This is to report on the status of the public library planning and design project which is partially funded with Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program funds through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and governed by the Regulations and Assurances in the application and the grant Agreement.

NARRATIVE: (Describe briefly what happened on your project during this report month. If necessary, use an additional sheet.)

Please see attached.

Dated at The Jones Library this 30 day of June 2016

Name of Person Submitting Report: Sharon Sharry

Signature of Person Submitting Report: [Signature]

Complete reverse only if you have entered into a contract with an architect
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Project Funding</th>
<th></th>
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<td>2. Local/Other Funds Budgeted</td>
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<td>2. Local/Other Funds Expended to date</td>
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<td>3. Total Funds Expended (d+e)</td>
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<th>III. MPLCP Funds Summary</th>
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We certify that all unexpended MPLCP funds are earning interest in a separate account.

Attachments:

[Other Project Information/Documentation]
1. The Amherst Historical Society (AHS) continued to research whether or not they can legally sell a portion of their property to The Jones Library, Inc.

2. Scattered throughout the Library building are places for Library patrons to post comments about the building. We call it the “What do you like about this space” project. The comments were transcribed and posted to the Library's website.

3. Kept the Interim Town Manager, Peter Hechenbleikner, and the Town’s Assistant Town Manager, Dave Ziomek, apprised of our project’s progress, including discussions about abutting properties.

4. Worked with the architects on our Building Program, and worked with our Owner’s Project Manager on the budget. Discussions were held to continue to align the budget with the Program. Met weekly with key Library staff in developing the Program and aligning it with the budget.

5. Patron comments/questions/concerns were responded to via email and during meetings.

6. Staff researched conflict-free RFID systems.

7. A spreadsheet was created listing the Jones Library’s annual circulation statistics beginning in 1967. We wanted to see what kind of difference a building project can make in circulation figures. The Jones saw a 35% increase in circulation over the first five years after the Library’s 1990’s addition.

8. The Library made presentations for three different articles during this year’s Town Meeting (two of which were directly related to the building project):
   a. FY17 Budget Request – unanimous approval.
   b. Re-Zoning of the Historical Society’s Property – failed; did not make 2/3 approval.
   c. Kinsey Memorial Garden – amendment passed, recommending the Library preserve as much of the Kinsey as will be possible.

9. After the re-zoning article failed, and we thought we wouldn’t be able to use any of the Historical Society’s property, the Town’s Planning Department discovered a discrepancy in Historical Society property surveys. Based on a review of a 1990’s survey of the Library lot, which includes a partial survey of the Historical Society’s lot, it appears that the Historical Society’s lot may contain the required 100’ building circle as it exists. Thus, the concept of purchasing a piece of the Historical Society’s property is still in play, depending on the results of the Historical Society’s legal request to deviate from their Deed. The Town’s Planning Department will continue to help us by seeking quotes for an updated survey and an appraisal of the Historical Society property (i.e., for the piece of the property the Library is interested in purchasing).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
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<th>Jones and Branches</th>
<th>% Increase from 1991</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>420,837</td>
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Molly Turner: Library remodel must consider greenway and historic preservation

Monday, May 02, 2016

I don’t believe the elected guardians of our town’s well-being have done their due diligence to protect our public assets. In particular I am writing about the project to enlarge and remodel our Jones Library, a landmark in the center of town.

The development that’s happening all over town, the continual push for ever more permissive zoning changes, the flurry of construction activity is encouraged by our planning department as part of our “Master Plan,” a blueprint for development that began as a participatory community activity but was greatly modified before it was written into our Zoning Bylaw.

It was never brought to Town Meeting but ratified by the Planning Board. The key word is “infill” – the imperative to use every shred and shard of valuable real estate in the town center for building.

But there are other principles written into that plan for historic preservation and preservation of greenways. From the plan’s Land Use chapter: “Amherst should preserve the historic character of its neighborhoods; ensure that new development complements historic buildings, and create an accessible, pedestrian-friendly environment. Emphasize preservation (historic areas of the downtown.”)

It also calls to emphasize “adaptive reuse,” particularly historic areas downtown. Public green spaces are significant assets to urban areas, particularly when they are well-loved and
frequently used by community members.

Trustees and Select Board members have failed to protect one of our finest public assets. They have not considered any plans for “adaptive reuse” of the historic existing building.

There is a petition article coming before Town Meeting to preserve the gardens. The Select Board will ask Town Meeting to dismiss it. Select Board member Connie Kruger said she did not want to “constrain the design process at this stage.”

Select Board member Andrew Steinberg said, "the health and vitality of Amherst Center might be lost if the building project does not move forward.”

Austin Sarat, in a statement from Jones Library trustees on March 28, said to preserve the entirety of the garden “would unduly constrain the effort to provide the best possible library to the people of Amherst.”

The Trustees and the Select Board have not studied alternate plans nor, it seems, have they read the historic and greenway preservation imperatives of the Land Use section of the Master Plan while they extol infill.

And how do Select Board members Kruger and Steinberg and Jones trustee president Sarat know what will provide the "best possible library" or how the building project might affect the "health and vitality of Amherst Center?"

Let's ask the leaders of our community to take a more balanced view of the facts that make up their decisions to destroy an irreplaceable asset in order to save it.

Molly Turner
Amherst
nherst — why not the alley cat art?

Bob Rivard
Belchertown

pointed that NHS art campaign failed

family heads into our final h at the often lovely ampton High School, I can’t truly sad at the many missed is we’ve had to push school next year for our stu-
successfully fighting for one change for the past 10 years, ed by the families who fought ainst it, particularly the very er of Smith professors and so oposed to it. lent article on this topic can be e.com by searching for “late...

