

Public Comments from the Site Selection Meeting for the Sammamish Library

Monday, March 20, 6:30-8pm

Before site options were presented, questions were raised about the fate of the current library building. Bill Ptacek explained that KCLS is required to obtain fair market value for the property. He said that the method for doing so will be determined after a site is selected and determined viable for the new/expanded library. Another attendee asked if there were only three sites being considered. Bill Ptacek affirmed, noting that much time and effort has gone into identifying viable options, in collaboration with City of Sammamish officials.

Following Kay Johnson's presentation of the three sites, the following public questions and/or comments were made:

- ◆ How much land is needed for the projected size of the new facility? *One acre is as small as KCLS could go for a 20,000-square-foot building with room for a 5,000-square-foot expansion. Underground/structured parking will be required.*
- ◆ If one acre is realistically the bare minimum, what would the ideal size be? *Approximately two to four acres, depending on site conditions.*
- ◆ How large is the lot the current library is on? *Slightly more than two acres.*
- ◆ Regarding parking, do you consider total parking or parking that's designated for KCLS-only use? *Shared parking is ideal to help mitigate costs.*
- ◆ Please explain why the Lake Washington School District is a possibility when they don't know if they plan to use the land themselves. *The School District agreed that KCLS could consider the site. The site they own is not large enough for a school. The School District is analyzing the future uses, but have no plans to sell the property, so it would be leased..*
- ◆ How many people is the new library supposed to serve? Will it serve patrons beyond the limits of Sammamish? *KCLS' approaches service regionally. Each community library serves a population in an area surrounding the library. Rather than focusing on the population of the jurisdiction, KCLS focuses on a proportionate level of service (i.e. square feet per capita, books per capita, etc.).*
- ◆ What is the standard ratio of square footage per resident? Shouldn't KCLS consider a library larger than 20,000-square-feet. Sammamish needs the right sized library now and for the future. Knowing the size of library appropriate for the community is necessary to select a site. *The City of Sammamish has indicated a desire for a larger library. KCLS will see what flexibility is available; however, KCLS will fulfill the promise of a 20,000-square foot library from the 2004 bond measure. KCLS must also be careful not to overbuild the library beyond KCLS' capacity to operate it.*
- ◆ If the size of libraries is not based on the population of the jurisdictions it must be about what can be afforded.

- ◆ I think the Pine Lake Plateau area deserves the biggest and best in libraries, but I understand that we will get what we get. The most important aspect of the new library is its accessibility. The current site is very dangerous in terms of accessibility. The size and design of the library is important, but we need to allow people to get there with no complications. Wherever you put it, it has to be accessible for all users.
- ◆ I would like to see a library with enough space for children to have their programs. Sammamish has a large population of children that needs to be accommodated. The Sammamish Commons site is too small. I prefer the site on Main Street and 228th Avenue. More acreage is appealing. Access is appealing. I like the idea of co-location with City Hall, but am concerned about the size of the site.
- ◆ I prefer the site at Main Street and 228th Avenue because of its size and availability of parking. The possibility of expansion at the Sammamish Commons site is limited.
- ◆ I am concerned about possible environmental limitations on the site at Main Street and 228th Avenue. I particularly like the Sammamish Commons site if KCLS can build upward with parking underneath. The site is obviously centrally located. KCLS may find out that space is actually limited on the site at Main Street and 228th Avenue.
- ◆ It is important for access to the library that it be located at a street-lighted intersection. The Sammamish Commons site is constrained in a corner of the property with decreased visibility, as it is located behind another facility. The environmental constraints of the site at Main Street and 228th Avenue have been studied (there are no protected species and the one drainage stream dissipates into the ground). The visibility of that site would be improved if the fence is taken down.
- ◆ It seems the size of the new library is capped. KCLS will spend as much money as is bonded. I would like to say that if KCLS goes with the Sammamish Commons site and the City provides parking, meeting rooms, electronic assistance, etc., then one acre is sufficient. Following such a capital exchange, perhaps the City could provide operating funds through an endowment or a grant to the Friends of the Library. I would like to see the building's square footage based on demand and not demographics or a historical formula.
- ◆ I have lived in Sammamish for 23 year and experienced anxiety during the wait for the previous building. Everyone was disappointed with the size of the current facility based on the size of population. My personal pick is the Sammamish Commons site, as it will create a central gathering area. Teaming up with the City on the project may save taxpayer dollars (i.e. shared parking facilities). The site also has the best access.
- ◆ Is it right turn only when leaving the Sammamish Commons site onto 228th Avenue, where you have to u-turn to head north. *A u-turn is not necessary to access the site from northbound 228th (a left hand turn is available), but it is right turn only when exiting the site at the second exit. The driveway to City Hall will allow using the signaled intersection to turn left.*
- ◆ I've only been in Sammamish for two months. I came from California and am concerned that the Sammamish Commons site combines so many activities that the benefit of shared parking will be diminished.
- ◆ Has KCLS taken future growth into account? Sammamish could possibly double in size. I am concerned about moving from one inadequate facility to another. I like having the

