

Information gathered for library study

Group eyeing new building, site

By Jeff Shmase

LYNNFIELD – About 50 residents gathered at the middle school last Thursday to offer their input as to what they would like to see in a new public library. The meeting was the first of several that are being scheduled by organizations that have been hired to produce a study that will determine the future of the building. Subsequent meetings will be held in December and in March, 2016, leading up to April Town Meeting at which time it is expected that an article will be placed on the warrant in which voters will be asked if they support the submission of a grant application with the state to help pay for a new building.

The meeting began with a brief overview of the project and an introduction of two representa-

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How about ...



Photo by The Priestleys

Residents provided input last week at the middle school to officials who have been hired to



Photo by The Priestleys

Ted Caswell of the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee makes a point during last week's public input meeting on the possibility of a new library.

Forum attendees speak of need for meeting space

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tives from the design firm, William Rawn and Associates. After library trustee Russell Boekenkroger explained the reason for the forum, attendees then moved from the auditorium to the cafeteria, where they were divided into four groups. Attendees spoke of what they would like to see in a new library.

One man said there is a big need for a meeting room. Ted Caswell, chair of the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, a group that is not only monitoring the future of the library, but also Town Hall, the police and fire departments, agreed. He said the meeting room at the Al Merritt Center at Market Street Lynnfield is used every night, an indication there is a need for community gatherings.

Jessica Tortolli, a mother to twin 4-year-old boys, said the library needs space for children of

all ages. She said she frequents area libraries with her kids, and said a new building with parking "would be wonderful." She said if the library could serve as a place where young children would want to congregate then it could serve those children down the road as well.

"If you get them while they are young, they will keep going. It would be such a great thing."

Kevin Bergeron of William Rawn said his firm's job is "to right size the building and get a clear idea of the cost. There is an equal weight to both."

The current building is about 21,000 square feet and, in addition, to lacking dedicated meeting space, has had flooding issues in its basement. Officials are looking at a new building in the range of 25,000-30,000 square feet for a community the size of Lynnfield, with the goal of having about 70 dedicated parking spaces.

The last time library officials

submitted a request for state funding it was determined that it did not have adequate parking or the room for sufficient parking at its current location at the Town Common. The owner's project manager and architects for the current plan are eyeing land where the Reedy Meadow Golf Course is located. The building would be located to the right of the existing clubhouse as you look toward Town Common.

While the proponents are not wed to that site, it has the lead in the clubhouse. Caswell described the area as beautiful.

Should Town Meeting approve the article, the library would then have until June/July of 2017 to submit the grant with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The commissioners will not fund the entire project, meaning the town would be responsible for funding the remaining portion of the project.