

# BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(4)

## AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: November 20th, 2012

### SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SITE FOR THE SOUTHERN BRANCH OF THE ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY

<b>DEPARTMENT: TOWN MANAGER and PLANNING</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING: NO</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> A- BOCC Agenda Item 9-28-12 B- Comparison of Potential Library Sites based on BOCC Adopted Criteria	<b>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:</b> <b>David Andrews (918-7315)</b> <b>Matt Efird (918-7314)</b> <b>Trish McGuire (918-7327)</b>

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is for the Board of Aldermen to consider a list of potential sites for the Southern Branch of the Orange County Library and provide direction to Town Staff and the Orange County Board of County Commissioners on how to proceed.

#### INFORMATION

Over the past several years, there has been a number of official actions and discussions of a potential Orange County Library branch site in Carrboro. A brief list of the actions that lead directly to the formation of tonight's agenda item is as follows:

- In April 2011, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen approved a rezoning of 210 Hillsborough Road for use as a site for the (then-named) Southwest Branch of the Orange County Library.
- On August 23rd, 2011, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) declined an option to purchase that site for use as a library site.
- On October 13, 2011, the BOCC drafted siting criteria for consideration by the Board of Aldermen.
- At the January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Board of Aldermen meeting, the Board formed a Library Subcommittee made up of Aldermen Coleman, Gist and Haven-O'Donnell for the purpose of discussing and recommending revisions to the siting criteria.
- The Board of Aldermen received updates from the Library Subcommittee on February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and forwarded their comments to the BOCC.
- At their June 14, 2012 meeting, the BOCC discussed modifications to the criteria based on comments by the Board of Aldermen. At that time, Town Staff began developing a list of potential library sites and evaluating those sites based on the criteria suggested by both the Board of Aldermen and BOCC.
- In August 2012, staff met with several Board of Aldermen members to discuss the potential sites and receive feedback on the evaluation process.
- On September 18, 2012, the BOCC approved the siting criteria and requested that the Town initiate public solicitation and review of properties for the southern branch of the Orange County library property based on the approved criteria. (Attachment B)

Town Staff identified a list of potentially available sites of appropriate size/location, or sites that had potential re-development opportunities. The initial list of sites was narrowed from 16 to eight based on availability and economic, physical, environmental or political constraints. Three additional sites were submitted to Town staff for sale or donation by property owners. Those 11 sites were evaluated by Town Staff based on appropriate size for a building and necessary parking, cost (\$/sq.ft.), proximity to downtown, proximity to Chapel Hill Transit routes that serve downtown Carrboro, and proximity to other Educational/Institutional uses or underserved communities. Based on staff evaluation and Board of Aldermen feedback, three sites were identified for further discussion:

- 1128 Hillsborough Road
- 401 Fidelity Street
- 301 West Main Street

A comparison of the three potential sites based on the criteria adopted by the BOCC is included as Attachment C. The identified sites are between 2-4 acres in total size, though all three sites have some limitations to buildable area. All three sites are located in close proximity to Chapel Hill Transit stops that serve downtown Carrboro, and all three are connected to downtown via sidewalks and bike lanes. The three sites are proximate to schools and within a short distance of retail establishments. All three sites offer an opportunity to expand or improve services and create a “beneficial joint development” between the Town of Carrboro and Orange County. Of the currently identified sites, only the 301 W. Main St. site is in an appropriate zone, and the other two would need to be rezoned to an appropriate zoning district.

#### **FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT**

There is no immediate financial impact to the Town of Carrboro associated with this agenda item. Future financial impact would depend on the ultimately selected site and any collaborations or joint development opportunities. Orange County currently has budgeted approximately \$600,000 for property acquisition for the library, and there is approximately \$7.5 million in funding in their 2016-17 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for building construction and design services.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen consider the potential library sites and provide direction to Town and Orange County staff on how to proceed.