

**Fort Edward Free Library
Board Meeting
July 22, 2020**

Attendance:

Present: Mary Ellen Fisher, Denise Mayer, Kathleen Smatko, Janelle Rose, Katie Hunsdon-Stannard
Staff: Vicki Plude *Absent:* James Donahue

Welcome:

Meeting called to order by Board Treasurer M. Fisher at 6:32 pm.

This special meeting of The Library Board was requested to discuss property issues with St. Joseph's Catholic church that have come about as we investigate moving the fence to the back of the library property.

Premise - The Library Board been working toward moving the chain-linked fence from its current location to the back of our property, approximately 42 feet further back toward the school (leased by St. Joseph's Catholic Church since 1957). This has involved having the Library's property surveyed and informal discussions with the church.

History - In February of 1934, the library property was acquired from the Last Will and Testament of Harriet Crane with the stipulation that the building and premises of the property be used solely for the maintenance, upkeep and improvement of the Library Association. If the property was used for any other purpose, the property would revert to the estate of Harriet Crane. Therefore, no portion of the property could be sold or signed over to any other party other than the Fort Edward Free Library Association.

When St. Joseph's School was being built in 1957, the school needed additional land for recreational purposes, and it is understood that property owner's on East Street either sold or donated some portion on the northern end of their property to the Church. Since the Library was unable to sell or donate their northern portion, the Library agreed to rent a portion of their property to St. Joseph's for \$12.00 per year. A formal lease was signed in 1959 and has been in effect to this date. The lease stated that the property could not be sublet nor built upon and that the lease could be terminated by either party with a 30-day notification. Subsequently, St. Joseph's School closed, and the property is now rented to BOCES for their use. Whether this is considered a sublet or not is not an issue at this point, but it remains that the property was leased to be used for the purpose of use by St. Joseph's School which no longer exists. For several years the rent was not received probably due to an oversight and not intentionally. Back rent has now been paid and this also is not an issue. This brings us to the present at which time the Library has a need for additional land which this northern portion of the lot provides. Therefore, the Library Board is looking into ending the lease with St. Joseph's in order to make use of the northern end of their property.

The Church Trustees requested a meeting with the Library Board for clarification and to discuss options on where to relocate the fence. V. Plude, M. Fisher, and D. Mayer met with Gayle Smith and Father Tom on July 15th. The Church Trustees expressed their concern that if the fence were moved to the back of the Library property, it would be close (within 6 or 8 feet) to the school's sidewalk and the fence would box in portions of the Church's land making it less useful. The Church proposed relocating the fence in at straight diagonal line (see proposed fence line in attached map) and they would transfer sections of the Church property to the Library that are on the south side of the fence (green polygons on map). Since the Library cannot transfer property, the small section of property (yellow polygon on map) would be leased to the church. This lease would only apply during the period at which the Church owns the present property and would come to an end if the Church property is sold or transferred at any future time. The Church also agrees to remove the present pile of discarded lawn materials from the southeastern portion of their property.

Discussion:

Members of the Library Board understand the Church's concern and are willing to consider the proposed property changes. Some points that were made include:

- The lease should cover the property only while the Church owns the property, not to be transferable to new owners.
- The Church would agree to pay to have the properties surveyed.
- That the surveyor place stakes at the corners of associated properties. J. Donahue indicated to V. Plude that he would have the surveyor contacted for more detailed information on the survey that was recently conducted for the Library.
- The Library would pay for moving and placing fencing.
- With the transfer of property from the Church to the Library (green polygons in Map) we would waive the annual lease fee for property owned by the Library (yellow polygon in Map).
- Need to discuss with the Church which party will file for the boundary line adjustment.

A motion was unanimously approved to request that the Church has a property survey completed to clearly define the Library, Church and neighbor boundaries with the intent to change the boundary lines and placement of the fence as described in the Map (D. Mayer, M. Fisher).

M. Fisher indicated that upon approval of this meeting's minutes, she would talk with Gayle Smith at the Church to communicate the Library Board's decision.

Meeting was closed at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by D. Mayer, FEFL Board Secretary (*insert date following Board revisions*).

