

Minutes of the Library Strategic Plan FY16 Planning Session

September 3, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM by Nancy Baker. Also attending were Robin Julian, Kathy Brundage, Bill Cassidy, Nancy Head, Ted Kranz, Kimberly Ayers, Alternates Steve Mantius, Rande Neukam and Library Director Amy Lapointe. Library Staff members in attendance were Angela Brown, Ruslyn Vear, Jane Martina, Sarah Leonardi, Sarah Hydorn, Becky Bolin, Lucienne Foulks, Toni Dinkel, Mary Milliken, Sara Martina, Michelle Donoghue, and Carole Gasch. Friends of the Amherst Library Members in attendance were Cheryl Forster, Sharron April, and Stephanie Tannariello.

QUESTION posed: What do you anticipate will be our most important service(s) 5 years from now?

Rande: More community integration: 3rd space between home and work. More services, more space, more civic and political groups participation.

Angela: More digital presence. Physical books are still important. More people might integrate ebooks, audio books, music into what they take out of the library. GMILCs and state library collaboration. More music, digital creation at the library.

Ruslyn: Library as neutral gathering place. Cultural sharing without retail/commerce. Everyone can share and find ideas. As technology becomes more integrated in our lives the library will become more important as a place for social interaction. The library is a place to share new thoughts, and get exposure to different thoughts.

The library has the role of preserving the memories of our community. A local history collection is very important. Library has a tremendous role in keeping those things.

Technology – we need to adapt much quicker. We must stay aware of what is changing and be constantly integrating it into our services in order to make it accessible to the public.

Jane: Research. Historical community. Archives need to be more modern and accessible, not just stored in a closet. The best way is to digitize the materials and put it on our website. It is also a good way to preserve it. We also should keep adding current history to the collection.

Sharon: Community hub. The library is a place to gather to meet people outside of the computer. People come to the library to research a project, meet people to connect with a hobby. A place to enjoy changing art. A neutral environment for tutoring, business meetings. Would like to see more technology – such as streaming movies, music, etc.

Sarah L: Focus on mobile services. Our environment is changing quickly. Current library services are still relevant but how we deliver them needs to change. We need to move from products to offering an experience. Need to integrate our services into people's busy workflows and lives. In addition to our currently outreach to the preschools we need to offer outreach to Parkhurst place. Should work on cooperating with other organizations and integrating more with the community.

Becky: Need to focus on supporting the library patron particularly in their pursuit of lifelong learning. Reaching out is important but need to remain human. Provide classes to staff and patrons that help

support technologies like streaming, ebooks, information exchange. Collaborating with other town resources: Town Rec, etc. Springboard off of other community activities. Kiosk that reminds people about the library resources.

Lucienne: How are the demographics of the town changing? This might impact the plan. Newer families with young children are moving into town. It is difficult to anticipate what the needs are. What demographic are we not serving? We should undertake an online survey to get input from the town as to what services they are looking for. The schools just completed 18 mo strategic plans. Mine was CONNECT. We should be tapping more into town and school resources. AMS has STEM lab. Communication as to how the citizens can access that, how they can support library events as well. Some of the aging population that would like to get to the library but can't get here. A "mobile library" (perhaps borrow the Rec. Dept. bus) could address that. There are lots of redundant resources that become more streamlined if we all connected.

Bill: Should try to do more cooperative events: Concerts at Clark Multipurpose room or the Congregational church. Do events outside the library but sponsored by the library. This will make the library a more important thing to the town.

Steve: Library is turning into a community center, that's OK but we must remember we are more than that. Also a place to read.

Toni: Create the need: people need to feel the need for the library. People don't always think of the library as a place to engage. It is a quiet bubble, an escape as well as a portal. It is difficult with our limited space. But we have to be needed to exist. Otherwise you are just part of the big scene and don't stand out.