Cath Hanauer
Northampton

Sanders camp oIsolationism

understand why the Gazette publish Howard Friel’s rant e current political fiasco in its ed. y did he write it? If Friel’s tirade would gain support for r, it had the opposite effect, at
ngthened my sense that the impation is not innovative but, conceived while evoking ugly

LETTERS & GUEST COLUMNS: The Gazette encourages letters and guest columns from readers. Please send letters of up to 350 words or guest columns of up to 750 words by email to opinion@ gazettenet.com or by U.S. mail to Gazette, P.O. Box 299, Northampton, 01061.

Letters should be of general interest and in good taste. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject submissions. Writers are limited to one letter every 30 days.

Redesign existing Jones Library space

We have recently about plans of the Jones Library in Amherst to expand the 48,000-square-foot library to some 65,000 square feet, or even to 110,000 square feet.

Why is the Jones Library acquiring this much additional space and spending millions of town money? Is somebody trying to compete with the Forbes?

If the Jones needs this much additional square footage, let’s start in the existing building and its poorly used or publicly inaccessible square feet. A creative architect can find or create a lot of square footage within the current footprint of the library. Remodel the third floor space and improve the flow in the upper floors. Rebuild the former second floor in what is now the adult fiction room. Install an elevator in the lobby that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and opens upper floors for public use.

Before we talk expansion, let’s get “in- pansion” ideas on the table. Possible li-
News > Local (/News/Local/)

Jones Library director responds to concerns about expansion

The Ellen and George Goodwin Room on the third floor of Jones Library. JERREY ROBERTS—
By SCOTT MERZBACH
Staff Writer
Tuesday, May 03, 2016

AMHERST — With its place in the heart of downtown and its use by thousands of patrons each year, including many who come from outside Amherst, the Jones Library has been a much-loved institution in the community for nearly 90 years.

But as library officials continue moving forward with planning an expansion and renovation project, concerns about its size and scope are being expressed by residents, including those in a new group called Save Our Library, which includes three former presidents of the library's trustees board.

And a Town Meeting petition article seeks to preserve the entirety of the Kinsey Memorial Garden, which could be altered by an expanded building.

Library Director Sharon Sharry said in an interview that many in the public may not yet understand the library's need for more space and the reasons a larger building is being pursued after Amherst received a planning and design grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in June 2014.

Sharry said in a perfect world consideration would be given to staying within the existing 50,000-square-foot building, including the original 1928 structure and the expansion that enlarged the Jones in the early 1990s and upgraded the heating, air conditioning, plumbing and wiring.

"But it looks like there's not enough space," Sharry said.

The problem, as library trustee Tamson Ely explains, is that the state library board will not finance a project it determines is insufficient for the use Amherst's library gets.

"We have to demonstrate that what we've designed will meet the needs of the community for 20 years plus," Ely said.

'Service population'

According to guidelines in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations for public library construction, Jones officials, like those at other
libraries, are mandated to follow what are known as the Wisconsin Public Library Standards to calculate the so-called “service population” for the library. This is then used to determine the space needs for the next 20 to 25 years.

“The MBLC needs to make sure what we are designing it as flexible as possible,” Sharry said, observing that the library is about more than just the materials it circulates. “It’s all about programming.”

Under these standards, the Jones is considered to have a 50,000-person service population — even though Amherst has only 37,819 residents.

This service population includes people from surrounding communities and students at the University of Massachusetts and other colleges. In fact, of the 26,000 cardholders, more than 8,000 live outside Amherst.

“The number of people we serve doesn't correlate to the number of people in town,” Ely said.

Based on space needs, the total recommended gross square footage of an expanded and renovated library should be 73,416 square feet.

A 200-page building program, adopted by trustees last July, takes into account the need for enough seats, tables, chairs and meeting rooms for the number of people who physically visit the Jones, not just those who check out materials, Sharry said.

“If our design doesn't meet their expectations for a community the size of the Jones Library's service population, fitting the building program into an overall structure that works for patrons, flows well and allows us to operate with great efficiency and effectiveness, then they will simply reject the application,” Sharry said.

While Finegold Alexander Architects Inc. of Boston is just beginning the work of developing a plan, the current assumption is that when a building project proposal is submitted to the state next January, the library will seek to add between 15,000 and 17,000 square feet.

This proposal would be smaller than what the library requires based on the state code, but the “deviations explained and justified in the application” are permissible.

Along with trustees and the owner's project manager, Colliers International, a thorough analysis of the space needs for 12 areas of the library is being undertaken, from the entrance, adult circulation and youth and young adult sections to the special collections department, meeting rooms and staff and administration offices.

Sharry said, in all cases, what is currently planned, as of April 11, is smaller than the ideal size of each area in the building program submitted to the MBLC.

Ely said the building program is an idealistic vision, with the state board asking communities that have received planning and design grants to imagine the best library possible, assuming money is not a concern.

Some of the spaces are even smaller than what exists in the current building, with the entrance area and the administration office both planned to be reduced in size.
The spaces that will be enlarged the most are for youth, which will nearly double in size from 3,817 square feet to 7,453 square feet, and young adult, which will more than triple in size from 636 square feet to 1,915 square feet.

Ely said there are 150 teens who come to the library on Friday afternoons but have no area to call their own.

