

About

The Seward Community Library Museum Project held a Public Meeting on March 25th with overwhelming support from the community.

Seward, Alaska has a long history of caring for and using their community library. They also have a colorful history that is preserved at the Seward Museum. Plans are underway to combine both of these community services to better serve the people of Seward.

"The Library/Museum project evolved as a major Seward effort following several public meetings in 2002 called by the Seward City Mayor Edgar Blatchford. He felt Seward needed a spirit of revival and hoped to get townspeople working together for the betterment of the community. These scoping meetings drew a wide spectrum of citizens and a lot of enthusiasm. The Mayor dubbed the effort "SOS," for Spirit of Seward. Fortunately the time period coincided with another project — that of planning for the celebration of Seward's 100th anniversary in 2003."

"Scores of townspeople attending the scoping meetings broke into groups and were directed to develop a list of projects that could be carried into Seward's second century. It was envisioned such a project could be at least started and possibly completed by 2012, the anniversary of Seward's city charter. These meetings resulted in hundreds of ideas. Some were impractical for one reason or another: too grandiose, too costly, not inclusive, narrow scope of interest, too complicated, or did not appeal to enough people. The following goals garnered the most appeal and merged into one project: it must be something for the greatest amount of users, provide year-round benefit, and be directed toward Seward area residents. Knowing both the library and museum have need of more space and that it would be appropriate they be combined in a single structure, it became the chosen project. With that choice evolved the project's motto: "Something For Us." —Bev Dunham

During 2004 Seward community members came together to plan their new library museum. They were asked to dream and dream they did. Armed with information gathered at a series of public meetings and through an image survey, the architect went to work. In December of that year the design concept was unveiled. December 2006, the City of Seward purchased the six lots west of the current library location. The wish to keep the library museum in the downtown area of Seward was the basis for selecting the site as the future home of the proposed library museum.

In 2007, the Seward Community Library Museum Building Committee worked with the Foraker Predevelopment Fund to create a facility that is not only beautiful, but functional and most importantly sustainable. The McDowell Group was commissioned to do a feasibility study on the design concept and also produced a comparison of similar projects for future planners. After reviewing the feasibility findings, the Building Committee went back to the drawing board to pare down the project to reflect the ability of the community to support and sustain the library museum.

The Seward Community Library Museum Building Committee meets every second Thursday of the month in the City Hall Conference Room (unless otherwise advertised) at noon. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call 224-4008 or email plinville@cityofseward.net for more information.