



CITY OF WASILLA

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

NO. 96-31

DATE: November 6, 1996

FROM: Mary Ellen Emmons, Library Director

THROUGH: John Cramer, Deputy Administrator

SUBJ: Library Building Planning - Update

This memorandum serves to update you on the planning process underway to determine the need for a new public library facility in Wasilla. The current facility serves a population area of 24,000 city and non-city residents. The building sits on a 0.16 acre lot, with 11 parking spaces, and the operation is squeezed into 8000 square feet on two levels. We need to be concerned about safety; the library sits on a very busy corner, and patrons use the post office parking lot for library business. Our former Children's Librarian was hit by a car as she crossed Swanson Street to her own car. Traffic and pedestrian congestion is becoming an increasingly serious problem.

Wasilla Public Library is the fourth busiest public library in Alaska (after Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage). Over 1000 children participate in the annual summer reading program. According to recognized guidelines for public library facilities, our present building should be twice the size to serve today's population area. That does not even account for needed meeting room space. Patrons need study areas; they want more resources. We need to plan for information technology developments. The current facility is not cost-effective in terms of offering up-to-date, efficient service.

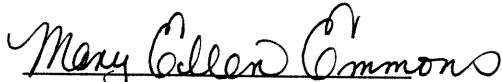
During the past year, the Wasilla Planning Commission and the Wasilla City Council acknowledged the need for an improved and expanded public library facility, and listed the project as a top priority on the CIP list forwarded to the Mat-Su Borough.

In January, 1996, the Friends of the Library Advisory Board voted to establish a building committee, and Marian Romano agreed to chair that committee. In April / May, 1996, the City Council approved funds to hire an architectural firm to coordinate the planning process for three municipal projects: library, community center, ice arena. The firm, Architects Alaska, was retained to coordinate the planning and needs assessment in conjunction with citizen committees.

With regard to the library project, meetings have been held with the general public and the building committee members over the past several months. The last meeting was held on September 12 with Architects Alaska and representatives of the Library Building Committee and the Community Center Committee. Options for distributing a community survey for the projects were reviewed. The estimated cost of conducting a combined survey for the two projects ranges from \$2000 to \$4000.

Unless Council objects, a meeting will be scheduled with Deputy Administrator, John Cramer, Architects Alaska and committee representatives, as soon as possible, to take the next step toward deciding on the survey and future direction of these projects.

Thank you for your interest, and I will be happy to provide additional information to you as needed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ellen Emmons".

Mary Ellen Emmons

Library Director