**Off-site additions**

Two other considerations in the space-needs plan relate to programs and materials that are currently off site. First, the Jones Library anticipates bringing in the Literacy Project, which has an Amherst program based at the Jewish Community of Amherst on Main Street. This would be an appropriate addition due to the longtime presence of the English as a Second Language Center at the Jones, Sharry said.

Second, the plan calls for 1,000 square feet for items held by the Amherst History Society at the Strong House Museum. This would ensure that the museum has a climate-controlled space near the library's special collections department.

Both of these mean adding more room to the building. "We need more space than a library this size might require," Ely said.

Though there are no plans to cut the collection size, there is need to have an automated materials handling system and room for more technology, Sharry said.

Ely said the building will have an efficient floor plan. "This is not profligate and wasteful," Ely said.

The new Save Our Library group has argued that there may be unused space that could be tapped without needing to expand, but Sharry said while there are areas that the public cannot access regularly, these are not wasted. This includes the Goodwin Room, where trustees meetings are held and which may be too large for just this function.

But George Hicks, the facilities director for the Jones, said the room is also a place where valuables are stored, including paintings, books and other items.

The public will have opportunity to respond to the building plan, including open forums with architects, possibly beginning in the summer, and then a spending vote at the annual Town Meeting in May 2017.

George Barnes, project manager for Colliers International, said the architects will be responsible for identifying the space the library should have and which Amherst can afford.

"It's a delicate balance of funding versus square footage," Barnes said.

Town Meeting is being asked this spring by the Amherst Historical Society, to rezone the 67 Amity St. property from general residence to general business, which would allow it to sell a portion of its land to the library that could be used in the expansion. Acquiring this land will give the architects more options, Barnes said.

Without the rezoning, Barnes said Finegold Alexander will have to design an expansion that does not use this land to the west.
The building project is already complicated by the nearly nine-decade old original L building. Barnes said this part of the Jones may need to be brought up to compliance with current energy and seismic codes if more than 50 percent of the project involves its renovation.

**Three draft plans**

Finegold Alexander currently has three draft plans. In the first two, the original building is maintained, but demolition of the 1990s addition occurs.

The third plan keeps everything intact, but puts an addition onto the building that might require going to five stories in height.

Hicks said this is unlikely to be pursued because the addition would dwarf the historic building.

Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com.
Jones Library project update Tuesday

By SCOTT MERZBACH
Staff Writer
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2016

AMHERST MA / KEYWORD? KEYWORD=AMHERST MA

AMHERST – Architects hired to design an expanded and renovated Jones Library will provide an update on the project to residents for the first time next week.

Representatives from Finegold Alexander Architects of Boston and project manager Colliers International of Hartford will make a presentation to the Jones Library Design Subcommittee at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Woodbury Room on the lower level of the library.

Library Director Sharon Sharry said this will be the first opportunity for residents to learn more about how the project got to this point and what will happen in the future.

People who attend will have an opportunity to ask questions.

The subcommittee will continue meeting every other week throughout the spring and summer to get regular updates.

The first meeting will be taped by Amherst Media and broadcast both on community access and on its website.

Meanwhile, Town Meeting this month will take up issues related to the library project, including a proposed rezoning of a portion of the adjacent Amherst History Museum property to general business. That would allow the historical society to sell a
portion of its property to the library.
Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com.
Questions voiced about Jones Library project
By SCOTT MERZBACH
Staff Writer
Tuesday, May 10, 2016

AMHERST MA (/KEYWORD/?KEYWORD=AMHERST MA)

AMHERST — There were many questions asked but few answers available Tuesday afternoon as representatives of the architects designing an expansion of the Jones Library met with the public for the first time.

More than 50 residents, including many Town Meeting members, packed the Woodbury Room at the Jones Library for the 90-minute session.

Many said they continue to be concerned about the scope and cost of the project.

"I very much want to be persuaded, but I'm not yet persuaded," said Michael Greenebaum, a Town meeting member from Precinct 6.

Janet McGowan, of Precinct 8, said Town Meeting members need to know the smallest-size library the state would approve, but Lauren Stara, a library building specialist for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, said that number would be impossible to provide.

She explained that the state board will examine the proposed layout and how space is divided within the building to decide if the planned expansion covers enough square feet.

"There's no magic number," Stara said.

She said the board asks architects to take the collection size and number of seats needed to come up with the square footage total, and then see how a building program works within those parameters. The population of the town is also factored into this assessment.

Sarah McKee, former president of the library trustees and a member of a community group called Save Our Library, praised the current trustees for pursuing a renovation and expansion project.

But McKee said many questions remain, including whether more staff would be needed in an enlarged library.

Barbara Puffer of Montague Road, who said she spends half the year in Geneva, Switzerland, argued that Amherst is not flush with money and the architects need to develop a project the town can afford.

Robert Pam, a member of the Jones trustees, said he wants to keep the library available for future generations.
“The question you have to ask yourself, is this the best we can do at this time,” Pam said.

**Project’s size reduced**

When library officials submitted a proposal for funding to the Board of Library Commissioners, a 110,000-square-foot building was envisioned to meet the projected service needs of the community.

Since being selected by the state for a planning and design grant in 2014, and hiring both architects and an owner’s project manager, the size of the potential project has been reduced to 68,000 square feet — a 21,000-square-foot expansion of the current 47,000-square-foot building.

But even though Finegold Alexander Architects of Boston is focused on this smaller expansion and renovation project, the first to be undertaken at the Jones since the early 1990s, state library officials say they won’t know whether such a project will be funded until the formal proposal is received this fall.

Library Director Sharon Sharry said cutting 42,000 square feet from the size of a library for the ideal building program means architects will be designing an expansion in which rooms must be used for multiple functions.

