

THANK YOU! I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the voters of Guilderland for approving our Library Renewal plan at the ballot box last month! The entire library community, the staff, the Board, and the Foundation are grateful and energized. As we wrote on Facebook the day after the election, thank you for allowing us to grow to serve you better. Your input and involvement is invaluable – this is YOUR library!

We were pleased to win the election by a vote of 58% in favor to 42% against. For those who voted no, I hope you will contact me to chat about how much the library has to offer that you may not be fully aware of at this point. We are the library, gathering place, and de-facto community center for all who live or work in the Guilderland Central School District. You may be pleasantly surprised by all we can offer you and your family - check us out!

As you know, the Renewal Plan will add a new 6,400 square-foot children's department to the East end of the library, allowing us to accommodate much larger story times and kids' classes than the current facility holds—in the children's department, as intended. There will also be a hands-on activity center for families of children too young to read themselves, stocked with Lego tables, train tables, and similar stimulating stuff. Studies resoundingly show that imaginative play is a vital component of early literacy, establishing positive patterns of lifelong learning.

Another exciting aspect of the plan will include a defined teen center, where our young people can have a place to study, play board games, work on computers, and hang out with each other in a safe, non-commercial space. Teens—and others—often need rooms for group study, and we will be expanding the availability of such rooms from three to four, and another room will have a divider allowing us to offer six study rooms at peak times.

Adult meeting room space will grow too, as we will carve out a third public meeting room, just a tad smaller than the Normanskill Room, for adult meetings and programs. We hosted 190 community groups last year, and this number will keep growing. We are glad for the opportunity to grow along with the demand.

Our coffee shop and used bookstore will offer library patrons a hot cup of coffee or tea, along with light refreshments such as bagels, cookies, snacks and the like. Much like Barnes & Noble or other local libraries like Saratoga, patrons will be able to linger and leisurely enjoy their visit. Our plan is to outsource this space to a local business, creating a revenue opportunity for the library. One of the concerns some voters expressed was the idea that the coffee shop might fail to thrive, and the library would then be stuck with that space. Should that happen, the space is easily convertible into more space for reading and study.

So, when does all this get started, you might ask? With any luck, we'll be all done with the project by July of 2022. That might seem like a long time, but let me explain the steps in order.

This month, we'll submit a letter of intent to the State Education Department (SED). We'll also secure the services of a Construction Management firm for final estimates prior to going to bid. These estimates of course cannot exceed the amount specified in the referendum. The architects and design team will need until March 2020 to develop detailed construction documents to be used by contractors bidding on the project.

Also in August, we'll submit the first of three annual applications to SED Division of Library Development (DLD) asking for state library construction grant funds to defray some of the costs to local taxpayers. Anything we get from this process would be received in Summer 2020, and be used for the project and related building needs. Because this is competitive grant funding, we could not "count our chickens before they hatched" when going to the referendum vote. So, if we are successful in attracting construction grant funding, we will use it to replenish a portion of the 1.4 million in our capital reserve funds currently designated for the project.

The first construction grant application will be for improvements to the "building envelope," including resealing the skylights and replacing and tightening up windows and doors throughout the building, which will receive energy efficiency and security upgrades. We will also undertake a full remodel of our public restrooms, replacing all fixtures with low-flow water-saving devices and updating the countertops and tile throughout.

During this period we will also be working on site preparation—making our land ready for a building extension and an improved parking lot.

By March of 2020, all detailed construction design documents will be completed and submitted to SED Facilities Planning Department for mandatory review. Here is where we really have to hope for the best—SED review can take many months, sometimes a year or more. Hopefully, our review will be expedited. The plan is to go to bid around April of 2021, and to select the lowest qualified bidder, as mandated by law, in May.

Once a winning bid is chosen, we will hold a groundbreaking ceremony around May of 2021. The construction plan is to build the new children's department first, and then to move the existing children's department into that space. We will want to get this space enclosed before winter, so that we can add finishing touches and move the children's portion of the library into new space. This will allow us to proceed with all other renovations in the building—the teen center, the new meeting rooms, the coffee shop, and also the renovation of the adult areas of the building with new furniture, carpet, shelving, and floor plan improvements. Concurrently, we'll be working on parking lot improvements.

When the plan is complete, there will be the two large public restrooms, and five single-family, gender-neutral restrooms throughout the building, one near the current public restrooms, and four on the East end of the building near the children's, teens, and adult spaces. These restrooms can be used by families with young children, or by those who require a separate facility.

The overall construction plan will be developed with the goal of completing the project as soon as possible, but also with every effort made to reduce the amount of time that the library might need to be closed to the public. Our goal is to remain open as many hours as possible during the various phases of construction. We will ask the public to bear with us during construction, as we want to make sure that we provide the maximum public services possible during these exciting improvements.

If all goes according to plan, look to attend a grand opening around July 2022! Again, our sincere thanks for your input and support!

Meanwhile, it's that time of year again, as we once more mount an ambitious Summer Reading Program to keep kids busy over the summer and reduce "summer slide," the regression in reading and other

study habits that can occur over the long summer break. We are the partners and assistants to the Guilderland Central School District, helping prepare kids for success the following school year.

We are looking forward to giving you more “space” to enjoy the library, so it’s great to announce that the statewide theme for Summer Reading is “A Universe of Stories!” The kickoff event and program registration ice cream party will take place on Friday June 28th, with sessions from 3-4 p.m. and 6-7. Join us for a free ice cream treat and sign those kids up for some amazing, fun learning activities! A full slate of programs will be announced on our website soon. Highlights include a Life Size Solar System exhibit, an “Out of This World” family jam with the Hilltown Ramblers, and an all-day Star lab with the Dudley observatory. While you are here, check out one of our new telescopes—the latest addition to our popular “Library of Things,” stuff you’d like to use, borrow, experiment with, and then return to the library for other families to enjoy. Why buy it and store it, when you can borrow it from us!