



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED

By Town Clerk GP at 10:57 am, Oct 17, 2024

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2024-09-09

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Meeting

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Cappy Popp, Chair (remote); Patrick Egan, Vice-Chair; Cherrie Dubois;
Monette Verrier

Members - Not Present:

Andrew Grimes, Secretary; Andrew Gregory

Others Present:

Amy Lannon, Director; Michelle Filleul, Assistant Director;
Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant; Andrea Fiorillo, Head of Public
Services; Genady Pilyavsky, Chair of Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee;
Elaine Stone, Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee Member (remote);
Joseph McDonagh, Finance Committee Liaison to Reading Public Library;

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Patrick Egan, Vice-Chair

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order 7:07 p.m.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were made in person or remotely.

III. Landscape Committee Recommendations

Dr. Pilyavsky introduced himself as the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee Chair. The Committee has had productive discussions regarding the preliminary design for the outdoor Library landscape project and is presenting an update.

Dr. Pilyavsky noted that the Committee's work supports the Library's core mission and focuses on building community connections. The Library is a dedicated third space outside work and home that facilitates learning. Educational programs and activities currently held inside could be held outside in good weather. Enhanced accessible spaces for small groups would create a friendly, welcoming environment for book clubs, tutoring, and other small social meetups.

The Committee engaged with community stakeholders through public listening sessions and a community survey to provide project guidance for Activitas. Activitas provided an initial concept design for \$1.2 million, prioritizing shade and seating, maximizing high-quality materials, and implementing extensive outdoor improvements. The Committee worked with Activitas to develop an \$800,000 value engineering option that would still fulfill the Library's mission and incorporate community feedback. The Activitas proposal

focuses on School Street and a portion of the Middlesex Avenue sides of the building. Completely removing existing structures and vegetation to relevel this area would create a blank canvas for the project at a significant cost.

The Committee discussed meaningful improvements that would best improve underutilized areas. Key priorities include patio space for active programs and group gatherings, shade, seating, sustainable native plants, and ease of maintenance through enhanced access to water.

Dr. Pilyavsky presented an image of the recommended project. The focus is a patio stage area for programming with tiered seating for 30 to 40 people built into the hillside. The project would include temporary or permanent shade for the stage area. Additional elements include an educational rain garden and native plantings along the stairs and path descending to School Street near the main entrance. Ideally, the Library could integrate an original 1896 Highland School sink as a decorative birdbath to celebrate the building's history as a local elementary school. Dedicated trash and recycling bins will help maintain the welcoming outdoor space. He noted that easy access to water is critical. Dr. Pilyavsky pointed out a need for outdoor plumbing on the School Street side of the building.

The project's maintenance should be manageable for Library or Department of Public Works (DPW) staff. Budget permitting, other "nice to have" project elements include:

- Sustainable rain collection options could minimize water use.
- Additional picnic tables
- Adirondack chairs
- Outside power connections to allow for charging devices.
- Replacing or upgrading existing lighting bollards to safely illuminate walkways while maintaining dark sky compliance and minimizing neighborhood impact.
- Relocating existing bike racks to create additional patio space for tables and chairs
- An in-ground irrigation system to serve as a backup during droughts.

The Committee has identified several "Do It Yourself" (DIY) improvements within the Library's supplemental spending budget, including trusts, gifts, and state aid funds. Dr. Pilyavsky reiterated that the Committee intends to use no municipal budget funds for the landscape project. However, work already within the purview of ongoing DPW maintenance includes:

- Removal of the yew shrubs near the Bradford Pear trees
- Removal of the Bradford Pear trees
- Addition of 4-8 shade trees
- Moving or repurposing the existing granite slabs

Additionally, the Library could purchase the Adirondack chairs and picnic tables separately from the larger landscape project.

The Committee recommends targeting a \$350,000 project budget and requests permission to work with Town Staff to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP). The Committee would also explore potential fundraising options. Dr. Pilyavsky reminded the Trustees to revisit the Committee's purpose and mission to determine the next steps. The Board discussed costs associated with individual project elements and the overall Activitas proposal. They noted:

- Using alternative material options may also impact costs.
- The dollar amounts are rough estimates and subject to change.
- The possibility of investing additional funds in professionals to create more detailed and cost-saving alternatives.
- The project could be done in phases.

Ms. Lannon noted that Assistant Town Manager Jayne Wellman recently attended a Committee meeting. Ms. Wellman is experienced with the procurement process and felt positive about the project. She said the project needs a firm budget plan with funding commitments before issuing an RFP.

Ms. Lannon mentioned the recent \$20,000 Dig In! Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, which is intended for programming, collections, and educational green spaces along the parking lot and inside the building. Dr. Pilyavsky said the Committee contacted state representatives, including Senator Jason Lewis, about the availability of potential federal and state funding sources. Despite a lack of current grant opportunities, the Committee is open to exploring other options.

The group discussed concerns about passersby's overuse of trash and recycling bins and the security of any potential lawn furniture. They agreed it would be challenging to raise funds for a \$350,000 project, but the overall proposal is impressive and would benefit Library patrons.

