

# Dialogue begins on new library

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By DAN TOMASELLO

LYNNFIELD — Lynnfield Public Library officials held two public forums on March 5 to update residents and library patrons on the library's building program and to give local residents an opportunity to weigh-in on the project.

In order to make the meetings convenient for townspeople, library officials held a forum at 10 a.m. on March 5 and a forum at 7:30 p.m. as well. There were nine attendees at the 10 a.m. forum.

## Background

Library Director Nancy Ryan began the forum by giving a history lesson about the library, which she said is a "jerry-rigged" building due to a number of different renovations. She said the town transformed the original Centre School, now the children's room, into the library in 1904. She said the library added a 700 square feet addition in 1957.

The library expanded again in 1967 when an additional 7,940 square feet was added, which is when the library "took on the

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shape and size it is now." The expansion added the mezzanine, reading room, Palladian window and the library's lower level.

Ryan said the library was once again renovated in 1990, when a ramp, elevator and air conditioning were added. The circulation desk and library offices were also moved, the restrooms were relocated and the HVAC system was upgraded.

The children's room was renovated in 2012, which included painting the walls and trim as well and a new painted mural. New light fixtures, ceiling tiles, tables, chairs, a bench, computer workstations and reference desk were included. Ryan said the Rotary Club also donated a caterpillar activity bench and stools to the children's room.

**Building program**

Ryan said the role of the library is changing in the community due to the increased use of technology.

"(Technology is) forcing public libraries in the 21st century to take a look at what they are doing, realign their priorities and move forward to attract new people of different ages," said Ryan. "We have to come up with new programs and collections that will interest a variety of different people. The library can no longer be a warehouse for books and magazines. Those days are gone and we have to change."

Library consultant Mary Braney is assisting library officials with



**THE LYNNFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY held two public forums on March 5 to update interested residents and library patrons on the library building program as well as gain feedback from residents. The forums were moderated by, from left, Library Assistant Director Samantha Cabral, Library Building Consultant Mary Braney and Library Director Nancy Ryan.**

**(Dan Tomasello Photo)**

the library building program. She began working on library building projects over 20 years ago when her hometown, Spencer, constructed an addition for its library.

As part of the library's building program, Braney has been working with library staff, local officials and townspeople to collect feedback about what they believe is "crucial" for the library's programs and services. She said the feedback has been positive.

After the data is collected,

Braney will "quantify" the data as part of the building program, which will be compiled in a report.

"It's been a comprehensive process," said Braney. "It's been great to hear what the library's needs are from different constituents."

Braney said a new library will need to be constructed at a new location because the library's current location is "not large enough to accommodate what we need."

According to Braney, there will be a multi-step process before a

new library can be constructed. The library received a \$50,000 planning and design grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners last year. After the building program report is finalized, the library will need to hire an owner's project manager and an architect. Additionally, voters will have an opportunity to vote on a new library at Town Meeting.

"You'll have an opportunity to say yeah or nay," Ryan added.

**Q&A**

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