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BELMONT MEMORIAL LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
September 23, 2013

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Matt Lowrie at 6:04 p.m. in the Flett Room of the Library. Present were Trustees Elaine Alligood, Mary Keenan, Sarah Phillips, and Matt Sullivan and Director Maureen Connors. Trustee Mark Carthy was absent. Also in attendance were Melissa Lynch and Elaine Murphy of the Belmont Library Foundation (BLF); Michael Smith of the Historic District Commission; Sue Bass and Kit Dreier, Town Meeting members; William Dunham.

Clark House

Mr. Smith presented the case for preserving the Clark House and moving it to the site of the Woodland Garden at the Library. He reviewed the history of the house, the prior attempt to site it on the woodlot of the Armenian Church, the increased space need of the Historical Society and the Library. Moving the Claflin Room to the re-sited Clark House would give that space to the Library. Only a few trees, not the Golden Rain tree, would be removed.

Chair Lowrie opened the meeting to questions from the trustees. These included:

- who would pay for on-going costs – heat, electricity, etc? Not determined.
- has there ever been a preservation restriction or historic designation for the Clark house? No.
- would the house be on a foundation? Yes – the house would be raised to the level of Concord Avenue.

- the CPC grant refers to the Clark house as a “library annex” – what would be asked of the library for staffing? The Clark house would be seen as part of the library.

Ms. Bass stated that the Historical Society would have no problem in raising money for insurance and maintenance.

Chair Lowrie then asked the trustees to comment on the proposal.

Trustee Keenan spoke of how stunned and appalled she was at the way the Library found out about this plan, that the Library was never contacted directly about moving the house to Library grounds, that the Library needs every inch of ground for needed future expansion in light of recent events and returning the \$7.5M state grant, that the Woodland Garden is a rare and popular oasis for patrons.

Trustee Sullivan referenced the pledge at Town Meeting that no public funds would be sought for this project. This is not the case at present with a CPC application for Town funds.

Trustee Alligood reiterated concern for space for library expansion to meet its pressing needs. This house site problem is not the Library’s problem.

Trustee Phillips asked if other sites had been considered – the Golden Bowl, etc. Mr. Smith said that the Golden Bowl/skating area and the sledding area on School Street were precious resources for those who use them.

Chair Lowrie noted that the Garden Club, which voted not to give a large part of the Woodland Garden for the house, does a great deal for the Library. He also

asked if this was the proper use of CPC funds, if the site at the corner of Concord and Underwood had been explored, and concluded that placement of the house on Library grounds would interfere with Library expansion and negatively impact the Library.

Chair Lowrie made the motion *The trustees respectfully decline the request to make land available for the Clark House.* Seconded by Trustee Sullivan, the motion passed unanimously.

No action was taken on a request from Ms. Bass and Mr. Smith for a second motion to express support for the preservation of the Clark house.

Plans for moving forward

Director Connors reminded the trustees of the decision by the Board of the Friends of the Belmont Library to expend funds for public relations for the many services that the Library currently provides. She also presented a plan that a patron presented to her this week for future expansion.

Ms. Lynch and Ms. Murphy presented ideas for going forward with plans to keep the Library and its needs in the sight of its supporters.

Chair Lowrie emphasized that support of Town Meeting is vital to any action.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. on a motion made by Trustee Allgood, seconded by Chair Lowrie, and voted unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday October 16th at 7p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary E. Keenan, secretary

List of exhibits:

From Michael Smith:

"Using the Past to Move into the Future" A Plan to Restore the Thomas Clark House c. 1760 part of application for CPC funds

"Can the Historic Clark House Be Preserved?" article from Belmont Citizens Forum by Joseph Cornish

From Library Director Connors:

2001 Library options chart

2001 Summary of Tappe report

2005 J. Stewart Roberts report summary

2013 Summary of Activities prior to State Grant 2013