

WELLESLEY FREE LIBRARY  
FELLS BRANCH LIBRARY MEETING MINUTES  
September 20, 2016

Present: Ann-Mara Lanza, Maura Murphy, Beth Sullivan Woods, Library Trustees; Andy Wrobel, Recreation Commission; Mary Kloppenberg, WFL Foundation; Susan Calcio, Friends of the WFL; Connie Su, Kathy Kelley, residents; Jamie Jurgensen, Library Director; Elise MacLennan, Assistant Director.

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM.

After introductions, Beth described the goal as “how to make the Branches add as much value as we can.”

Beth gave a brief history of the Branch libraries since the “basket of services” override failure in 2005. Since reopening, Hills has found a solid identity as a neighborhood reading room. Fells’ identity has felt undefined since the WCCC vacated.

Jamie presented an overview of recent committee work, and of a proposal to create an interactive learning library geared for children ages 0-6 at Fells Branch. Based on the concept of free play as essential to learning and literacy, there are nationwide examples of “discovery zone” installations in libraries. Slides of various installations, floor plans and furnishings were displayed.

Comments, observations and questions followed, including:

- Brilliant idea- the Town needs this.
- Could have a Book Babies program every day.
- 900 Worcester St. recreation space will be nearby.
- Will there only be early morning hours?
- Interesting concept to try to transform the building.
- Fells neighborhood is full of young families.
- The density of the area makes this a wonderful initiative.
- Good to have a destination within walking distance for the neighborhood.
- Physical plant vs. programming.
- Risks and benefits of a single purpose, “super-service” site.
- Consider opportunity/impact of broadening target age over time or by time of day
- Incorporate grandparents (intergenerational).
- “Interactive,” “independent,” “imaginative,” not “unstructured.”

Open Questions:

- Will people “drop-in?”
- What is the data on need?
- How often will the installations change?
- What will the space be called?
- Data on usage of equipment – How much is a piece used? How long does it last?
- What is the impact of electronics on children’s needs for space?
- What can be done with the outside space?
- Is there revenue opportunity? What income could be created?
- What is the cost of initial set-up?

Next steps:

- Talk to people you know/people with young children/ recruit focus group.
- Schedule another meeting.
- Send notes.

Other Action Items:

- Discuss funding.
- Brainstorm name.
- Focus group with Mother’s Forum.
- Answer open questions
- Make recommendations.
- Finish by early winter.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM