be used to create a soil amphitheater. Ornamental grasses could be placed behind the seating area. Native plants in the wetlands would be supplemented with these plants and grasses.

Option Two contained aspects of The Meadowlands and The Green Belt. Block settings for perennials was suggested for the front with ornamental grasses across the back. Block planting would continue along the front, around the front wetlands area with the possibility of a paved path or boardwalk over the existing feature. The plants in the entrance area would need to be moved to accommodate changes to the proposed ramp enhancement for handicap access at the main entrance of the building. One existing handicap parking space would also be moved closer to the building access at the end of the building. Ornamental grasses would be planted to match the front garden area of the library. The informal gathering spot would be more of a woodland area with seating on wooden benches or logs. The idea of an informal loop walkway around the wetlands area was presented.

For both options the cow path stone wall area was proposed to be extended into the plantings of ornamental grasses and shrubs so as not to come to an abrupt end and include signage explaining the history and usage of the path. The mixed shrubs would be planted along the property line behind trees and would aid in bringing green space back into the parking lot.

Discussion then was held on different aspects of the two plans and which combinations worked best. The loop walkway could include stone dust with a boardwalk crossing where appropriate. Maple trees currently planted on the islands will try to be maintained. A light for the top of the flagpole was discussed with the potential for placement on the island outside the front of the library.

Upcoming Meetings

The Public Charette on Thursday, September 30 will be virtual and probably in the evening.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Bell

Minutes are unapproved until voted on by the Landscaping Committee