library serve as a central gathering area, but am not sure that the Sammamish Commons site is the best. I am not fond of any of these three sites. How about locating the library near the new transit center?

- ◆ If KCLS partners with the City and is able to share costs with parking, shared areas, etc. I would hope you put the extra money into the building, even if the extra 5,000-square-foot is just space that doesn't require added staff. It would be more economical to build 5,000 extra square feet now than later.
- ◆ To me, the library the hub of the community. It is important that's be part of the community center. Cross-fertilization of uses will occur at the Sammamish Commons site.
- ◆ All three sites have environmental challenges. I am disappointed that the caboose property at SE 4th is not an option. I rank the Sammamish Commons site as preferred, followed by the Lake Washington School District Site. I hope KCLS would negotiate with the City so they can use the current library as an interim community center.
- ◆ I am concerned that we're building something that's already going to be old before it's finished in terms of the size of the City. The current site is not close to where a lot of people live, so when the new library is built on a better site, I imagine the use will be multiplied by four or five times. We need central location that fits the City and the region. I don't know how you're going to get there. I hope that, when KCLS sells the current building, the profit can be applied to more square footage in the new building. Twenty years of frustration has built up in Sammamish, as we compare our library to those in Redmond and Issaquah.
- ◆ I just came to hear everyone's thoughts and to find out what would happen to the current facility. As someone with a child in high school, middle school and elementary school, I think the site at Main Street and 228th is convenient for students to walk from the high schools. I'm afraid too much else is happening at the Sammamish Commons, especially traffic. Each school will take advantage of the library regardless of where it is.
- ◆ I originally liked the Sammamish Commons site, but I am concerned is that when the new library is finished, it will already be too small. Does KCLS have the ability to expand the library to meet the needs of community?
- ◆ Will KCLS provide sketches for the March 28th Planning Commission meeting? Is KCLS considering any other sites? Based on the City's support of KCLS' site acquisition process, I suggest that KCLS get involved with the City's planning process.
- ◆ I do not have an opinion about the location of the library. I would like to have input as to how KCLS decides what happens to the current facility. As someone involved with the Boys and Girls Club, I think the community should get input as to the current building's fate. It would serve as an ideal teen center.
- ◆ I believe the Sammamish Commons site is the closest to meeting KCLS' criteria and allowing us to move forward. The organization I'm here on behalf of was interested in the property to west of the Sammamish Commons; however, the property was beyond our means to purchase. I recommended KCLS acquire that adjacent to provide capacity for some much needed anticipated growth.
- ◆ The purpose of library is to provide knowledge materials to the residents of Sammamish, so the biggest issue is size of the library for now and expandability for the future. The

Sammamish Commons site has restricted growth capacity. The capacity on the other sites seems uncertain. At some point, I hope KCLS recognizes that this area needs as much support as the rest of the County. The population in the City should have a much greater affect. The size of the library is the first priority, regardless of location.

