"Action Guide" Follow-up:
Summarizing Some of Our Thinking
March 13, 2017

Thanks to all NPL Staff and Board for your dedicated work as we look to the future. There is much that can be gained through our own collective wisdom. Perhaps a quick review of our most recent work will be helpful as we move forward.

- We read document *"Rising to the Challenge, Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*" created by Aspen Institute. This comprehensive work represents a compilation of best practices in the field of library science. The intent here was to *expand our own knowledge-base* gaining insight from some of the brightest minds in the field.
- We utilized corresponding *"Action Guide"* tool *to help crystallize our thinking* as it relates to re-envisioning Newton Public Library. NPL Staff, Board and Director attended five scheduled work sessions during the past year. Every effort was made *eliciting both verbal and written response from each participant*.
- Our results from *"Action Guide,"* was then summarized and distributed to all participants. A follow-up session was then conducted with intent to *identify trends* from our individual and collective responses that could help prioritize future re-envisioning initiatives.

Expanding our knowledge-base, responding and collecting targeted responses, and then identifying trends will certainly guide future re-envisioning recommendations. During our last session, each participant was asked to respond individually from three specific prompts. All participants responded simultaneously by writing a short description on "sticky notes." There was no limit as to number of responses. Then, the group collected "sticky note" responses from each question, organized/clustered them by similar trend through group dialogue and finally titled each group. The following responses collected and presented below represents those trend titles. I have organized trend titles and individual responses by prompts used during our work session.

Prompt # 1:

How have Action Guide responses from NPL Board and Staff impacted your own thinking as it relates to re-envisioning Newton Public Library? What are you thinking? Maybe think of the three to five most important issues to you.

- Space
    - Parking
    - Staff workroom, lounge, administration
    - Providing a friendly space
    - Create a vertical space/height in central portion of library providing natural light
    - Meeting spaces for community
    - More space necessary to meet community needs-especially meeting rooms & maker space
    - Maker space
    - Re-configuration of library space might help
    - New space
    - New building
- Community
    - Social media is huge
    - Community outreach, need more staff to facilitate and Spanish speaker would be good

- o Partnerships are needed between library and other entities
  - o So important to communicate our purpose and potential to public
  - o We need more community support
  - o NPL needs to become more visible to all community
  - o The library should not be confined by its' walls-get out into the public more
  - o NPL is important to the community
  - o Grass roots advocacy-friends of community
  - o Community buy-in
  - o We need to get the word out to the public
  - o We have very strong programming
- Technology
  - o Keep up with technology
  - o Little understanding of the technology that will drive the future of libraries
  - o Tech digital broadband
  - o More band width and electrical outlets
  - o A big need for updated technology (outlets, band width, hot spots)
- Staff
  - o Continuing education is important for all staff
  - o Importance of staff and staff connections
  - o Our staff is on top of things in the profession
- Library Goals
  - o Common united vision is paramount to improve and move forward
  - o Library needs to examine its barriers that limit service and make it a goal to break them down
  - o Think big when planning for the future
  - o Be solution oriented, not just problem focused

Prompt # 2:

Are there trends appearing in responses that should merit attention in our *collective* *thinking* and dialogue as a board and staff relating to re-envisioning NPL?

- Space
  - o Space and lighting
  - o Need for more space or reuse of space
  - o Creative inviting spaces
  - o We need more space
  - o Focus on spaces rather than materials
- Community
  - o We can change focus for library in the community
  - o More communication with the public; "take our library to the public"
  - o Community connections
  - o Communicating purpose to the community
  - o Library is a "quality of life endeavor in our community"
  - o Library impacts economic growth vitality
  - o Relationships with community partnerships
  - o Outreach to community
  - o We need more staff to meet community needs
  - o Change and educate community perception as to what library can be
  - o How to communicate to and with the public
  - o Provide help for job seekers

- o   Community programs
- Technology
  - o   Process to procure shared e-books and other digital content
  - o   Technology
  - o   More and better Technology
  - o   Technology improvements
  - o   Improving Technology and digital services
  - o   Develop high capacity band-width
  - o   Increase and maintain social media presence
  - o   Need for increased band-width
- Staff
  - o   Importance of staff professional development
  - o   Our staff needs training to stay current on technology, etc….
  - o   Board/Staff relationships
  - o   More staff
  - o   More library staff involvement beyond our walls
- Putting into Action
  - o   Explore grants
  - o   Set priorities, meet architects regarding 1.5-1.75-2.0 million project

Prompt # 3:

Does the current facility present challenges towards re-envisioning NNPL? If yes, what are some of the big issues? What is not working with bricks and mortar? Think "BIG" picture here.

- Structural Issues
  - o   Lighting, lighting, lighting
  - o   Lighting
  - o   Better lighting
  - o   Create central vertical space (windows installed up high above) providing natural light
  - o   Brighten the library/paint the walls/brighter bulbs
  - o   Community meeting rooms
  - o   Accessibility parking, elevators, stairs
  - o   Age of building/old and out dated
  - o   Structural failures
  - o   More and better infrastructure
  - o   Low ceilings
  - o   Overcrowding
  - o   Physical plant problems and replacement cycle (some things are too old to be replaced)
  - o   Primary mechanical systems, elevator
  - o   Addressing all negative water drainage
  - o   Antiquated heating and cooling
  - o   Cost of keeping an old building functional
  - o   Size restraints (programming limited due to space)
  - o   What needs to be repaired/replaced? (Plumbing, electrical, elevator, lighting)
  - o   More electrical outlets, improved electrical to manipulate space
  - o   Reevaluated work spaces for patrons and staff
  - o   More flexible spaces
  - o   Not enough space available

- o Meeting room space
- o Spaces with connectivity for maker-space and meetings
- o Children's area design and walls also too small
- o Places people don't have to be quiet (small meeting rooms)
- o Variety of seating with space
- o Maker-space
- o Tech area
- o Need smaller meeting rooms
- o Reorganizing designated spaces
- o Vending, coffee and refreshments area
- o Business jobs space
- o Staff work and lounge spaces
- o How to store things/books
- Technology
  - o How to create more and new technology
  - o Broad band digital tech
- Finance
  - o Financing changes or building new
- Parking
  - o Lack of parking and accessibility
  - o Parking, parking
- Programming
  - o Consider pop-up events