

# Lindenhurst Library holds second meeting to air \$14.5M renovation plan

by Michael Scro

Last week, residents gathered for another presentation of the Lindenhurst Memorial Library's renovation and expansion project, resulting in a lively discussion between supporters and skeptics on the \$14.5 million plan.

Lisa Kropp, assistant library director, reviewed a presentation initially made July 29 and then the meeting was open for public discussion, including input from residents, civic association leaders and Library Board Secretary Antoinette Deluca, who discussed the library's concerns moving forward.

Residents who question the bond project generally do not object to the proposed plan, which would add an estimated 10,000 square feet to the 22,000-square-foot building at 1 Lee Avenue, with meeting rooms, ADA-accessible bathrooms, a teen section, 3-D printers and a café. The parking lot would also be repaved and expanded. They question the costs, saying taxpayers simply cannot afford them.

Kropp assured the public that the library board is committed to the project, but is also open to looking into ways to lower the price.

The costs were revised in mid July to reflect interest rates that were one percent lower than initially proposed. Kropp explained that, combined with the library's \$500,000 in a capital reserve funds, the estimated cost of the project was brought down to \$14.5 million.

The anticipated tax rate increase for the work would be \$2.81, which translates into an annual cost on a home assessed at \$4,000 of \$112.40. A home assessed at \$5,000 would pay an additional \$140.50 a year in library taxes, if the bond were approved.

A public referendum vote for Lindenhurst residents on the bond tentatively planned for mid November. The library has hired H2M Architects and Engineers for pre-referendum services at \$35,000; half of those fees will be refunded by H2M to the library in the event the bond passes and H2M is hired to work on the project.

Kropp listed some of the library's problems, which include the lack of a fire sprinkler system, no ADA accessible bathrooms or elevator, inadequate wiring infrastructure, not enough computers in the teen and children's section, and inadequate meeting room and office space. "This building is not up to code, and we can't continue with applying Band-Aids," added Deluca.

Displaying photos of the library during after-school hours, Kropp outlined how the library's Teen Zone is frequently crowded, overflowing into the open mezzanine and creating noise and disruption throughout the rest of the library. The renovations and expansion would address those areas, as well as move the entrance/exit moved away from nearby homes for better security and privacy, and relocate the garden and concert space, as well as add an outdoor learning space.

Included in the project is the demolition of the "Annex" on the east side of the library, which was originally a home that the library purchased 20 years and that has been used as offices. That vacant lot would then become an additional parking lot for the library, and administration offices would be relocated to the library building.

Resident Harry Kalogeresis says as someone who is planning to have children, he wants his future family to have an up-to-date library, and strongly advocates for the bond to be approved.

"To be quite fair, being fiscally conservative has its benefits and drawbacks—putting a Band-Aid on everything sends a message that the quick fix is better than the long-term solution," Kalogeresis said.

Gabrielle Giacomazzo, a resident supporter, said the renovations and additions would bring more programs

and the community closer together. Giacomazzo has used the library meeting room for a support group, which she says is growing.

Daniel Street Civic Association President John Lisi said that should the library's \$14.5 million bond pass, he would hope the board would hold off on starting the bonding process until all construction quotes come in.

Kropp said the board cannot begin the bonding process immediately because if the numbers come in lower, that would lower the cost of the project. "I don't want to spend a lot of money, so as low a figure as we can—we will keep it like that," Deluca said. "I'm a resident too, and I don't want my taxes to go anymore than anyone else."

Lisi, who has served on multiple committees for projects in the Lindenhurst community, countered that as long as voters approve the \$14.5 million, it is legal for the board to spend that much money on the project regardless of what the costs of construction come in as, and he does not want to see that happen. "I want to see the voters get a break," he said.

Kropp said that "high-end finishes" such as marble bathrooms with expensive faucets will not be included in the project.

Dennis Garbo, Lighthouse Civic Association president, says he does not want to see the bond referendum vote "go down in flames" because of the cost -- offering a suggestion to significantly lower the estimate by repurposing the "Annex" building instead of demolishing it, and utilizing it for increased meeting rooms, a separate Teen Zone, and other improvements the community wants.

Kropp said that idea has been considered, however it would not solve the issue of having staff in two separate buildings, and added that it is not designed for public space, nor is it ADA accessible. In addition, the building has cesspools, which have backed up in the past. She did say, however, that administration would revisit that option to see if anything different can be done to lower the cost.

While Kropp said the library is not permitted to fundraise, a group of library patrons are currently in the process of incorporating the Friends of the Lindenhurst Memorial Library group to help with fundraising and special events.

Offering a tentative timeline, Kropp said if the library bond vote passes, it would take approximately 43 weeks to get the schematic designs approved by New York State. A shovel would not be put into the ground until around November 2018.

*Babylon  
News  
&  
Muse  
by Mary  
Gallagher*

There has been a lot of response to the column of Aug. 3, most of it on Facebook. The majority of it was in favor of saving historical buildings, but there were a number of people who were not in agreement. Many are friends or clients of Ken Rogers, who has a construction firm in the Village. Some of them thought I was attacking Ken, which

was not my intent at all.

Kenny contacted me because he felt I had erred in saying that the buyers of the properties mentioned had promised to fix the buildings. Going back over my notes, he may be right, so I will retract the use of the word promise. But each of them said they would restore the buildings, which they subsequently demolished. So I apologize for using the incorrect phrase.

*News and Muse will be back next week.*