- ◆ I've lived here for 25 years and feel we need to learn from our mistakes. KCLS needs to project the ideal size of the library right now regardless of cost. KCLS should ensure that the site acquired and plans for the library enable future expansion. We also need to learn from our mistakes and not build an ugly building; a visible library is great if the building is aesthetically pleasing. We contribute more than \$3 million in taxes and should be able to afford to maintain an equitable level of service with a larger Sammamish Library based on the City's population. Sammamish residents are currently spending tax dollars outside the community.
- ◆ All three of sites lie within the town center study area, which isn't defined at this point. There will be roads built in the future that can impact access to any of those sites. I agree we get a site big enough that we can grow. This is more important than access.
- ◆ I see an accident at SE 8th almost daily because of the traffic from the high school. I think the Sammamish Commons site is the best spot with a skateboard park, youth area and library together, but the site is bad environmentally. The Lake Washington School District site is bad because of ingress/egress and wetlands. The site at Main Street and 228th Avenue is interesting, but I don't think it'll work. All three sites are problematic. The Sammamish Commons site is best option if we work around everything else.
- ◆ Does the Sammamish Commons site slope downhill? If terrain is going downhill, could you build several levels of stacked parking? *Cost is prohibitive.*
- ◆ This is a very important project that should dovetail with the Town Center Committee's efforts to create interconnectivity and complimentary uses in the city center. I encourage KCLS to become involved with the consultants for this planning process. I agree with need for shared parking and access, which is the best use of land. It also makes sense to have the library by intersection with stop light. Why limit the library to a single story at the Sammamish Commons site? I can imagine library with two or more stories to provide space for all service needs. I suggest building up instead of out.
- ◆ Please build something for the future, not in terms of size, but in terms of technology. It's very important. Also, please look at service needs five to ten years down the road. Maybe KCLS should build a small branch in Klahanie since we can't build bigger on 228th.
- ◆ I like what I'm hearing about partnerships. I'm also hearing almost everyone talk about needing a larger facility that what's planned. I'm hearing that technology is a big factor, but Sammamish is also a community of readers with a large population of children. The children need room for books and lots of them. I want KCLS to think outside the box in regards to a lease versus purchase. You should consider the flexibility of leasing. If KCLS won't consider leasing, are there larger areas in the Sammamish Commons available for the library? I encourage a partnership with the YWCA and like the idea of sharing responsibility for space. Without sacrificing accessibility, can KCLS focus on availability even if it means leasing instead of purchasing? Building in the Sammamish Commons will allow sharing of resources and energy.
- ◆ All government agencies have to consider partnerships where space is a requirement. KCLS should think about partnering with agencies where space isn't used on a regular

basis (i.e. churches). Such locations could support programming. The Sammamish Commons site also has open outdoor space that could be used during the summer.

- ◆ The current Sammamish Library was sized based on budget. The new library will be too. Neither is large enough.
- ◆ I am an avid user of the library. Most of my books come from outside the library, which I order online. Usually, I wait one to two weeks or more for materials. Have you considered warehousing books so they're more readily available?
- ◆ Are there owners of sites on SE 4th that have not been approached? *Kay Johnson has attempted to or has contacted all owners of the sites in that vicinity.*
- ◆ I want to know how much of what we say tonight will matter? It sounds like you're going to build a one story library that's 20,000-square-feet at the most. *Bill Ptacek reiterated that KCLS will fulfill the voter-approved project in the bond issue. KCLS has discussed the flexibility of the plan to allow for a larger library, but KCLS must consider the cost of operating it (staff, materials, overhead, etc.).*
- ◆ How will the Board make an informed decision on March 28th about a site without knowledge of the environmental ramifications? *The Board is not being asked to decide which site to purchase. Rather they are indicating that staff should pursue a particular site and being due diligence processes on the preferred site.*
- ◆ Will the community be informed or asked to offer input again later? *Yes.*
- ◆ If co-location at the Sammamish Commons is an option, that should trump the other concerns. We all talk about wanting to get out of our cars and have a destination for multiple activities.
- ◆ I have concerns about the methodology used to make decisions. All the criteria seem to be weighted the same. *Bill Ptacek indicated that criteria in Phase I need to score past a certain threshold before criteria in Phase II are considered.*
- ◆ I fear the Board will pick a site, somewhere down the road discover it's not the ideal site, but be unable to go back. *Bill Ptacek said KCLS the ability to solicit public input is based on the fact that KCLS has three viable sites.*
- ◆ I live by Pine Lake and feel these sites will serve people on the north end. I don't think KCLS has looked in a broad enough area. I hope you would consider sites closer to Issaquah-Pine Lake Road.
- ◆ I disagree about having the library further north or south. I'd rather have two smaller libraries instead.
- ◆ A study committee has said that town center is supposed to be conducive to walking. I would hate to see the library in the Sammamish Commons area because it will concentrate more activities in one spot instead of diverting traffic flow. Also, buying property is a better than leasing, as it allows KCLS to control its destiny and take advantage of selling property in the future. Based on information available to the public (i.e. topography, environmental conditions, etc.), KCLS has done enough research to deem the sites viable. The new library should be in the middle or north of town center, not at the City Hall site which is too small and has more environmental constraints.

