

Board approves support

By Sydney Krieger
Hometown News
Correspondent

at library public hearing

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, the Village of Cambridge held a public hearing to discuss the proposed financing for a new library.

The public hearing had been set in lieu of a referendum to determine public opinion regarding building a new library.

The 6 p.m. meeting held in the lower level of the Amundson Center was well attended despite the poor

weather conditions.

The new library had been in the Village Capital Five Year Plan for a commitment of \$800,000 in 2016.

The Cambridge Village Board voted unanimously on Dec. 11, 2012 to commit the lesser sum of \$400,000 but to advance the project to 2014 to take advantage of current lower construction costs and lower interest rates.

That action was contingent upon a positive public hearing early in 2013.

The recent Community

Design Presentation offered by the architect held Jan. 17, covered in detail the library project. Over a hundred area residents attended the presentation that evening.

Library board members have regularly made presentations at village board meetings since April 2012 to discuss the village's possible commitment to a new building project.

Cambridge Village Board members Victoria Pavlick, Scott Waller, president Steve Struss, Dwight Christianson, Ted Kumbier and Village Admini-

strator/Treasurer Shellie Benish were in attendance for the public hearing.

Prior to the start of the hearing, village board members were given copies of numerous letters and e-mails supporting the commitment of village funds for the new library.

The public hearing provided a forum for residents to share concerns and discuss financial implications in more detail, and an opportunity for the village board to weigh a final decision based on public opinion.

The question-and-answer session specifically addressed the Village of Cambridge's commitment of providing \$400,000 toward the \$1.8 million needed for the project.

Eleven of the 39 citizens attending the meeting registered to address the board with comments and questions. Each of the 11 registered were given three minutes to share opinions and ask questions.

Out of the 11, seven spoke in favor, and four spoke against

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or raised questions regarding the necessity of a new library and taxpayer cost.

Library financing options were presented on handouts for 10-, 15- and 20-year terms on a proposed \$400,000 loan to be procured by the Village of Cambridge.

The overall cost to taxpayers would be determined by the type and length of the loan. Shorter term loans have slightly higher annual costs to the taxpayer, with overall total cost of the shorter loan term being less in the long run.

Average taxpayer costs were projected in a range from \$32.84 annually to a high estimate of \$82.09 annually, based on a home value for a 10-year loan.

More detail is available from the Cambridge Village office on these figures and projected loan length, interest terms.

Concerns from business owners who carry a large portion of tax responsibility were also raised.

Discussion concerning the benefits to the community, quality of community life and attracting new businesses and residents to the Cambridge area ensued with the pros and cons being weighed.

Linda Begley-Korth presented information about the impact a new library would have on the community by sharing collected data from communities similar in size to Cambridge.

The return for every tax dollar spent for a new library was 4-1, according to her sources.

The subject of holding a referendum regarding the issue was raised by Richard Wolf.

It was pointed out that village board members had previously voted to hold the public hearing instead of incurring the financial cost of a referendum.

Wolf stated he would be willing to pay for the costs of a referendum.

Daren Maron, of CC Works, Fresh Cut Tree Service and Concrete, is a business owner and resident in support of the new library project. He pledged \$20,000 in funds for July 2013 and an additional \$10,000 for January 2014.

Questions were raised concerning existing buildings as a possible home for an expanded library. Board member Scott Waller assured the attendees that virtually every possibility had been explored. Other residents stated that the increase in their taxes were well worth an expanded library facility.

Some concerns were raised that the projected \$1.8 million would not be enough when construction began and it was explained there was a \$100,000 margin built in. However, continual delays on the project would indeed increase costs.

The hearing was concluded within the allotted hour so the Cambridge Village Board could hold its regular meeting.

Village board member Jeff Leoni joined the members for the meeting. Kathy Cunningham was absent.

The library finances were on the agenda and several members of the Library Board and Capital Campaign Committee were in attendance.

A decision regarding financial commitment from the Village of Cambridge was pivotal for the library project as funding contributions from other communities hinged on support from Cambridge.

After a public appearance and update from Bob Salov, Dane County supervisor and Cambridge EMS director, the board members voted to move discussion and possible action regarding the financing of the library expansion to the head of the agenda.

The possibility of referendum was discussed.

Board member Kumbier pointed out that too much time would be lost and the board had previously voted to hold the public hearing in lieu of referendum.

Both Mary Gjerme and Salov, members of the library Capitol Campaign Committee, addressed the board.

Salov pointed out that \$612,000 had already been raised, more was in the works, but the library would lose funding as it had several years ago if a commitment from Cambridge did not come through.

Salov stated that a full campaign is slated to be launched for fundraising March 15 and it was imperative for raising funds for donors to see that the Village of Cambridge was behind the project.

"This is your building," stated Salov. "Who will give money if you are not willing?"

Discussion included how the expanded library would give the village administration much needed space, a community center and library facilities for much less than it would cost to build new office space for the village.

The new library annex on the existing building brings costs and square footage of a new facility in much lower than other options explored.

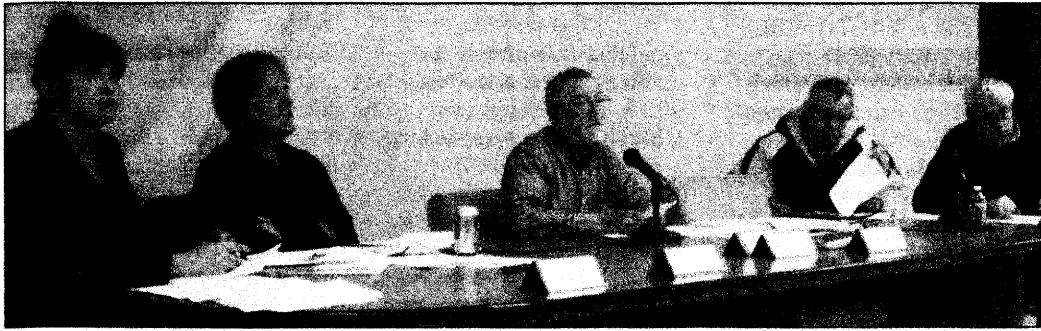
The board deliberated the issue of a loan to finance the \$400,000 requested from the Village of Cambridge for the new library. It was determined by the board members that further delay on the issue would not be beneficial.

Village finances could be adjusted and efforts would be made to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

Benish shared the results of the public forum sign in: 34 for the new project; one unsure; four against.

Board member Waller made a motion to "pursue borrowing \$400,000 in 2014 based on positive feedback from the public hearing as part of our commitment and continue to minimize the impact for taxpayers by other cost-saving cuts."

The motion was seconded, and the board voted "yes" unanimously except for Christianson voting "present" for non-committal.



Thirty-nine residents from the Village of Cambridge attended a public hearing and had their voices heard about whether or not they felt the village should finance a big part of the new library building project. During their board meeting following the public hearing, the village committed to borrowing funds in the amount of \$400,000. Shown above, board members listen to feedback during the public hearing. Shown right, Linda Begley-Korth offered statistics on how new



libraries have helped other similar sized communities. Shown below, Village of Cambridge resident and businessman Daren Maron, shown left, of CC Works, Fresh Cut Tree Service and Concrete, is in support of the new library project. He pledged \$20,000 in funds for July 2013 and an additional \$10,000 for January 2014. After the public hearing, he spoke with other residents about the benefits of a new library. Photos by Sydney Krieger.