“Flexibility is key,” Sharry said. “It’s one of the things we don’t have now, and it’s one of the things we want in the renovated building.”

Stara said 21st-century functions of the library will need to fit into whatever size project is approved by the state. If the building is designed to be smaller than the community’s needs, the collection might have to be reduced.

“You will have to make compromises,” Stara said.

James Alexander, principal at Finegold Alexander, said the architects are planning a refurbished library that is respectful of its history. The Jones opened in 1928 and underwent an expansion 25 years ago.

“We see a fine building that has a fine presence on the streets, something we’d hate to lose, and not overwhelm,” Alexander said. “I want to make it clear we’re not tearing down the original library.”

**Town Meeting action**

The only action Town Meeting will take this spring related to the library is a zoning request from the neighboring Amherst History Museum, which is seeking to rezone its site from general residence to general business.

If this is successful, the museum’s board of directors could then sell a portion of the property to the library and give the architects more flexibility in designing the expansion.

The architects also are aware that Town Meeting will be taking up a citizen petition to preserve in its entirety the Kinsey Memorial Garden, which makes up the landscape of the back of the library.
"We feel it's an obligation that we consider that as any part of change," Alexander said.

Alexander explained that three preliminary plans show additions of 21,000 square feet, with each option estimated to cost around $33.5 million. The town would cover $20.8 million of this cost, with the state funding the remainder, if it approves the project.

A renovation of the current building would not be eligible for state funding, Stara said.

With successful rezoning, and the land sale, a three-story addition could be put at the rear of the library and cause the least disturbance to the Kinsey Memorial Garden.

A second option would also see a three-story addition built at the rear, but without rezoning this would cut the size of the garden nearly in half, to about 8,000 square feet.

The third plan would demolish the 1990s addition, replacing it with a five-story addition, though Alexander said this might not be funded because state officials prefer libraries with fewer stories.

Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com.
Amherst TM nixes rezoning for Jones Library project
AMHERST — A deeply divided and often contentious Town Meeting on Monday rejected rezoning the Amherst Historical Society’s property so a portion of the land could be used for an expanded and renovated Jones Library.

The 93-91 tally fell 30 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to alter the zoning at the 67 Amity St. site from general residence to general business. The change is needed if the Jones is to acquire a portion of its neighbor’s property. Otherwise, any land acquisition would put the Strong House Museum site out of compliance with town zoning.

The decision, which came after more than an hour of debate, hampers the $50,000 planning and design process, library trustees president Austin Sarat said following the vote.

“Town Meeting authorized trustees to engage in planning and design,” Sarat said, referring to an April 2014 vote in which Town Meeting approved spending $25,000 for this work.

“What Town Meeting did tonight was to, in essence, rescind its own vote.”

While Town Meeting turned down the rezoning, members afterward agreed to change the zoning on a nearly 6-acre parcel on University Drive from office park to limited business. That measure passed 117 to 57, meaning a potential development of townhouses geared for college students might proceed.

The defeat of the Amherst History Museum rezoning narrows what can be done with the Jones Library as Finegold Alexander Architects of Boston examine how to expand the building from 47,000 square feet to 68,000 square feet.

Library Director Sharon Sharry said Finegold Alexander have until October to come up with cost estimates and designs for a project, submitting a proposal to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in January.

John Kuhn, principal with Kuhn Riddle Architects, said the rezoning made sense for the library project. “It’s more compact, more efficient, and probably more economical, as well,” Kuhn said.

Instead, the building program and preliminary design will likely now have to obliterate the Kinsey Memorial Garden, which forms the rear of the library.

Sarah McKee, a former president of the library trustees, urged members to vote against the rezoning.
"This would involve demolishing more than half of the Jones Library building, built just over 20 years ago," McKee said.

But more importantly, McKee said she was concerned with breaking the will of Laura E. Emerson, who left the Strong House in 1904. Emerson's will states that no additional buildings be erected on any part of the property.

Select Board member James Wald, who serves on the historical society board, said a "reasonable deviation" in the terms of the will would benefit the museum.

Bonnie MacCracken of Precinct 6, a member of the history board, explained the need to partner with the library. "Our collection has grown and grown and we need to look toward the future," MacCracken said.

Mandi Jo Hanneke of Precinct 5 said she supported the rezoning to bring consistency between the Jones and Strong House properties. "To me it makes sense to have them both zoned the same," Hanneke said.

Another former president, Merrylee "Molly" Turner, said downtown would be losing green space with the rezoning, as well as a buffer for homes in neighborhoods. "I think this residential area needs protection," said Turner, of Precinct 1.

Carol Gray of Precinct 7, another former trustee, also argued that rezoning would destroy the landscape. "It's like a public park surrounding our library," Gray said.

Sarat disagreed. "One of the options would impinge on the garden space, so the irony is that the vote encourages a plan that would limit green space," Sarat said.

**Matter of fairness**

Much of the contentiousness centered around a decision by Moderator James Pistrang to limit the scope of those speaking about the article to the advantages and disadvantages of rezoning or, as he described it, "not on the pros and cons of the entire library project."

Pistrang's reasoning was that the library project is a debate for the future, and that there are other opportunities to debate the merits.

But the debate quickly seemed to stray into territory Pistrang had declared off-limits when Kuhn said it would be impossible to rearrange the existing space to meet Amherst's needs.

"This has been a very carefully programmed process and 68,000 (square feet) is about as tight as you can get to give Amherst a library that will serve it into the future," Kuhn said.