Cheryl: The library is more of a community space these days. People want to go there instead of their home. Library needs to be set up differently. Some people will want to be on the computers and talking. Need better sound proofing, better tech space. We have great offerings of audio, visual and reading materials. Great job with children's programming. We should concentrate on what we are going right. Keep focused on it. People don't want change, they want something they can count on. Don't want to lose resources by being too busy moving forward. Digitize archives. Cooperative sharing like Boston Public Library. Have different experts come and present such as clay throwing, etc. Help with resume help, formatting help. Individual and group support is an offering people will be looking for.

Mary: We need a balance of services. Have to provide for what people need and want. Literacy is a focus. Book mobile is old but new in the sense it is outreach to people. How do we survey the people who DON'T already use the library? What is that doesn't draw you to the library. Need to communicate with that population.

Sara: Programming is one of our most important services now and in 5 years. We need to reach out to grab those people that aren't coming in. STEM approach to programing. 3D printing, come and build. Combine literacy with STEM. Need to do more outreach with social media – blogging, Facebook, Twitter. Places where the community can comment. Can see what the library is doing. Books are first and foremost but we need to be more. Get attention so we can get them into the library. Then they see all that is here. Technology is continually changing.

Robin: Important services are education, communication and entertainment. How do we support that? Staff will play a much bigger role in educating. More training is needed on how to educate.

Sarah H.: While tech is galloping along and changing but basic brain chemistry is not. Children need to sit in a parent's laps and sit with a book. eBook is not the same experience. We need to continue developing a top collection of books and connecting children and families with those books. In 5 years there will not be a huge change in that. Community center is important. Bring them in as babies and keep them coming here. Meeting space is the biggest need. Constantly feel it. Always struggling to get time in Insight. Our public needs more than just the Johnson room. If we are to continue to be the place where people come for various meetings we need to work on this.

More collaboration with Rec & Schools. Have good connection at the middle school. But there are many places where we could stop duplicating efforts.

Michelle: To me the library is children driven. I only go when they ask. We should have more interaction with school library week. We could participate to let kids know there is more than just the school library.

Kathy: How we present is different but our core mission statement is the same. Need more outreach to increase our perceived relevance. Our personal touch is what separates us. We are not selling anything so we are unique. And there is a great need for that.

Carole: Staff needs better training for dealing with technology. It is constantly changing. Need to offer more workshops on technology. Carlos' tech workshops were very popular. Should offer more children's activities in the evenings to support working parents more.

Nancy H.: Need better communication and cooperation with town departments. All departments need to identify the needs for the town and then have each dept. do what they do best. Maybe the schools are better to do some of the educational aspects. Whole town would benefit.

Amy: Creating young readers is what we are best at. That is our critical role: Early literacy.

Sue: 1000 books before kindergarten program

Stephanie: The library is a special gem in the time especially for children. Need to add more books. But we must also realize that many people are constantly attached to their phone. Need to make folks more aware of downloadable books, magazines. Especially the 30-somethings.

Nancy B: Safe places for people to meet. In winter people probably turn down the heat at home and come to the library to be with people and be warm.

Ran out of time to discuss Q2 but Nancy asked everyone to send any specific ideas/comments to Amy via email.

Rear Garden FENCE Discussion

Fence is library's fence. It was last replaced some 25 years ago with outside funds, probably from the Garden Club but not 100% sure. Painting of the fence was done by Garden Club volunteers.

The adjacent neighbor has proposed to replace the fence. He will provide the labor if we pay for the materials. He also proposed to extend the fence which he will pay for. He has proposed cedar which will cost more but will last longer than pressure treated wood. The estimate was \$3500 for materials for the existing portion of the fence.

There is a meeting on 9/17 with HDC (Historical Development Committee). The HDC wants to know if the Trustees approve the design.

Kathy: Isn't this the town responsibility? Should we really spend Library funds on this?

Robin: OK with spending the money, but the home owner is driving the process. It should belong to us. We should have at least 2 estimates.

Steve: Does it come out of the trust funds or out of the general funds?

We will discuss the funding at the next LBOT meeting on 9/21. It will be posted on the agenda.