



To: Peter Joseph, Town Manager  
From: Courtney Sparks, Library Director  
Date: September 20, 2022  
Re: Update on Library expansion plans

Staff hired Simons Architects in 2019 to design a conceptual plan for an expanded and redesigned Youth Services area. We spent \$7,500 of the \$10,000 approved by the Council. Plans were finalized in June 2021 and focused solely on the Youth Services area. The conceptual design included a project budget with cost projections of \$1.5 million (using 2021 estimates). Staff put the project on hold when it became clear that there would be a significant leadership change at the end of the year, and it appeared library usage had shifted during the pandemic. Once I became director, I decided to pause the project because it does not include a complete, wholistic assessment of the building. At this point in time, I'm not comfortable asking the community for such a large sum of money for a project that impacts less than half the building.

Within the past year, staff have identified several areas of concern/need within the building outside of the Youth Services area. More adults are using our space as mobile offices and require a mix of quiet and meeting space for teleconferencing. Staff space is tight, inefficient and ergonomically challenging. Young adults have returned to the library as an after-school hangout, but the numbers are not yet as high as they were pre-pandemic. We will be paying close attention this school year to see if more kids come inside. Yet, even with decreased numbers, we have maxed out our space. Other needs already identified:

- Small & medium sized meeting/study rooms
- Dedicated quiet space in both Youth Services and Adult Services
- Redesigned circulation desk w/ergonomics and efficiency in mind
- Sound dampening throughout the library
- Improved lighting in the adult wing
- More space for young adults
- Increased shelf & floor space for Youth Services

With an eye on fiscal management, I'm recommending that we:

- Re-engage with Simons Architects for a complete space utilization study using unrestricted gift money.
- Form a building committee comprised of library staff, the library board, town office staff, RSU staff, Freeport citizens, and Council.



The goal for the building committee will be to determine a new plan, cost estimates, and recommendations for the Council to review at the winter budget workshop. Using creative space redesign to keep costs as low as possible, this plan will factor in how the building is currently being used, update areas in need, and get the building in good shape for another 10-15 years.

Courtney Sparks  
Library Director