During Gray's response, Pistrang used his gavel to repeatedly halt her when she ventured into speaking about the project, attempting to show the vacant spaces in the building through photographs displayed on an overhead projector.

"It's only a matter of fairness to allow a counterpoint," Gray said.

"It may seem like fair play, but it's not my ruling in this case," Pistrang said.

This caused members to continually call for points of order when others strayed into speaking about the library project, with periodic booing.
James Oldham of Precinct 5 said Pistrang's mandate hurt the debate. "You are neither saving time, nor facilitating discussion," Oldham said.

Alan Root of Precinct 5 was even more critical. "I think you can do better," Root said.

"I promise I will always try to do better every day of my life," Pistrang said.

Unlike the history museum rezoning, Town Meeting successfully rezoned a parcel on University Drive, situated between Newmarket Center and 100 University Drive, that has been used for farming.

The rezoning would allow a company known as UMass New Build LLC, whose principal is Trey Wills of Virginia's Wills Companies, to construct townhouses on the site.

Sarah la Cour of Precinct 9, executive director of the Amherst Business Improvement District, said this will broaden options for the site, possibly for housing. La Cour observed that the office park zoning has been on the site since 1978 and yielded no projects.

Abigail Jensen of Precinct 4 said the site is close to town center, the University of Massachusetts campus and shopping, and is ideal for homes. "We do need more housing, there's no doubt about that," Jensen said.

The vote came over objections of abutters, including none Marley, who owns the office building at 100 University Drive. Marley said student housing built next door would harm the commercial office tenants in the building.

Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com.
Opinion > Letters (/Opinion/Letters/)

Matthew Blumenfeld: Without expansion, Jones is inadequate

Monday, May 23, 2016

'Without expansion, Jones is inadequate  

EDITOR’S NOTE: Amherst Town Meeting rejected an article to rezone the Amherst Historical Society’s property needed for Jones Library expansion.

There has been understandable concern expressed about the effort to renovate and expand the Jones Library.

Having worked on many library capital projects, the Jones’ current inadequacies — particularly for those who need it most — are obvious and fixable. Our library should be the place for everyone to come together to learn, enjoy and grow and it is for many, but not for key parts of our community.

Our growing low- and fixed-income populations need a place that provides more access to technology and programming. We need private study spaces for tutoring and mentoring, a dedicated young adult area, and spaces for students to come together for group study and to apply research skills.

Today’s Jones meets only some of these needs. The fact is that the opportunity to address the building’s weaknesses systematically with substantial support from the state only comes about every eight to 10 years. The library has engaged in a serious and open process for more than a year and has involved many volunteers from throughout the community.

The design team is incredibly well qualified to take on historic preservation and expansion work. The guidelines being followed are there to help the Jones create the best possible
library for the next 20 (more likely 50) years.

From the perspective of the design team, staff and the building planning committee, being able to put on an addition that "squares off" the building is by far the best option. It is best because it allows for greater efficiencies in patron and staff workflow, enabling the Jones to better fulfill its mission of serving all patrons.

Acquiring some land from the Strong House is necessary, and they are a willing partner. The requested rezoning cannot lead to any other development.

Without the transfer, it will be difficult to create a design that will be competitive for a critical state grant. Without this funding the project will fail and the Jones will remain a beloved but inadequate facility for the foreseeable future.

Matthew Blumenfeld

Amherst
Five Amherst men arrested in library garden

By SCOTT MERZBACH
Staff Writer

Monday, May 23, 2016

AMHERST MA (KEYWORD/?KEYWORD=AMHERST MA) POLICE (KEYWORD/?KEYWORD=POLICE)
ARRESTS (KEYWORD/?KEYWORD=ARRESTS) HOMELESSNESS (KEYWORD/?KEYWORD=HOMELESSNESS)

AMHERST – Continued problems with homeless individuals loitering in areas of downtown Amherst led to five arrests at the Kinsey Memorial Garden behind the Jones Library Friday night, according to police.

Officers responded to the 43 Amity St. location at 8:36 p.m. and arrested the following men on charges of violating the town's open container bylaw, said Amherst Police Detective Marcus Humber:

Mark E. Jarrett, 21; Angel L. Rivera; Matthew R. Roy, 31; Paul Raymond Scace, 54; and Troy E. Ward II, 24.

Each man arrested could be responsible for up to a $300 penalty for violating the bylaw.

A group involving social service agencies, police, town officials and the Amherst Business Improvement District is continuing to meet to address issues related to homeless people hanging out on the streets and in places like the library and West Cemetery.

Hwei-Ling Greeney, who oversees the Amherst Community Connections social service agency, said she believes there are more homeless in town than at any previous point.

This has caused issues at the First Congregational Church at 165 Main St., where the Not Bread Alone soup kitchen is located.

The church at Town Meeting last week got $200,000 in Community Preservation Act money to install fire sprinklers to better protect the historic building, with one of the arguments in favor being the number of homeless using the building.

"They are overwhelmed by homeless people every day," said CPA Committee member Diana Stein.

Ralph Faulkingham, a trustee for the church, told Town Meeting that members are seeing a much larger population of homeless at the house of worship, with many using the restrooms at the building, and staying out of the elements, between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com.
Directors seek change in will's terms for museum

By SCOTTY MIERZBACH
Staff Writer

AMHERST — A potential land sale that would have provided money for the Amherst Historical Society and expansion and renovation options for the Jones Library is off the table after Town Meeting rejected a rezoning request on Monday.

