

Frequently Asked Questions about our plans for a new library

1-Why build a freestanding library separate from the current library shared with the school?

Separating the libraries will allow each library to function fully and serve our community better.

A public library allows open access to all information to everyone in our community, not just children. The library supports our First Amendment rights to free speech.

A school library supports the curriculum, filters the Internet, and protects the children. Ideally, it is a secure space restricted to students in school.

2-What will happen to the school library when the new library opens?

In the gained space the school will be able to expand media services and house an academic commons.

When the new library is built, the security of the school library will increase, thereby ensuring the safety of the children during the day.

3- Would the school library lose books?

The school currently owns about 9,000 books, which will stay with the school. The public library owns about 11,000 children's books. These books are geared more toward enrichment, leisure reading, and non-curricular subjects as well as books geared for preschoolers. The remaining 14,000 books are adult books, on adult topics. Public library books will move to the new public library.

Each year the school library has a budget to purchase materials that support the curriculum.

4-What will happen after school when the new library opens?

The school offers after school programs. Children are always welcome to come to the public library. The school will ensure students are dismissed safely.

5-Won't building a new public library raise taxes?

The Board of Trustees for the Cranbury Public Library continues to make fiscally responsible planning our priority. The Board is exploring all avenues of funding a new building, including private sources, grants, and corporate donations. By augmenting our savings, we hope to have enough money to build a new facility without raising taxes.

6-How is the public library funded?

In New Jersey, municipal libraries receive most of their funding through a local tax appropriation. The tax is based on a percentage (1/3 mil) of the "equalized assessed value" (EVA) of property. The EVA is calculated annually by the state and determines the minimum funding for each library. In our town, this amounts to about 2% of property tax dollars. The Cranbury Public Library has always operated on this mandated funding and has not needed additional public funds. In many towns, public libraries are funded above the minimum.

7-How will the library pay utilities and maintenance of a new building?

Currently the library pays rent to the school. After researching similar buildings, we believe that the library can comfortably afford to pay utilities and maintenance in a new energy efficient building.

8-Can't we just go to Plainsboro or Monroe if we want library services?

As a result of our having our own public library, we are able to participate in what is called "reciprocal borrowing". If we did not have a public library, one would have to pay for the library services in that town.

In addition, survey and interview results show that residents value having a library in the center of town. Our public library contributes to property values, serves as vital community center, and people appreciate the easy accessibility. Studies show a municipal public library is good for locals businesses.

9-What role will the library play in the future?

The library will always serve as an educational and information center. Whatever form the book may take, the public library will be able to provide it. Also, public libraries are community living rooms where all members of the town are welcome.

10-Why does the public library have a \$600,000 reserve account?

According to New Jersey library law, a municipal public library is obligated to plan for the future and place on reserve any extra monies from the daily running of the library toward this plan.

11-Where will people park for the new library?

On May 9,2016 the Township agreed to build the adjacent municipal parking lot on the library building time line. On October 20, 2016 the Township Planning Board recommended the site plan for the new library and municipal parking lot at the end of Park Place West. The new lot will serve both the business community and the new library.

12-When will you open the new library?

The Cranbury Public Library Foundation has raised two thirds of the funding for the new library. The project is "shovel ready". The Library Board of Trustees will apply for a state library construction grant as soon as the NJ State Library develops the criteria and application for the NJ Library Construction Bond grant process. If we receive a state grant we can break ground in 2018.

13-Why not just move the library to a vacant building on Main Street?

Early on, the Library Board seriously considered other buildings on Main Street. Each building did not meet the needs of a new library for a variety of reasons; space, load restrictions, access, and cost to retrofit. The Board kept in mind that:

- The land for the library is allocated on the Master Plan
- The library shouldn't take away a ratable building
- Libraries have specific load and space requirements
- The utilities are included in the operating budget so we want a high energy efficient building
- And finally, the Board has paid an architect to design a library specifically for Cranbury on the land allocated on the master plan

The Library Foundation has raised all the money for a new modern facility. This facility is what our donors have reviewed, want, and paid money towards.

Kirstie Venanzi
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