

Crowd Packs County Courthouse For New Library Design Forum

By Ken Baume

MILFORD — Pike Library unveiled the full architectural design for a proposed new Pike central library at a public meeting held at the Pike Courthouse on Monday evening.

The meeting was the first of several planned for this summer by the Library Building Task Force to enlist public support for the building design concept, according to Pike Central Library Task Force Chairperson and Library Board Member Maley M. Syracuse, who moderated the meeting.

The meeting attracted close to 175 people, many of whom offered comments after the presentation by

library architect Frederic Schwartz of Frederic Schwartz of New York City.

Schwartz said that he has been professor of architecture at Ivy League universities, Harvard, Yale, and University of Pennsylvania. He said that 20th century major architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Alto, and his professor Joseph Esherick, influenced his designs as did Thomas Jefferson, president and architect of Monticello.

High-profile buildings designed by Schwartz include the Staten Island Ferry Terminal (Whitehall Terminal) in Manhattan, the Chenni (Madras) Airport Terminal in India, and he is

the design team leader on the adaptive re-use design for the World Trade Center in New Orleans.

Following an intensive competition involving 100 architects, Schwartz's cantilevered design was selected in February from the nine architects who actually submitted final designs.

All nine designs were modern, not one was traditional. The proposed Pike Library interior was inspired by Alto, who used a lot of glass, light, and atriums. The exterior was inspired primarily by Frank Lloyd Wright, who frequently used cantilevers, in which the top portion of the building extends beyond and outward from the building base. Wright also likes to use plant-



(Photo by Ken Baume)

At a Pike Library public presentation at the Pike County Courthouse this week of the proposed new central library in Milford Borough were, from the left, Architectural Historian George E. Thomas, Pike Library Task Force Chairperson and Library Board Member Maley M. Syracuse, and Architect Frederic Schwartz.

ings or gravel on the roof of some buildings, including one located in Dingman Township. Schwartz said that his Library design would have vegetation on a flat roof to soften the potential hard edge of the roof line and to better blend the building into the landscape.

The landscape on the proposed Library lot at 4th Street and East Harford overlooks a ravine that leads to the Sawkill Creek. The 18,000-square-foot, multi-storied building, would be set back over 150 feet, have parking in front on either side of the building, and have energy efficient green designs to use solar light to heat in winter. The extensive glass would allow people to interact more closely to nature, according to Schwartz.

During the meeting, one person commented that some of Wright's cantilevered buildings collapsed over time. Schwartz responded, "I didn't get to where I got by building buildings that collapse. My designs

won't collapse."

A Pike Task Force jury of 12 selected the Schwartz design. Six of the jury members were from Pike County and six were from outside the area, having expertise in architecture, history, libraries, construction, design, and cost analysis.

Regulatory Process Syracuse said that the board ratified the Schwartz design selection, though a contract with Schwartz is not in place yet. The contract can't be concluded because the Library Board must go through the Milford Borough regulatory process, starting with the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Some ARB members, such as Beth Kelley, have already questioned whether the proposed Schwartz modern design concept can comply with the Borough's historic district ordinance.

Syracuse said in an interview on Tuesday that the Library design team

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Proposed architectural design by Frederic Schwartz Architects of New York City shows front exterior view from East Harford Street of cantilevered Pike central library in Milford Borough.