But even with the rezoning defeated, the directors of the historical society, who oversee the Strong House Museum and property at 67 Amity St., intend to pursue other aspects related to the land sale, including seeking approval to change the terms of the will by which it obtained the property more than a century ago.

“Our effort to secure reasonable deviation from the terms of the will (Sarah E.) Emerson will go forward, so that the museum will be able to meet the needs of today’s society as it enters its second century,” said Select Board member James Wald, who is president of the historical society.

Wald said the rezoning loss also does not change the possibility of having more physical connections between the two institutions.

"Because of our similar missions and needs, the two organizations do indeed plan to continue consulting and collaborating," Wald said.

The need to change Emerson’s will was planned even before the library was considering undertaking its project and potentially acquiring some of the historical society’s land.

"Even without the land sale, it (amending the will) remains our most important current goal," Wald said.

Bonnie MacCracken, treasurer for the society, told Town Meeting on Monday that Emerson did not foresee that her will would pose hardships for the museum, including needed renovations that could include climate-controlled storage space and making the building handicap accessible.

“We have a very old house and we want to preserve it,” MacCracken said.

The Strong House Museum is a 1750s building constructed in Georgian-style by Nehemiah Strong.

The will on file in Hampshire Probate Court is explicit in that there shall be no additions to nor alterations in structure of said house, all buildings shall be erected on any part of the land now occupied by buildings. If these conditions are not complied with, the property shall be forfeited to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The will is so rigid, in fact, that Emerson’s second-floor bedroom remains intact exactly as it was when she died, with a four-poster bed in the middle and other belongings, including a night dress, chamber pot and glasses, still in place.

The terms of the will prompted Sarah McKeel, a former president of the trustees, to advise Town Meeting to hold off on rezoning and to find a public charities division of the state attorney general’s office, at that time it can ask for rezoning again,” McKeel said.

The rezoning from general residence to general business was needed because if any portion of the 3/4-acre property is sold, it would result in the remaining land being out of compliance with town zoning regulations.

Town Meeting’s decision is the second stumbling block after an $18,000 request for Community Preservation Act funding from the historical society, which would have paid for legal expenses to amend the will, was turned down by the CPA Committee in March.

The museum said no funding source has yet been identified to do this work, Wald said.

Meanwhile, the library project remains an opportunity to bring together the collections, with the library having a vast trove of Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost materials and other paper and photographic records, with the history museum holding more than 7,000 objects, such as furniture and clothes, including a white dress worn by Dickinson.

MacCracken said the museum is running out of space because the collection has grown, both from donations — some left in bags dropped at the door of the museum — and others given by families who find artifacts in their homes.

Wald said he believes that the library remains committed to setting aside some space in its project for climate-controlled storage and processing of artifacts for the museum.

As things stand, the library is still including space for the history museum’s collections in its building program,” Wald said.

Library Director Sharon Sherry confirmed this is the case. "The library, historical society and town are definitely moving full steam ahead with collaborations," Sherry said.

Storage space for the historical society is part of the plans that will be submitted as part of the grant application to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in January, Sherry said.

"This process has brought us closer together than ever before and the possibilities are limited only by our creativity," Sherry added.

The land sale had the potential to bring money to the historical society, but MacCracken said its annual operating budget of about $60,000 is already in the black.

Wald said this has been accomplished because the museum is run on a shoestring budget and gets money from memberships, fundraising events, donations and solicitations and CPA money. In fact, $20,000 in CPA money, approved by Town Meeting Wednesday, will pay for carpentry work at the museum to be done before painting, and $4,500 for dendrochronology of the structure, which is the study of wood used in the building.

Scott Merzbach can be reached at smerzbach@gazettenet.com
Jones Library expansion project drawing opponents; Town Meeting considers zone change

Amherst Town Meeting to consider a zone change Monday night that would affect the design of a proposed new library. (Republican file/Diane Lederman)

By Diane Lederman | dlederman@repub.com
Follow on Twitter
on May 16, 2016 at 1:15 PM, updated May 16, 2016 at 1:16 PM

AMHERST – Town Meeting voters Monday night will be weighing in on a zoning request that could affect the proposed Jones Library expansion project.

But unlike in Hadley, where a recent vote put a halt to a project, opposition in Amherst would affect the project's future.

The Amherst matter involves a request to rezone a portion of land owned by the Amherst Historical Society
residence to general business.

The society has agreed to sell the land to the Jones Library for the proposed expansion project.

But according to messages posted to the Town Meeting listserv, a contingent of Town Meeting voters oppose will oppose the zone change with a motion to refer back to the Planning Board -- or outright opposition.

"I appreciate that people are willing to consider this Jones expansion and all that it entails, given more information to consider the proposal in more depth," Town Meeting member Melissa Perot wrote in one message. "However convinced that while there is a need for expansion and reorganization there are alternative ways to provide for the community of Amherst as a whole that does not require expansion of the main Jones library in town."

Perot's message continued: 'A first step to think outside the 'grant box' is to vote 'No' to the zoning change that reinforces this over-reach and use of public funds wherever it comes from."

Former library trustee Carol Gray posted a message stating, "We really need to defeat this massive library expansion!"

"It's not in the best interest of future generations to lose what is left of our charming old-fashioned downtown."

If the zoning measure is defeated, the project will be able to move ahead, but its design plans will need to be modified.

A zoning change requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

**Jones Library** Director Sharon Sharry said if the measure is defeated or referred to the planning board, the library will create a plan based on renovating and expanding the library using only its existing property footprint, within which the Amherst Historical Society involved.