- ◆ Visibility is the number one KCLS priority, but the crowd doesn't seem to think it's a high priority. I'm curious if its rating changes based on community input. *Visibility is important criteria for the Library System.*
- ◆ You're at a preliminary conceptual point. I don't trust government, but it appears you've taken the right steps to get to this point. I'm not certain that KCLS will change course if site conditions don't meet our needs.
- ◆ I strongly recommend working with the Town Center Committee and to have a staff representative there at their March 28 meeting.
- ◆ I'm concerned about operating costs. I know KCLS has a regional approach to service, but as the City looks at its level of support to KCLS, we're subsidizing the rest of the County. If we're not getting the level of service we're paying for, we should de-annex.

The following comments were made via the Comment Card form following the meeting:

- ◆ The site at Main Street and 228th Avenue has the best access with a four-way controlled intersection and left turn lanes. There are too many uncertainties with the Lake Washington School District Site and access is from northbound only. The Sammamish Commons site is too small.
- ◆ The number one issue is offering room for future expansion, so determine which of the two sites besides the Sammamish Commons offer most potential. I don't like underground parking from a safety aspect. The Lake Washington School District Site would be good if it has enough usable land for expansion. The Sammamish Commons site seems too busy and doesn't offer enough room for expansion. Have you looked at buying the land adjacent to the site, as mentioned in the meeting?
- ◆ The site at Main Street and 228th Avenue is too long and narrow, and environmentally sensitive. Can you make wooded area an attractive trail/park for dual use and keep construction to only the open section on the Lake Washington School District site? The Sammamish Commons site is good, but with environmental challenges, particularly as headwaters to salmon-bearing creek. How about northwest corner of 228th Avenue and SE 4th (where caboose is)? This is dry, high ground. If you go with Sammamish Commons, strike a deal with the City for a swap or lease of current library for use as interim community center. Very important: pledge to do low impact development.

E-mail Comments

regarding site selection for the Sammamish Library

March 14, 2006

- ◆ We are unable to attend the Public Meeting regarding site selection for the new/expanded Sammamish Library but we want to give you some input on this topic. We are very disappointed that our current library already needs to be replaced. It is not that old! Why wasn't there better planning for the existing library to pick a site that would allow for future growth and have better access? The library system has an obligation to use taxpayer funds wisely and this seems to be a very expensive project that could have been avoided if there was better planning initially.
- ◆ I pay taxes, lots of taxes. Some of those taxes went to build the current young library facility. I am quite upset that you are now even considering taxing me again for a new facility because you and those who work with you did not do a good job the first time around. Your short sightedness should not be grounds to charge me again for a new facility. Your architect did a horrible job designing the present facility and you did not even think through the access problem. Why oh why would I support you spending more of my money, throwing good money after bad? You don't have my confidence. It is time that you figure out how to live with what you made. We have a saying that says, "You made your bed, now sleep on it." I think you need to stay right where you are and get creative on how to put that space to maximum use.

March 21, 2006

- ◆ As a Sammamish resident and library patron, I would like to weigh in on the current debate about the location and size of the proposed new facility. I'm strongly in favor of selecting the largest site available and of reconsidering the proposed size of the library. It's no secret that the current Sammamish branch is heavily used and was inadequate for our community when it was built. It would be a travesty to perpetuate the situation and under build again. Please, please take your time, wait for more funds if necessary, and do it right this time. We all owe it to future generations to create a comprehensive vision of Sammamish that holds adequate resources for the current population as well as for many years to come.

March 26, 2006

- ◆ My hope had been that the new library would be at the Sammamish Commons site as it would be a natural gathering place. But I was surprised to hear how small the lot is. And I am also concerned that the new library will only be twice the size of the current one. Since the current site was obsolete before the doors even opened, I question that you have the right size this time. It is important to get the largest building you can this time around and on a site that can be expanded in the future. A gentleman at the meeting last week mentioned their church was aware of land adjacent to Sammamish Commons that was for sale...they just couldn't afford it. That would be worth looking into. Otherwise, seems like you need to choose a location with more room. (I feel for you trying to find land)! And once that is done, I would like to see community input in the

design of the new one. I think the current library probably would get the prize for the ugliest building in Sammamish - it looks like a field house for playing basketball. The county must have really hated the folks on the plateau to give us something that looks that bad. Sorry to sound so negative but that is my gut feeling to our current library - we never use it. We are looking forward to a new library. Please keep me posted.