

Fairport-East Rochester Post

Public offers feedback on Fairport library revote

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Fairport, N.Y. — There was only standing room as community members filled the meeting room of the Fairport Public Library tonight for an update on the library board of trustees' efforts to put its failed relocation project to a second public vote.

Town and village residents lined up to voice their opinions - some offering suggestions for moving the library to a different location while others claimed that moving it outside the village would hurt the village landing and surrounding businesses.

"As a taxpayer, I say it's worth my money to keep the library here (in the village)," said Rose Ericson. "But I feel like this building is a ghetto," she added, referring to the disheveled walkway leading from the parking garage to the ground floor of the Village Landing. "I think if we don't put money into this building we're going to end up with a heap of rubble in no time."

Others suggested building a new facility on town property in Perinton, near the recreation center on Turk Hill Road.

"There are so many people who use that facility right now, and it would be a wonderful way to pull people from the town and village too," said town resident Priscilla Ferrell.

The issue of technology such as e-books and their impact on the future of book collections was also addressed during the forum, as some said the need for space would be limited when taking this into consideration.

The board did not address the claims made by Affordable Fairport Library, an opposition group that released a statement last week that claimed its procedural methods violate legal regulations.

Some, like resident Robert Walker, said it doesn't make sense to try again with another proposal after the voters made themselves clear after the first one failed. Instead of listening to voters, he says valid concerns are labeled as "angry" or "negative" in library mailings.

"The deck is stacked against those with a different viewpoint," said Walker.

Other opponents agree.

"They have not exercised good fiscal judgement here," said opponent Al Gubiotti, adding that the amount of money spent on expenses such as a professional media consultant, Libby Post, could've been spent more wisely.

According to new estimates that include overall project reductions, what was once estimated at \$16.3 million in total cost is now approximately \$11.8 million.

The 8,000 square-foot mezzanine was eliminated from the preliminary drawings altogether, reducing the total square footage to 32,000 square feet, which would save \$1.5 million in construction cost, according to architect Dave Beinetti.

Additionally, by cutting any renovations to the outside of the building, including an outdoor book drop, pavement removal, and outdoor seating, there will be \$250,000 saved.

Electrical and mechanical costs were reduced by \$80,000, although Beinetti warned that long-term operational costs will likely outweigh any short term heating and cooling expenses saved by choosing less costly energy systems.

"There may be an up front investment for the long term," said Beinetti.

One of the board's key efforts in getting feedback from the community is posting a survey on its website, www.fairportlibrary.org, which went online at 6 p.m. Monday and will be open through Feb. 14. The questions focus on cost, and what factors influenced voters' decision making during the public vote in December.

Board president Bethanne White said the survey results will play an important role in the board's decision to proceed with a public vote before June or not.

"If the support is not there, we won't go forward," said White.