SCARSDALE FORUM MEMBERS MEETING

February 11, 2016

Howie Nadel, president of the Forum welcomed everyone to the meeting.

* Beverly Sved spoke about Norma Roberts
* Ed Morgan spoke about Miriam Cedarbaum

I. Scarsdale Public Library – proposed expansion

Presentation by Terri Simon, Library Board President, and Elizabeth Bermel, Library Director

Impetus for the project: The way people use libraries has changed. Our library is heavily used; the facilities are not adequate for the level of usage. There are insufficient rooms for activities, and only eight comfortable chairs.

Strategic planning process began in 2010, soon after Beth began working as Director. The community identified needs; the strategic plan was adopted in 2012.

Maintenance and infrastructure repairs are $4.5 million, including ADA compliance, replacement of the roof, leaky windows and doors, etc. They want to open the building to the landscape, and design the upgrade in an environmentally responsible way.

When the building was first built in 1951, 2/3 of the cost was paid for by the Village, and 1/3 was paid by private donations.

Beth explained schematics for the proposed revisions.

* Open the view
* Have flexibility in the allocation and use of the space
* Technology and functionality upgrades
* Doubling the amount of useable space

It would be most cost-effective to do the construction at once, over a period of 18 months. The building at Supply Field can be used during the construction phase, after some minor adaptations (estimated at $750,000 to do these adaptations, which can then be used by the Village). Because the Village owns the building, the library does not need to pay rent.

Cost estimates for the entire project were based on the schematics, and were done in great detail.

* Hard costs: the building construction: $13.9 million
* Soft costs: management and professional, IT and audio-visual, escalation and furnishings: $4.5 million
* $18.5 million total cost includes necessary infrastructure repairs and accessibility repairs
* $370 per square foot with blended rates

The Village pays for operational costs. The library has hired professional fund-raising consultants, and also has brought in seasoned community leaders and fundraisers. They can raise $7.5 million through private contributions. The Village Trustees are analyzing a $12 million 15-year bond (per household assessment of approx. $168 annually).

Questions from the Audience

Parking will not be impacted for day-to-day use, but they are looking at expanding parking by 30%.

Library staff should remain constant, but we may need more custodial staff due to additional meeting space.

Supply Field space would have only some facilities, primarily circulation. They would have most programming outside the building at other facilities.

II. State of the State

Presented by Amy Paulin, NY State Assembly representative

Amy supports the library project and will work to secure state funds for the project.

New leader in the Assembly is Carl Heastie, and Amy is pleased with his leadership. Carl came to the Village to discuss flooding issues with Steve Pappalardo, and as a result a grant was secured.

She chairs the energy and education committees. She is most proud of the human trafficking legislation she shepherded through.

The focus of the energy committee is the reliability of the power grid, and that it relies on as much non-polluting energy sources as possible (only 3% of the grid is renewable energy). Governor Cuomo announced a proposal to move to 50% renewable energy in 15 years. Community aggregation for energy purchases will allow for cost savings (it is active in other states); Amy got a pilot running in Westchester.

They have adopted “community solar,” whereby a private developer can build a giant solar farm and sell shares to homeowners to participate due to restrictions in zoning or the configuration of their hope in adopting solar power.

Budget: the budget was just introduced in January. The tax cap creates issues requiring an override (Scarsdale has not been able to override the cap in the past).

Our regent, Judith Johnson, is spearheading changes to the poor policies that were enacted to take the power away from the regents.

Amy summarized some legislation that she is introducing now, and fielded questions from the audience.

III. Members Meeting – New Business

Jacob Appel will speak at the Sunday Speaker’s Program on February 28, 2016.

1. Municipal Services Committee – by Madelaine Eppenstein

Mayor Jon Mark sent a letter regarding a proposal by the Department of Transportation that was conducting a feasibility study on running a high-speed rail line that would run through the Mamaroneck Strip section of Scarsdale. The Forum

wrote a report by expeditious treatment to oppose consideration of constructing a high-speed rail line through any part of Scarsdale.

There are serious environmental impact issues, including the sensitive wetlands through which the spur would pass.

$290 billion is the estimated cost to add the high-speed rail plan for Northeast Corridor, so the project is extremely unlikely to happen.

Motion to approve the report: Passed.

2. Sustainability Committee – by Ron Schulhof

Proposal: To conduct a pilot study to do food scrap composting, for 100 homes at a cost of about $45,000.

Background: The elementary schools have been composting their food scraps for years. For backyard compositing, the type of food scraps is very limited. We would have to do the composting outside of Scarsdale.

We would bring in a carter to pick up the waste, and take it to where they handle processing. It is the tipping (disposal at sites that handle this type of waste) that escalates the cost as among 100 homes. If the cost were spread over more homes, the cost would be less per household. However, the pilot allows us to study the issues and make sure that we are learning about what works best. Meanwhile, there may be new processing facilities built closer to Scarsdale.

The Scarsdale DPW cannot participate in the project due to their existing workload.

Some people thought the costs were not justified, and that the money should be spent on paving the roads and other more pressing concerns. People who want to recycle can do so on their own.

If we recycle and compost, the garbage does not have to be picked up as often and will save the Village a lot of money.

Mayor Mark: commended Ron Schulhof and others for their work on the LED lighting project. However, this project is not as persuasive. The ecological downside is that the truck drives around town, and then goes 47 miles to the composting facility. The schools pay $20,000 for 2,000 kids, so it is much more economical. Therefore, the Board has not thus far put $45,000 in the budget to pay for this. They have suggested a meeting with Ron, Michelle Sterling and others to discuss alternative pilot projects to try this out but at a lower cost.

Motion to approve the report: 13 in favor, 4 opposed. Report carries.

Meeting adjourned: 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Douglass