

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Special Meeting of March 14, 2024**

**Present via Zoom:** Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Ms. Francis, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight. **Also Present via Zoom:** Carole Collins, Director of Climate Action and Project Administration for City of Northampton; Jason Petcen. **Absent:** None.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying the State's Open Meeting Law issued March 12, 2020, this meeting will be held using remote participation. On March 29, 2023, Governor Healey extended this provision until March 31, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Geothermal Test Well**

Ms. Downing reported that the city would like to drill a test well to explore the feasibility of geothermal in the grass triangle in the rear of the parking lot. A geothermal well field has the potential to provide heating and cooling to both the Hub and Forbes.

Mr. Carrier welcomed Carole Collins, Director of the Climate Action and Project Administration Department to the meeting. He said that Forbes owns the building and the land while the city is responsible for maintenance and upkeep, which is an unusual hybrid arrangement. Ms. Collins discussed her role with the city. The city's goal is to become carbon neutral by 2030, and a big part of that is transitioning to geothermal energy for heating and cooling. The city has already engaged engineers and conducted some feasibility studies, but needs to drill the test well on Forbes property to look at the thermal properties and determine how much energy is available. Their full intention is that there is more than enough energy in the parking lot to supply both the library and the Resilience Hub.

Ms. Collins then addressed the trustees' concerns about disruption to services during the drilling of the test well. She said the noise would be loud close to the drilling, but that inside the building it would be about the same as regular conversation. The test drilling will take about one to two days (8-10 hours per day) and a section of the parking lot will be unavailable during that time. The driveway will not be impacted. She referenced a video from the program *This Old House* showing the drilling process and will forward the link to the trustees. There will be one truck and the drill will be about 6-8 inches wide. They will leave the property in the condition they found it. Once the trustees agree to the drilling, it can happen in 2-3 weeks. Ms. Collins said the city could consider drilling on a Sunday, but that it will take more than one day, and there would be a cost premium. She said there is also parking on street available for library patrons. She said the city will work with the library to make this as minimally disruptive as possible.

The trustees discussed whether approval of the drilling for the test well meant approval for the project as a whole. They agreed that they support the project and that if the test brings back good results would expect to move forward with the project. Ms. Collins said that the test was a critical step

**Geothermal Test Well** (continued)

in determining feasibility, cost, and next steps. In response to a question from Ms. Teschner, Mr. Petcen said that the full project would entail drilling 30 to 40 holes in the parking lot and then connecting them into a reversible chiller in the building. Ms. Downing said that once the project is complete, the geothermal wells would be invisible beneath the parking lot. This project has the potential to provide all of the libraries' heating and cooling as well as that of the Resilience Hub. In response to questions from Ms. Teschner, Ms. Collins and others said that both UMass and Smith College are pursuing large-scale geothermal projects. Ms. Wight said that it aligns with the library's strategic plan to support the community by supporting the Resilience Hub. There is also a proposal to install a generator at Forbes that would also serve the Resilience Hub. It is a completely separate project which would provide power to the library and the Resilience Hub when the power goes out.

Ms. Teschner moved that the trustees support the geothermal project and based on the results of the test drilling, they would anticipate moving forward with the full project. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The trustees thanked Ms. Collins who left the meeting at 4:30 PM.

**Trustee Vacancies**

Ms. Downing reported that the lengthy approval process to change the number of Forbes trustees from five members to seven members was completed when the Governor signed it into law on Thursday, February 29. Here is the relevant section from the board's bylaws in regard to appointments:

Whenever a vacancy occurs on the board of trustees under the will of Charles E. Forbes, the president of the board shall declare a vacancy and, within 30 days following the date of the vacancy, call a meeting of the trustees to fill the vacancy. The board of trustees shall choose a person to fill the vacancy from among the voters entitled to vote for the office. Persons appointed by the trustees to fill a vacancy shall serve only until the next regular city election, when the office shall be filled by the voters. The candidate elected to an office filled by appointment prior to the election shall be sworn to the office immediately, and shall serve for the unexpired term of the seat to which such candidate was elected. If the seat to which the candidate was elected would have been on the ballot for the next regular city election notwithstanding the vacancy, such candidate shall be elected for a full four-year term. No vacancy shall be filled under this section if a regular city election is to be held within 120 days following the date the vacancy is declared to exist.

- As soon as a vacancy is known, the board president should be alerted.
- The president will decide in consultation with the director if a special meeting should be called to announce the vacancy or if it will be added to the agenda of the next regular meeting.
- The vacancy should be broadly publicized to the community at large utilizing print and social media for a period of 10 days.
- Interested candidates will be asked to provide a statement explaining why they wish to serve as a trustee.
- Candidates will be invited to a special meeting to address the board and answer questions by the trustees.

**Trustee Vacancies** (continued)

- Library administration, staff, Friends of Forbes boards members, and the general public should be invited to submit questions for the candidates.
- At the conclusion of the candidate questioning the trustees will select a candidate by roll call vote. If there are multiple candidates, the lowest vote getter will be dropped during each round until someone gets a majority vote.

The Personnel Committee met earlier this week and developed a press release and a set of questions for discussion and approval. The purpose of the meeting today is to officially announce the vacancies, approve the press release and interview questions, and set a date for the special meeting to interview candidates.

Mr. Carrier officially declared that there are two trustee vacancies as of today. This begins the 30 day clock to fill those vacancies by April 14. The trustees reviewed the press release and discussed whether the candidate statements needed to be written or if they could be in audio or video format for accessibility purposes or for non-English language speakers. The trustees agreed by consensus to add a sentence to the press release that accommodations are available upon request and to contact Ms. Downing if they would like to submit an alternate format for their statement or if they have accessibility concerns for the interview meeting.

The trustees considered the proposed interview questions. Mr. Carrier said that the original list had 17 questions, which was narrowed down to 10 questions that focus on the areas that would give the trustees the best sense of each candidates qualifications. In response to a question from Ms. Francis, Ms. Moss said that question #3 was not meant to elicit specific programs the trustee would implement, but to get an idea of how they view the library's role in the community.

Ms. Downing then outlined the process, with the press release going out early next week, and setting the deadline for candidate statement submissions for April 1. In order to be eligible, candidates must be a registered voter in Northampton, Florence or Leeds. Eligible candidates will be invited to a special meeting on Wednesday, April 10 at 5:30 PM in the Coolidge Museum. The meeting will be in-person, with a Zoom option. The trustees will alternate asking the interview questions, and the candidates will alternate the order in which they answer, with each candidate responding to the same question before moving on to the next. After all questions have been asked and answered, the trustees will vote for their top choices, with low vote candidates dropping out until two remain. The President will then appoint the two new trustees, who will need to be sworn in by the city clerk.

Ms. Teschner made a motion to approve the plan as outlined above including the press release and interview questions, the submission of statements of interest by April 1, and the date for candidate interviews to be April 10, 2024, at 5:30 PM. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

At 4:56 PM Ms. Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 PM.