

Here's a look at what's happening with Tufts Library construction

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WEYMOUTH -- The main entrance of the new Tufts Library will be bright and feature a spacious lobby with a great view of Weston Park.

“We want people to see the park from the opposite end of the building,” said Dennis Corcoran, a library construction committee member, and former Hingham Public Libraries director.

He said the building's large picture-size windows will allow more natural lighting and provide library patrons with a wide-angle view of Weston Park.

“The front entrance will have a more civic look,” Corcoran said while standing in the lobby as construction crews labored. “The back entrance will be more casual.”

Tappe Architects, a Boston firm, designed the \$22 million library under construction. CTA Construction of Watertown is working with various sub-contractors on the construction of the building.

Weymouth Public Libraries Director Robert MacLean said the 53,000 square-foot building is scheduled to be 99 percent finished by June 1.

“We could then get an owner’s occupancy permit,” he said. “To open the building in June would be good because the kids are getting out of school and starting their summer reading program.”

The plan includes an outdoor amphitheater to host children’s programs, theater group performances, movie nights, and small community gatherings.

The amphitheater, made of Weymouth Granite, was recently completed. Corcoran and Hill International construction supervisor Roger Boddie said the granite was removed from the foundation of the previous 55-year-old library.

“The granite is beautiful,” Corcoran added. “We are trying to have a continuum of what we had before to echo the past.”

He said the new library would have the look and feel of the former Tufts building, “but all the amenities of a 21st century library.”

MacLean said there is still a great deal of work that remains.

“We plan to move furniture and books into the building in May,” he said. “Things are moving quickly.”

MacLean said a Native American dugout canoe, which was previously displayed in the former Tufts, will be moved into the new library before it opens.

“It has been in storage in Williamstown,” he said.

The new amenities at Tufts will include a café in the lobby for patrons to enjoy a cup of coffee while reading a book or periodical. The building plan also consists of a young adult unit, a teen section, an expanded children’s department, 10 student study rooms, five community meeting rooms, and a digital media lab.

“The children’s area will be huge,” said committee member Diana Flemer. “It will be wonderful. There are people I know in Braintree who will want to come here.”

Library construction committee member Cathy Torrey said two meeting rooms would be available for community groups to use after hours.

“There will be a quiet room section for patrons,” she said. “Libraries used to be places where you had to be quiet, but that is not the case now. We want to have a quiet area for patrons who desire that.”

The library will provide patrons with dozens of computers, reliable wireless internet capabilities, additional book volumes, CDs, and DVDs.

Corcoran said the wireless capabilities will be much better than in the former Tufts building, which opened in 1965.

“You know if you have a good wireless if somebody does not ask you, ‘Do you have WI-FI,’ or ‘where can I go to get a better signal?’” he said.

There will be an expanded parking lot next to Weston Park and a new lot on the lawn of nearby South Shore Christian Academy in addition to a small lot near Franklin Street.

The site is required to have parking for 126 cars under the terms of a \$12.1 million grant by the state library commission, and all of the lots combined have approximately 200 spaces.

“You can never have enough parking,” said Corcoran.

He said a crosswalk with updated pedestrian flashing traffic lights would link the parking lot in front of South Shore Christian Academy to the new Tufts.

Boddie said a walkway would encircle the new library and have a variety of plants for people to enjoy.

“There will be a water retention area with plants that can thrive,” he said.

MacLean said it is “exciting and a little nerve-wracking,” as the construction completion date looms.

“We are double-checking and triple-checking on the library side of things to be sure we are getting things done to move into the new building on time and to serve the people of Weymouth,” he said. “There will be a lot of new space in the

building, and we want to be sure we are thinking things through thoroughly with our staffing, procedures, and policies.

Boddie said the new Tufts would be “a point of pride” for Weymouth.

“It will bring the community together,” added Corcoran.

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