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(Neb.)-Chadron Public Library Moves Ahead Toward Renovations  [Listen](#)



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 04/05/2013 01:04 PM

Photo: Participants paste their sticky notes with ideas on them that they'd like to see incorporated into the new Chadron Public Library at the library's informational meeting with the Humphries|Poli Architecture Firm. (Photo by KCSR-Roxie Graham-Marski)

(CHADRON)-The Chadron Public Library Board will soon be attempting to decide which architectural firm they will proceed with in regards to the renovation of the library. Library director Rossella Tesch says the library, which was built in 1912, is outgrowing itself and is in definite need of refurbishment. During the last week in March, three architectural firms met on different evenings with residents at City Hall to share about their firms and their ideas for the library.

Humphries|Poli Architects

Monday, March 25th, featured Humphries|Poli Architects from Denver, Colo. Dennis Humphries with Humphries|Poli shared with those in attendance that his firm works exclusively with libraries and has completed 64 projects to date, each one unique and based on the needs of its community. He said they are strong preservationists and would like to "preserve and honor" as many historical features of Chadron's Carnegie library as possible, while helping the structure to move forward into the future at the same time. Their aim with every library, he said, is to "Ennoble the site, inspire the participants, sustain the resources, and bring joy to the users." He praised the Chadron library, saying it has some outstanding qualities, but he also noted that things were in need of an upgrade, such as the broken elevator and computer cables crisscrossed every which way. Providing colorful sticky notes, Humphries encouraged attendees to participate in a "mindbreaking" exercise by writing what they would like to see the newer library embody, in an effort to generate thoughts and explore ideas. Humphries then highlighted a variety of different concepts and options to consider, ranging from a comfortable, living room feel with big windows, fire places, and comfy places to sit, to child-friendly places with bright glass, tree houses, mobile spaces, and good acoustics, so some areas could be noisier without the sound carrying elsewhere. He talked about outdoor spaces, even a gardening area, and "makerspaces," which exemplify the newer concept of libraries being "creators of content" as opposed to only "keepers of content."

Humphries discussed LEED buildings and sustainability elements, such as natural light, geothermal, and even green roof and photovoltaics. He said with the size of the Chadron library being what it is, there are approximately 30,000 decisions to be made, thus the importance of fully understanding what the community would like to see implemented. He also discussed a few methods for financing the project, from energy efficiency grants to community donations and more.

Participants were then invited to place their sticky notes of ideas on large pieces of paper up front under different categories. People shared ideas ranging from comfy places to meet or read and an acoustic friendly meeting room to a comfortable outdoor space and more windows.

Humphries also took questions, and when asked which library had been his favorite to work on, he said “the next one.” He said his firm strives to take all they’ve learned from working on each one of their past 64 library projects and make number 65 even better.

Geiger Architecture

On Tuesday, March 26th, Geiger Architecture from Rapid City, S.D. presented their ideas.

Lead architect Lee Geiger stressed prior work in historically laden areas, such as Deadwood and Keystone, S.D., in reference to the history surrounding the Chadron Library in its current state. He also made known that the library his firm recently completed in Deadwood was recently listed by *USA Today* as one of the top ten libraries in the United States to visit.

In a design focused heavily on natural lighting, Geiger pointed out that each of the firm’s prior works is custom designed with specific features to make each building unique. He said that the firm would like to take the historical design, and the culture and heritage of the Chadron Library, and blend it with a more modern contemporary design. Features of the renovations could include materials made specifically for quiet environments in order to decrease the amount of noise throughout the library. The entrance of the building would be aimed at making a friendly atmosphere, as Geiger said, “Make the people want to be there.”

He said the layout of the overall structure could possibly been seen as a two-level building with an on-grade street level entrance and an exterior and interior design flexible for multiple uses. Other possible features would include a sheltered entrance with wind protection, along with a protected exterior of the library, and adequate privacy for those who frequent the library.

Energy efficiency was another point that Geiger Architects mentioned, by using geothermal technology, earth berms, and a motion-detected system to allow for lights that would only function when someone was using a designated area.

Geiger said fundraising efforts on their behalf are available, and their firm would help provide exceptional cost, experience, and local strong ties to the Chadron area.

When asked by a member of the public in attendance if they had ever felt resistance during a project, Geiger simply stated, “Our style is whatever you need it to be.”

Bahr Vermeer Haecker

A representative from Bahr Vermeer Haecker (BVH) in Lincoln visited on Thursday, March 28th.

The presentation began with a history lesson on the Chadron area and where its core roots were developed. The firm said they want the design of the renovation to be inspired by those who settled in Chadron and call it home. BVH has a rather large prior work history in Chadron, including several projects on the Chadron State College campus—the Student Center, Administration Building, and one step of the Mari Sandoz Center. Not only does the firm have ties to CSC, but several other buildings and businesses Chadron as well, and outside of Chadron,

just down the road at Fort Robinson.

The base principle for BVH's proposal was centered on the existing library and the value that already exists, along with who will be using the library. BVH brought up several ideas of incorporating the outdoors into the library for reading spaces as well as learning environments that bring nature to the building.

When designing the building, BVH said they would like to reach out to the community for involvement, as well as putting an office in Chadron to allow for people to view progress as it's being made.

Dan Worth Sr. with BVH said that the firm starts any project with research, beginning with what the community wants in the library. He said it important that the renovations have an identity and a connection to Chadron that tells stories of what is taking place. He said features of the building would be effective for both adults and children and equip the right resources. Worth also said that the library needs to bring the community a physical experience; it needs to be accessible and reinforce the surrounding neighborhood.

Raised flooring would be a feature of the design that would allow for specific heating and cooling needs, along with other features that would make the library environment friendly. Worth said the objective is to have flexible technology available and make the library usable for everyone, not just the obvious, with a solid and comfortable security structure.

When wrapping up the presentation, BVH said Spring 2016 could be targeted as a possible opening date.

Roger Wess with the Chadron Library Foundation says money is the only thing standing in the way of renovating the library.

Listen to story for sound bite

The foundation currently has about a quarter of a million dollars saved to begin the project, but as Wess explains, that will not last long in a project that is estimated to cost approximately \$3 million.

Listen to story for sound bite

The only real downside to renovating on the current site, Wess said, is the lack of available parking. An upside, he says, is being able to maintain the historical structure and update it as needed.

Listen to story for sound bite

Drew Petersen with the Chadron Library Board says the board plans to make a decision as to which architect the community seems to feel is the best fit for the job by the end of April. Once an architectural firm is selected, Petersen says...

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Although there is a lot to be done before a library renovation becomes a reality, a variety of entities are excited to just see the project slowly moving ahead. Pat Kaus, who is a member of the Friends of the Library, says...

Listen to story for sound bite

If you have feedback from any of the architectural firms' presentations that you haven't yet shared, make sure to drop that by the library or e-mail it to cpublib507@gmail.com by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 5th. Forms are available online at www.chadronpubliclibrary.com.

For community residents who would like to make a donation to the library project, large or small, feel free to do so at any time by stopping by the library and visiting with director Rossella Tesch. You can stop by with

suggestions as well.

--Written by Roxie Graham-Marski and Jeremy Anderson

(Questions? Comments? E-mail news@chadrad.com.)

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