

What's Up with the Library? Glad You Asked! July 2013

Did you know almost 90,000 people visited the Thomas Memorial Library last year, checking out over 150,000 items? Our library here in Cape is a valuable resource, but it's obviously in a state of disrepair. The library operates on five levels, it's out of compliance with current building codes, and accessibility is limited for some of our most vulnerable citizens. The building has structural issues and outdated mechanical and electrical systems that are extremely expensive to operate, maintain, and replace. We all know something needs to be done, but what?

The Town Council appointed a committee to study the situation and to make recommendations for library facilities and services for the future. The committee has been busy, reviewing the material prepared by Council members, library trustees, architects and planners, and various committees over the last several years. Recently, we've toured libraries in Topsham, Brunswick, and Portland to see how other communities have successfully constructed or renovated their aging facilities and how they have planned for their libraries of the future in an age of exploding information and technology usage. We were inspired by what we saw and by the possibilities we see for our own library. Soon you'll be able to see some photos of these libraries at the TML website <http://www.thomasmemoriamlibrary.org> (or you can follow the link to the library website from www.capeelizabeth.com).

Over the next couple of months we'll be seeking input from folks here in our own town, to learn what you value in the existing library, what you think the library should be offering for programs and services in the future, and how you think the library should be renovated or replaced. Our committee meets regularly, and our schedule is on the Town website. We welcome public input at those meetings, but more importantly, we'd like you to participate at an upcoming roundtable discussion and we'll be posting the time/date/place shortly. In the meantime, if you have any specific input or questions for the committee, please email them to LibraryPlanning@thomas.lib.me.us.