
Minutes

Covington Library Expansion

Community Meeting #1 (March 16, 2005 7-9pm)

AGENDA: An orientation to the work

1. We were welcomed by Mary Prichard, Covington Library Expansion's Community Steering Committee Chair and President of Friends of Covington Library.
2. Mary introduced Milenko Matanovic and Julianne Zimlich from the Pomegranate Center who will be facilitating the community advisory process. Milenko introduced several King County Library Services (KCLS) staff in attendance, including KCLS Director, Bill Ptacek
3. Bill expressed his excitement to be at the community planning meeting, and introduced the KCLS vision for the expansion project. The KCLS Vision includes four major themes:
 - An intellectual adventure for everyone
 - The heart of the community
 - We make it easy
 - One system

Bill then answered questions about the KCLS vision, and outlined a framework for the project for the community to work within. Bill offered that the Covington library will gain 10,000 square feet, much of which will be focused on serving the community in a less traditional library fashion. His hope is that the community will use these meetings to discover together how best this space could fill the needs of the community.

4. Milenko introduced a structure for community meetings, including the meeting's agenda and ground rules. He then introduced some possibilities for the work and examples of success stories through a Power Point presentation.
5. From here the group created an extensive list of key ideas and concerns for the library for the next 20 years. The group also compiled a list of design principals they wished to see expressed through the library expansion. These design principals will get improved and tightened as we go along. They serve an important function: they are like scaffolding that helps in the construction of a new building, but they disappear when the building is done. The following principles and values will provide us guidance along the way. When in doubt which way to go, they should be consulted to help make the decision:

In the end, the new library should be:

- Airy and open
 - Indoor-outdoor connections
- Comfortable, welcoming, warm
 - Colorful, bright, naturally lit, alive
 - Textured, curved and spiral furnishings, less boxy and linear
 - Stimulating, compelling
 - Aesthetically interesting
 - Filled with surprise, discovery and whimsy
 - "Cool" and hip
 - Multidimensional
- Accessible, convenient, user-friendly
 - Intuitive
 - Flexible and adaptable
 - Fluid, with a clear flow

6. From these lists, the large group split into small groups to create a map of an ideal future Covington library. After 20 minutes, each group presented their collective thoughts to the large group. From these presentations and from the initial list of key ideas and concerns, a handful of common themes stood out:

A Front Entryway / Café:

This space should include:

- A warm, attractive and inviting atmosphere—drawing people in from the outside
 - A colorful and interesting façade from the outside to attract people
 - One of multiple entrances to the library
 - Art, new books, and/or recommended reads on display to those entering.

This space may double as:

- A comfortable café (not a cafeteria) with optional outdoor seating and a garage door or retracting wall that opens up to an outdoor patio or deck.
- A performance space with a stage on one end.

Meeting Rooms:

A variety of meeting rooms should be present in the new library:

- One large room accommodating up to several hundred people featuring:
 - Soundproof dividers to separate it into two or three mid-range rooms.
 - An “I want to be in here” feeling.
 - Curved glass wall or lots of natural light & a fireplace for temperature adjustment.
 - The latest technology
 - Whiteboards
 - Off-hour access
 - Enough quantity that regular monthly meetings could be arranged far in advance.
- A group of small 4-6 person meeting spaces are needed. These spaces would be:
 - More informal, comfortable and cozy
 - Each one could have a different theme or feel inside
 - Each should be enclosed for privacy and noise
 - Reservations should not be required

A Child and Family-friendly Area:

Perhaps this is a space where everything is designed to fit from a young child’s perspective:

- Eye-level, age-appropriate artwork
- Fantastical-themed designs and colors

Family-friendly facilities should include:

- An opening to an outdoor space, perhaps into a storybook garden
- A family computer area, where it is expected that kids are playing around adults
- A family bathroom in this section.

A Space for Teens:

The new library should have a space that is specifically for teen activities and meetings:

- Interesting and fun
- Perhaps it is underground, in a dome, or separated from the main library by a hallway or courtyard. Perhaps you can see in from the main library but there is an enclosed green space between the two spaces
- Not necessarily a quiet space
- Possible features:
 - Big chessboard floor
 - Comfortable loungy furniture
 - Free-write/poetry/graffiti wall.

New and Improved Outdoor Areas:

In addition to 10,000 square feet of indoor space, the new design could invite more use of outdoor areas, including more indoor-outdoor connections. Perhaps there are:

- Water features like a coy pond or a waterfall or fountain which would soften highway noise
- Burns between the road and the library grounds
- Trails that connect the library to the schools up the street or invite users to walk through the existing trees
- A courtyard, sitting area, deck, or comfortable furniture throughout
- An amphitheater or an outdoor movie viewing area
- A poet's corner
- Interesting lighting for after hours use.

And Some Other Features:

Many other features could be incorporated into the overall the library expansion design.

- Outdoor features could include:
 - A drive-by book return
 - A scrolling reader board
 - An outdoor emergency phone station
 - Adequate parking
 - Other transportation improvements like an inviting bus stop and bicycle parking are necessary.
 - An atrium or decks over the water retention area
- Inside features should include:
 - Additional power outlets
 - Intuitive directional indicators and/or signage to different areas
 - Fun, non-fluorescent lighting
 - Recommended reads and new releases should greet patrons—perhaps on a reader board over the check out area like in a video store
 - Staff should have mobile workstations and be accessible throughout the library
- User amenities could include:
 - Access to pleasant, individual computer workstations
 - Music stations—these could include new soundproof headphones
 - A local music library
 - Inviting reading nooks throughout
 - Integrated hooks to hang coats and hats.
 - Art and gallery space should be integrated throughout.

7. Finally, Milenko led the room in a review of major themes, key proposals, and concerns discovered during the meeting. (Recap of above)

8. Next steps include reviewing these minutes, and coming prepared to participate in the next community meeting, to be held at the Covington library conference room, March 30, 2005 7-9pm. Bring your friends!

If you have additional comments or concerns, please contact:
Milenko Matanovic at milenko@pomegranate.org or
Julianne Zimlich at julianne@zimlich.org.