

**MINUTES OF THE BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY
LIBRARY AMBASSADORS GROUP**

Bloomfield Township Public Library
Oakland County, Michigan
Tuesday, March 23, 2021
Held via Zoom

Trustees Present: (via Zoom) Tom Deska, Sandra Edwards, Danielle Gillman, Judy Lindstrom, and Joan Luksik

Trustees Absent: Grant Gerhart

Administration: (via Zoom) Director Carol Mueller, Assistant Director Tera Moon, Administrative Assistant Linden Godlove

Guests: Bloomfield Township Residents Lyle Dahlberg, Wes Dietrich, Julie Gheen, Yona Grey, Kim Hoke, Joy Murray, John Owens, Albert Sasson, Jay Shah, Constance Silver, Shane Spradlin

President Judy Lindstrom expressed that she was thrilled that “everyone is here.” She explained the proceedings for this first meeting and that it will be an overview of strategic planning.

Brief Introductions were made by the Library Board and the present staff. The Ambassadors introduced themselves and shared their history with the Library and Bloomfield Township.

Strategic Planning –

President Lindstrom introduced the first topic of conversation: strategic planning. The Library will soon embark on its 6th strategic plan. Director Mueller was quoted as saying, “a strategic plan is a road map that helps you to plan bigger and broader.” Attendees provided feedback on a series of questions.

1. What do you value the most about the Library?

- Accessibility and safety precautions (especially during the Pandemic)
- Flexibility of services
- Plethora of accessibility
- Inviting environment (building and gardens) where one wants to spend time
- Safe and well-lit facility
- Other nearby libraries “pale in comparison” and out of town visitors are impressed
- Spaces for the community to meet and to meet the community (for example, meeting rooms, book sales, programs)

- One of the few places where physical books can be perused
- Being able to check out books
- The variety of book formats (audiobooks, downloadable books, print, etc.)
- Melcat (and the ability to borrow from other libraries)
- The quality of the collection
- Great teen collection and spaces for the teens to gather
- Children's collection and programming
- Programs
- Spectacular children's area
- Culture of service
- Helpful staff that is front and center

2. *What is one of your best experiences with the Library?*

- "Serving on the Board of Trustees—the Library has great leadership"
- Staff in reference took time assisting with getting an app to work on a patron's phone
- Visitor found children's department well-stocked and grandchildren had a great time
- Staff personally escorted patrons to the Library materials they were looking for (rather than just giving directions or pointing)
- Watching his son check out comic books and selecting classics after walking past them on the way out
- Watching a librarian patiently try to assist a patron over the phone for a prolonged time, continually offering help until they eventually seemed to find a solution
- A teenager personally thanking a librarian for service and assistance through four years of high school
- "The Library is the last place where you can walk in and people try to help you without trying to sell you something"
- When the Library reopened after the stay-home order, it was a "hallelujah" moment in their household
- Library books supported homeschooling
- Feeling so welcome walking into the Library
- Librarian was so excited to see someone return to the Library after the stay-home order
- An extensive Accessibility Support Collection which is very telling of the inclusive environment the Library promotes,
- Community support for millage in 2014 that supported building and staff

3. *What do you wish the Library would do to become even more exceptional?*

- Game clubs (like board games) for community to meet face to face
- Recognize the importance that gathering plays in community's mental health and provide opportunities to connect with others---more classes for adults beyond computer classes--like health, history, religion, cooking, more book sales, more author events and lectures
- More adult classes (streaming or remote)
- More concerts (outdoor events)

- Leverage talented community people for programs and presentations
- Book group for 20-30 year olds promote use of facility meeting spaces
- A café (like Starbucks or Einstein Bagels) as a revenue stream and a service
- Drive-up window
- Better signs
- More diverse staff (reflective of the brown and black people in the community)
- The Library can be conservative in change
- Longer bestseller lending time
- Displays in children's area can be too provocative for young ages (particularly in regards to sexual behavior or religious beliefs)
- Improve the website, with a stronger search feature, results/suggestions based on interests, "trending now" feature—more things like Amazon.com

4. *What services and programs do you see the Library needing to focus on for the next five years?*

- More recognition from staff (no badges)---perhaps using technology (like Uber) to provide feedback or rate
- Outreach from Library to connect with community (especially schools)
- Working more with the small business community
- Reaching non-users
- Teen programming (especially coding, STEAM)
- Intergenerational programing (like teens with seniors)
- Discovering what the millennial generation wants from the Library
- Marketing (ensure that the community knows about the great things the library does), leverage the new ways of communication that have become popular during the pandemic
- Community surveys
- Focus on the Library as a community center (ways for people to gather)
- Rental program (like cameras, laptops)
- Makerspace, programs for aimed at young adults/young professionals
- Outreach to preschool parents to teach the importance of building a habit of coming to the Library
- Toy bags connected to books
- Wrap-around service for homeschooling (partnering with homeschooling services),
- Maintaining books by mail
- Mobile Library
- Increased availability of digital books
- Library materials acquisition suggestion box option on website

Judy thanked everyone for their insights and suggestions.

Future Topics to Discuss

Ideas mentioned:

- Reaching the Community: Marketing and Outreach
 - How to magnify reach when the world starts reopening/the pandemic is over

- Outreach to Senior community and nursing homes (and discussions within Senior homes)
- Connecting with the business community--for pro-bono assistance, resources, meeting room use, etc.
- Making Space for the Community: The Library as a Community Center
 - What is the role of the Library?
 - How does it best serve all of the community?
 - The role of the Library in civic education in the community
- Diversity in the staffing
- Formal surveys (targeted to demographics)
- The budget: how it is generated
- Space needs and space use

Closing

Judy Lindstrom thanked everyone again for their participation and applauded them. Sherry Anderson said, "Volunteers don't get paid because they are priceless." She expressed that it was wonderful to see everyone again.

The next Library Ambassadors meetings will be Tuesday, July 27, at 7:00-8:30pm p.m.