"A 'no' vote gives the architects less flexibility and forces them to expand further into the back garden," Sharry said. "In the large landscaped area between the library building and the CVS parking lot.

Of the controversy, Sharry said in an email, "We are very happy with the questions and discussions regarding the Amherst Historical Society property. It has given us an excellent opportunity to discuss the process and what we can do without it.

The Planning Board has voted to support the article.

In 2014, the **Jones received** a $25,000 matching grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, expanding and renovating the current library, or building a new facility.

Since then, architects from Finegold Alexander Architects of Boston have been working on various designs. They have worked on the Holyoke Public Library renovation project.

The Jones Library building is 47,463 square feet now, and the last expansion occurred in 1990. If the state aid would cover a little more than 50 percent of the project cost.

Town Meeting begins at the Amherst Regional Middle School at 7 p.m.
AMHERST – Despite the rejection of a zoning change, the **Jones Library** project will move forward and library officials will apply for a state construction grant in January.

Town meeting voted 93 to 91 against the change, a vote that needed a two-thirds majority.

The library asked to rezone a portion of land owned by the Amherst Historical Society from general residence to general business.
The society agreed to sell the land to the Jones Library for the proposed expansion project but the zoning change was needed first.

The vote limits the design options -- but, Director Sharon Sharry wrote, "The Planning and Design phase will still continue, and we will still submit a Massachusetts Public Library Construction grant application in January 2017."

Sharry said public sessions will be held throughout the summer.

"Within the next couple of weeks, we are planning an evening information session with the architects to talk about the Building Program, so that people can get a more detailed look at how we arrived at 68,000 (square-foot size)," she said.

The library is 47,463 square feet now.

Town meeting members were critical of the project and on a private listserv were generating support for opposition. Former library trustee Carol Gray posted a message stating, "We really need to defeat this massive library expansion."

"It’s not in the best interest of future generations to lose what is left of our charming old-fashioned downtown," Gray wrote.

According to the Daily Hampshire Gazette the discussion Monday night was contentious, and part of it centered on decision by Moderator James Pistrang to limit the scope of those speaking about the article to the advantages of rezoning not on the entire project.

The Gazette reported that there were continuous calls for points of order with periodic booping.
Jones Library project returns to Amherst Town Meeting -- this time via controversial garden proposal

Amherst resident Carol Pope is asking Town Meeting to preserve the entire Kinsey Memorial Garden she created as Jones officials plan to expand. (Diane Lederman/The Republican)

By Diane Lederman | dlederman@repub.com
Follow on Twitter
on May 23, 2016 at 1:27 PM, updated May 23, 2016 at 1:28 PM

AMHERST – Town Meeting members on Monday will take up another article related to Jones Library expa:
library officials are hoping the meeting will reject it.

This article asks whether Town Meeting would recommend to the library's trustees that they preserve the entire Kinsey Memorial Garden, and authorize a Garden Committee of horticultural experts and experienced gardeners, analogous to the Library's Burnett Gallery Committee of artists, to maintain and oversee the garden.

Carol Pope, who created the Kinsey Memorial Garden to honor her late husband in 1999, filed the article.

But the library's trustees director said passage would hamper its expansion plans. Library officials are planning to apply for a state grant that would allow the library to expand from its current 47,463-square-feet size to 68,000 square feet. The last expansion was more than two decades ago.

The library project has been limited in its options after meeting members last week rejected a request to rezone a portion of land owned by the Amherst Historical Society from general residence to general business. A remaining option involves expanding into the garden.

In a statement addressing the garden article, trustees wrote: "As our planning goes forward, we want to be clear in stating how much we value the Kinsey Memorial Garden. It is a wonderful part of the Library grounds and of the town."

"Yet to endorse a request to 'preserve in its entirety the Kinsey Memorial Garden' as proposed to Town Meet planning and design effort gets underway, seems premature as it would unduly constrain the effort to provic Library to the people of Amherst. Putting a restriction on any portion of our property would deny our design use our building and grounds in the best way possible," according to the statement.

"It is impossible for the Library to abide by this article if any renovation and/or expansion occurs," Library D said in an email.

The garden's operation, meanwhile, is also drawing controversy because of charges raised by the petitioner officials.

In a Facebook posting on the private Town Meeting Listserv, Pope wrote that after initial fundraisers to help "I have contributed all of the design work and have bought and donated all of its rare and beautiful plants ev 2015."

Pope said the 2015 "hiatus" came after Sharry forbid her involvement with the garden. That followed a 2014 adopted by the trustees that shifted responsibility for care of the plants to the library's facilities supervisor.

Pope feels that without a committee, as requested in the article, "this special space will no longer provide th many residents value."

She also wondered if this was a prelude to eliminating the Kinsey Garden completely in order to expand the

2 of 4

5/26/2016 12:34 PM
Sharry, meanwhile, sent out a memo to clarify the allegations. She wrote that no provision for a permanent funding was made for ongoing maintenance when the garden was created.

By 2012, with years of minimal maintenance, the garden became overgrown.

"Library maintenance staff regularly found bottles and needles amongst the weeds, and the garden felt unsafe at night.

"The Library and the Friends have struggled with trying to find a fiscally responsible way to keep the garden safe," she also said. "...has been very much involved in all the decision-making that has taken place as a viable alternative."

"She was displeased with the high cost of maintenance that the Library was paying, but at the same time, the Friends continued to press for high maintenance plantings that are inappropriate for a public garden with minimum maintenance."

Sharry said, though, that she welcomed Pope's continued involvement, and said Pope "has never been bannished from the Library or its grounds."

