

The Holmes Public Library

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Directors Report November 2009

Building Update

The Library has been heated with only one of the two heating units for several weeks. Last week, the second unit was repaired, and we are all crossing our fingers that the repairs will last. Rosemary Waltos, Assistant Building Consultant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners will visit us on Thursday, November 19th at 9 AM. Her site visit will cover a look at our space planning; a conversation about beginning a building program and the position we would be in if we were to seek state construction funding. I am particularly interested as to whether there is funding for facility planning and also on green technology.

Action Plan

The FY2011 Action Plan is attached. We need to approve this document (with any changes) in order to send it to MBLC by December 1. In addition, we need to begin planning how we will proceed with a new long-range planning process. Sandra Nelson has a new planning process model available called Strategic Planning for Results. The new process is significantly streamlined and can be completed in four months. When we are through the process, I would look forward to working with the accompanying book called Implementing for Results.

Book Clubs

Susan has begun a new Afternoon Readers Adult Book Club will meet at the Library on Tuesday, November 10 at 1:00 PM. The program is intended for adults of all ages, and the program is a collaboration with the members of the Halifax Council on Aging. Susan will lead the discussion of the chosen book Lily of the Valley written by Suzanne Strempek Shea. The book is about life in a small Massachusetts town where Lily makes her living as an artist. She comes to a greater understanding of her relationships with family and friends while working on a commission for the richest woman in town.

Meanwhile, Jean has a special surprise for the members of her Book Group, but I will let Jean tell you about her surprise. Her book this month will be held on Tuesday, November 17 at 6:30PM for a discussion of Hallie Ephron's Never Tell a Lie, a relentlessly fast-paced and disturbingly creepy thrill ride about how well we know the people we love and how far we are willing to go to protect the secrets of our past.

Finally, Marie's Not-For-Children-Only Book Club has begun! Parents and children are invited to read the book and join us for discussion on Monday, November 16 at 6:00 PM. The first selection is Gary Schmidt's The Wednesday Wars, a gentle, hopeful, moving story of a boy who, with the right help, learns to stretch beyond the limitations of his family, his violent times, and his fear, as he leaps into his future with his eyes and his heart wide open.

Children's Programming

This past October, the Children's Room provided programs for about 200 children through our weekly storytimes and Holmeswork Help. The Holmeswork Help is a small crowd this year but appropriate and enthusiastic. The Halloween Costume Parade Party hosted about 45 Parents and Children. Everything has been moved to its final spot in the Children's area. Starting in November, children will be asked to

trace and decorate a green hand for our Holidays in Halifax Christmas tree display. The Friends purchased lots of Legos, and Marie plans to hold a Lego club storytime for older kids on an evening over December break.

Safe Routes to School/Bicycle Safety Program

We have a meeting with Courtney Croteau, School Outreach Coordinator for MassRIDES on Monday, December 7th in the Community Room at 9:30. Courtney will make a brief presentation about the Safe Routes to School Program. The intent of the meeting is for us to have a conversation with Courtney about Halifax and the services that are immediately available if Halifax becomes a Safe Routes program partner. In particular, the Safe Routes program provides no-cost services directly to Elementary Schools, including free pedestrian and bicycle education. For example, there is a Boston-Based group that has a program geared for 2nd and 3rd graders to teach them safety education on walking to school (they are not ready to walk to school alone yet, but this helps them develop the skill set). For 4th and 5th graders, there is also a very dynamic speaker from MassBikes who is quite effective in terms of reaching the kids. In addition, there are all kinds of incentives including pedometers and educational materials.

More importantly, as a partner, a team of engineers will come to our site to do an assessment. With that assessment, the Town will be eligible to apply for 100% federal funding (usually 35 Massachusetts communities receive a grant, so it is competitive) for the recommended infrastructure changes (sidewalk improvements, for example.) I am also interested in the possibility that this meeting might culminate in a local bicycle and pedestrian safety awareness program on Wednesday, May 5th which coincidentally is International Walk to School Day. The idea would be to remind the children how to be safe when school is out.

Floor Plan and Collection Development Policy Part II—Tech Office & Magazines

The next phase of our collection reorganization plan is to remove one stack section from the Tech Office. This will free up more space for staff work areas. We will find a new, larger desk for Amy and place it near the center of the room so that she can also keep an eye on the circulation desk. As part of this move, I would like to revise the Collection Development Policy to state that the Library keeps only the current year of periodicals, or, as in the case of weekly magazines, only the amount that will fit on the public shelves. Because of the electronic databases, and with only a few exceptions, such as Consumer Reports, patrons no longer ask for back issues. We will of course keep periodicals with local content.

Joint Meeting with Friends of the Library

I'd like to confirm that we hold a special Trustees meeting with the Friends of the Library on Wednesday, December 2nd at 6:30 PM. The event will be partly social, but with a two-item agenda to plan a Staff/Volunteer Appreciation event and to begin a plan to re-dedicate the Gallerie Petite using the program from the original dedication as the model. That program consisted of a "gala" art opening with an exhibit of the work of local artists and a formal written program. The idea is that from that point forward, a new exhibit will show in the room. This project can be one that the proceeds of funds can be directed to: the room can be refreshed with paint, new signs, new mounting mechanisms for the art and perhaps a new carpet.

SAILS Acquisitions Training

Rose and I are learning to order and record the purchase of new library materials electronically. The advantage is that staff and patrons will immediately know what has been purchased but has not arrived yet. This will be a nice improvement in public service that both patrons and staff will enjoy.

Holidays In Halifax

I attended a meeting of Holidays in Halifax, and the library is looking forward to being a “venue” for the event which will be held on Saturday, December 12. I will be attending their next meeting on Thursday, November 12th and will have more details then.

State Budget

The FY2011 State budget news for libraries is bleak. The governor has asked MBLC to submit a budget that includes a 28% reduction. The primary impact of this cut for us is that the regions will merge into probably three which means that Staff will have to travel further for training. In addition, the State Aid to Public Libraries line item has taken another hit. Last year, we received \$12,680. Because of cuts, this year, we expect only \$8,648. The governor’s budget has reduced this line item by another \$248,000; we have not heard the final what the impact on our funding will be. This is an important line item for us because it supplement’s the Town budget to pay for our network (SAILS) expenses.

Other Library Activities

Amy set up a cranberry recipe exhibit to complement the historic material from our collection on “Cranberry Science—Yesterday and Today.” Cranberry-Walnut Trifle anyone?

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra DeJonker-Berry,
Library Director