

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Howard Tipton, Town Manager
FROM: Carolyn Brown, Support Services Director
REPORT DATE: February 12, 2024
MEETING DATE: February 20, 2024
SUBJECT: Sarasota County Library Public Outreach / Workshop

Recommended Action

None, Informational only.

Background

A Sarasota County Library planning /public workshop meeting took place on February 12, 2024, at Town Hall, providing an opportunity for residents of Longboat Key to hear background about the planned library project and provide their thoughts and valuable feedback. The methodology used for the workshop was a standard approach for such a community input session, which has been widely and successfully implemented to gather community input on public projects such as a library. It has proven to work well with larger groups, so everyone's ideas are heard and captured.

The Town Manager began the meeting providing background on the original intent of the Town Center project and the progression of conversations and decisions that have transpired over the years, bringing us to where we are now. Former Commissioner Irwin Pastor provide some additional background and insights as well. Sarasota County staff and their design experts, Borrelli & Partners, presented information related to what the base library project will include and the approximate size of these spaces within the anticipated 8,000 square foot facility. Break-out sessions followed the presentation which allowed an opportunity for the public to ask questions and to provide their input on both the base project and any enhancements. Approximately 75 residents and interested parties attended the workshop.

At the writing of this memo, the collected public input has not been assimilated, however some of the general discussions and themes included:

- Community meeting space from 20 to 200 people for book club discussions, chess, movies, presentations, club meetings, adult education and lectures, literacy tutoring, technology training for seniors, office space for the public, etc.
- Rooftop space – viewing area for concerts or fireworks at Town Center
- Reading nooks, reading garden, quiet spots, fountain
- Art exhibit, gallery space, sculptures
- Parking underneath the building
- Elevators instead of ramps
- Children's space, space for homeschoolers and their programs
- Audio visual equipment in meeting rooms
- Creation station, makers space, and instruction
- Bookstore / coffee shop
- Lockers for holds
- Friends of Library.

A second workshop will take place on March 18, 2024, when Borrelli will return with a few concepts for further discussion based on the feedback and findings. Once again public input will be collected so a final plan can be drafted.

A period has been established for fundraising and a deadline associated with timeframe for any donations toward the enhancements. The County will then create a construction project for funding consideration by the County Commission in their 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget process for a base library project. Any enhancements or additions to the project would be the responsibility of private donors. The Sarasota County Library Foundation will serve as the fundraising arm of the project for any additions or enhancements.

Next Steps

Sarasota County has launched their Engage site which has a video recording of the February 12th meeting, as well as a survey which gives the public another opportunity to provide their feedback. The site is:

[Sarasota County, FL: County Library Planned for Longboat Key \(civilspace.io\)](https://www.civilspace.io/sarasota-county-fl-county-library-planned-for-longboat-key)

The next Community outreach meeting will take place on March 18, 2024. Further public input will be collected on some of the concepts presented. Cost estimates will be developed.

Staff Recommendation

None, informational only.

Attachments

- A. Principles of Agreement (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)
- B. Timeline (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item