

MERIDEN LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

While the Meriden Library Building Committee (as appointed by the Plainfield Library Trustees) hopes that we already have your support for the new Meriden Library, we would like to take this opportunity to share answers to frequently asked questions about the project.

Why are we talking about a new Meriden Library?

At Town Meeting 2017, a warrant article to defund the Meriden Library was voted down 225 to 29. With this show of overwhelming support for the Meriden Library, the latest iteration of the Meriden Library Building Committee was formed to make a recommendation for how to move forward. Seeing as the existing Meriden Library is not ADA-compliant, the building committee was tasked with proposing a plan to rectify this, making the Meriden Library a building all community members can access and enjoy. Our proposed building design is ADA-compliant, is in keeping with Plainfield's Ready For 100 energy goals, and is more than 80% paid for by pledges and existing funds.

The town owns a piece of land on Bonner Road, adjacent to the elementary school. Why aren't we building the new library there?

We've considered the various needs of the town, and the current library site is the one that will best meet the community's needs. We've seen no compelling financial reason to site the building anywhere else. There is not a site within the confines of the town that offers significant savings, and money has already been spent to assess the Bean Road site.

I've been hearing a lot about this being a Ready For 100, energy-efficient building. What will the annual energy costs of the new building be? How do they compare to costs of the current building?

This is the same building we proposed last year as a Ready for 100 building; the only thing that has changed is the financing, as the Meriden Library Foundation has raised significant funds over the last year. This new Meriden Library will cost significantly less on a square foot basis than the existing building. It will have approximately the same operating costs as the current building for a larger space. If approved, this would be the first town-owned Ready For 100 building in Plainfield.

This new building features a 30-person meeting room. Why do we need that?

The Meriden Library runs a number of popular programs for all ages, from after-school early release programs to Humanities Council events with guest speakers, book clubs, poetry evenings, puppet shows, and so on. Right now, many of these programs are moved elsewhere — to the school, the Duckworth Museum (which is no longer a resource), or the Meriden Town Hall. This meeting room would allow the library to grow its roster of programs, and to have a permanent home for existing popular events. The Meriden Library also hosts a great deal of meetings and small community gatherings, and having a suitable, handicap-accessible space to do so is of utmost importance.

Was this project put out to bid? How did you arrive at working with Bensonwood?

The Meriden Library Building Committee considered a variety of approaches to this project, ultimately deciding on the one we considered to be the most fiscally responsible. We did discuss putting different parts of the project out to bid and had some preliminary talks, but this approach would have required hiring a separate architect, and breaking out

the other pieces of the job had too high a degree of uncertainty in terms of both the numbers and the timeline. Working with a design-build firm provides us with a total package and a much tighter sense of financials. As we explored the design-build options, Bensonwood's focus on energy efficiency made them the best fit for the project.

What is the plan for storing furniture and circulation materials during the demolition and construction process?

Since the materials don't need to be accessible during the demolition and building process, we're looking into a weather-tight tractor trailer with humidity control. These trailers can be stored on site, or at another town-owned site. We will **not** hire a moving company to pack books in boxes and store them; volunteers will move the books. These storage costs have already been factored into the existing budget for the project.

What are the overall tax implications for me, specifically, if this project is approved at Town Meeting?

We currently have approximately \$863,000 toward this project in pledges and existing funds. The Library Trustees are putting forth a warrant article for a **one-time payment** of \$183,000 to be approved at the 2020 Town Meeting. This works out to \$0.60 on the tax rate, or approximately \$60 on a \$100,000 house for **one year only**.

In summary, the Meriden Library Building Committee was formed to look at the challenges presented by the existing library, and to make a recommendation to the town for how best to address those limitations. Building upon the work of previous study committees' efforts and conclusions, we have met regularly over the last 2.5 years, investing a great deal of thought, research, and discussion into our proposal. The new library will eliminate the liabilities associated with the existing building, improve functionality, and minimize costs going forward. It will serve the community safely and efficiently for decades to come. We strongly believe that this is the time to do this project.

The Meriden Library Building Committee:

Jeff Albright, Leeli Bonney, Terri Crane, Joe Crate, Shannon Decker, Judy Hallam, Bill Knight, Shawn Rogers, Suzanne Spencer, Library Trustee Liaison *Jeanne Woodward-Poor*

Advisors: Mary King, Brad Atwater, Steve Halleran