She said that while it is too soon to know how the expansion project may impact the exact form of the garden, the Trustees stated, "...we look to work with the Historical Society, Friends of the Library, Garden Club, Amherst Regional Middle School, and the town to create a garden vista which will inspire pride and be visible and accessible to the community."

Pope could not be reached for comment.

The Select Board previously voted to dismiss the article.

Moderator Jim Pistrang, when asked how he would direct the discussion, said it would focus on the scope of the discussion, he said, "I expect to have it go well and have the rules of order of town meeting be followed."

Some were upset with him for limiting the discussion of the requested zone change on the zone change itself and discussion of the library expansion project in general.

The library, meanwhile, will file a request for a grant to the Massachusetts Public Library Construction program.

The article is the first scheduled for the meeting that begins at 7 p.m. in the Amherst Regional Middle School.
AMHERST - Trustees for the Jones Library are officially advised to keep intact most of a memorial garden that has formed the building’s back yard for the past 16 years, even if a planned expansion and renovation project disrupts the landscape.

By a 150-58 vote after a 90-minute discussion, Town Meeting at Monday’s seventh session asked trustees to "substantially preserve" the Kinsey Memorial Garden and to create a committee of horticultural and gardening experts to help maintain what was created by Carol Pope in memory of her late husband, David Chapin Kinsey, in 2000.

Calling the garden a "prized community respite" since its installation, and with the need for more expert oversight, Pope brought the petition before Town Meeting out of concern that the garden is no longer being properly cared for, and that it might be destroyed by a future building project.

"Amherst residents, and other Valley folks, and out-of-town visitors consistently express appreciation for the botanically sophisticated Kinsey Garden," Pope said. "It would be a draw for visitors to our town as part of the new downtown cultural district, and would encourage them to enjoy our restaurants, businesses, Amherst Cinema, as well as the
history museum and its garden."

But George Hicks, facilities supervisor for the Jones, said such an advisory will severely restrict the possible expansion and renovation.

Hicks explained that the garden was put under the maintenance of library staff, rather than volunteers, in 2014, after the garden fell into disrepair and became a breeding ground for what he termed "deviant behavior," including drug activity, alcohol consumption and public urination.

"The work was necessary to make the garden safer and more appealing," Hicks said, adding that trustees remain satisfied with this arrangement.

While Pope's original petition asked to "preserve in its entirety" the garden, Christopher Riddle of Precinct 2 asked to change this wording to "substantially preserve," so as not to tie the hands of trustees and their architects who are working on the building project.

This amendment narrowly passed 93-86.

Another elected trustee, Tamson Ely said it could be years before any changes happen to the garden. "We're not taking away green space, we might consider moving it around," Ely said.

Even though the trustees own the garden, Select Board member Connie Kruger said the petition might place restrictions on the library project.

"We don't feel it's necessary to pass this article recommending preservation of the garden," Kruger said, noting the trust she has in the trustees and Library Director Sharon Sharry.

Yet several Town Meeting members expressed their appreciation for the garden and worried about its fate.

Sarah McKee, a former trustees president, called the garden an oasis.

"The living sculpture is that the David Chapin Kinsey Memorial garden honors the memory of a beloved scholar and teacher," McKee said. "Both his life and the Kinsey Garden mean a great deal to our town."

Maurianne Adams of Precinct 10 said the garden is a calming space, seasonally changing colors, featuring benches and walkways, "and lucky for us is a contribution to a growing cultural district."

"We need the garden, we need the greenscapes, we need some form of library, we need a community to bring together," Adams said.

Others claimed that trustees are citing the presence of homeless as a reason why library
staff, rather than volunteers, should be in charge of maintaining the garden.

Gerald Weiss of Precinct 8 said it would treading on dangerous ground to pave over green space for that reason.

"Yes, there are sometimes homeless people, and sometimes there are not," Weiss said. "We might as well shut down the bars while we're at it."

**Trustee responds**

One trustee said the vote on the memorial garden is a repudiation of the work done in recent years.

Trustee Jonathan McCabe said they are pleased with the work done by Hicks and other staff, and strongly disagree with "the suggestion that it's not being taken care of."

Pope said she, too, wasn't entirely satisfied with the vote, but appreciated the support.

"It's important we get a lot of the questions out in the open and that we got a lot of support for the garden," Pope said.

**Rezoning vote**

The decision related to the garden came as Town Meeting learned that its May 16 defeat of rezoning the Amherst Historical Society property at 67 Amity St. from general residence to general business, which was thought to prevent a sale of land from the society to the Library for the building project, may be moot.

Peter Hechenbleikner, interim town manager, said a reexamination of town maps by the Planning Department shows there might be sufficient property held by the Amherst Historical Society that it could convey a portion of its property to the Jones Library without the need to rezone its property. A full field survey will be done to determine if this is the case.

That Town Meeting session was particularly contentious as members attempted to debate the merits of the expansion and renovation.

Hechenbleikner apologized to Town Meeting if the rezoning vote was, in fact, not needed.

**Other action**

In other business, Town Meeting approved 132-34 spending $30,000 in free cash to pay for consulting services for the Charter Commission. Though some questioned the need for a consultant, others praised what they hope will be an open and transparent process leading to recommendations about changes to town government.

Town Meeting approved 145-14 an amendment to the cluster subdivision bylaw that will create a more efficient process of review by the Planning Board for projects such as the Retreat student housing project that had been proposed for the Cushman section of Amherst.

A second zoning amendment that would have changed rules governing mixed-use buildings was sent back to the Planning Board for more study.