Regarding fundraising, the Trustees pointed out that the Landscape Committee and the Board are public entities and, therefore, unable to raise funds. They mentioned the Reading Public Library Foundation and Friends of the Reading Public Library and discussed possibly creating a third Library fundraising group explicitly dedicated to this project.

The Board also discussed concerns about the need to fund future maintenance. The \$350,000 budget could be adjusted and revised as needed. For example, the project could have several RFPs for sections of the project on an incremental basis. The Board agreed on the importance of relying on town staff who are knowledgeable and experienced in cost and liability considerations associated with RFPs. Ms. Lannon noted that the Town has the right of refusal and can decide not to move forward with any bids received. RFPs can also be revised and reissued. This project will continue to involve the Engineering Department and DPW, which have already been involved.

The Committee will present this project to the Friends of the Reading Public Library and the Reading Public Library Foundation. Despite differences in each organization's mission, building awareness for the project is key. The Board will further discuss the project's status in October.

Dr. Pilyavsky and Ms. Stone excused themselves from the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

IV. Fall Programming & Summer Reading Report

Head of Public Services Andrea Fiorillo presented a recap of summer reading and programming and an overview of upcoming fall programming.

The children's summer reading program was sticker-based, with various activity options on scratch-off bookmarks. RPL raffled off five karaoke machines to children who spotted Spot, the Library's stuffed giraffe, around Town. There were fifty-seven children's programs, and 2,887 children completed passive programming options such as scavenger hunts, crafts, and games that rotate monthly in the Children's room.

Adult summer readers completed BINGO sheets for the chance to win gift cards to Whitelam Books and Market Basket. The "Full STEAM Ahead" teen summer reading program focused on science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Teens earned raffle tickets for themed gift baskets by attending programs and writing book reviews. There has been a general decrease in Teen summer reading participation since RMHS eliminated summer reading requirements for specific books. Although summer reading participation was low-key this year, summer programs were well-attended. There were many positive interactions with the participants.

The Friends Speaker Series features talks by celebrated authors and compelling speakers that can be watched live and on-demand from anywhere. Since the launch of this series in June, there have been six live watch parties at the Library with over 95 attendees. Over 4,000 live and archived viewings of the content have also been recorded. The Friends Speaker Series has also held several in-person watch party events and discussions at the Pleasant Street Center.

The Library tabled at the Lions Friends and Family Day in June and held weekly sunset story times in local parks. The Treats and Beats concerts at local apartment complexes were successful. The Book Bike visited Reading Recreation summer performances and the Reading Lions Annual Fun Run.

The Reading Coalition for Prevention and Support will host Mental Health First Aid courses at the Library this fall. Adult programs include disaster preparedness, the Salem Witch Trials, and the Earth's largest telescopes. The Friends Speaker Series will showcase presentations from bestselling authors Liane Moriarty and Silvia Moreno-Garcia. Ms. Fiorillo was pleased to announce that an artist reception for the Community Seed Beading Project led by Thomas Green will take place in November. The artwork will be permanently housed at the Library to celebrate the presence of Massachusetts culture.

RPL is hosting an official ribbon-cutting event for the new Tween space in the Children's Room. Other programs include:

- A "Creeping It Real" horror-writing workshop program for Tweens
- The Trails and Tales series will feature stories, crafts, and hikes on local conservation land
- Children's concerts, including the Sulinha Trio Brazilian concert, Mara & Motoko, and Movement and Music with Ms. Julie and Peter Sheridan
- Plant Lab programs featuring pumpkins, greens, and houseplants
- Library tours for 6th graders

- Teens can also look forward to constructing a spooky scene in a glass "Cemetaryium" terrarium, Buildwave: A Hands-On Building Game, and a K-Pop craft program.

The nature-based Dig In! grant will run from October to September 2025. As part of this, the Library is relaunching the Teen Advisory Group (TAG) with monthly meetings centered on the grant's environmental theme, developing job and career skills, and building a lifelong relationship with libraries. Teens must apply to be selected for this special program series.

Other highlights:

- Fall meetup groups for Mah Jongg and knitting and crocheting
- Book group programs include the "The Real Story" (nonfiction), the patron-led "Fact or Fiction" book group, and the Word of Mouth book discussion
- RPL outreach and book group at Peter Sanborn Place
- Town Clerk Laura Gemme and other volunteers will help visitors register to vote at the Library on September 17, National Voter Registration Day
- A group of local parents will lead Mandarin storytimes
- The North Suburban Family Resource Network will host Music Makers sessions for toddlers and a Hello Baby group for new parents

The Board thanked Ms. Fiorillo for her detailed and informative presentation.

V. Discussion and Vote: Meeting Room Policy

Ms. Filleul provided a brief overview of Meeting Room Policy Changes. Updated language reflects the new reservation software. Formatting changes include reorganization and clarification of policy content. She noted additional language about the potential of credit card processing fees, similar to the Town's online payment process for tax payments and other bills.

Motion: To approve the changes to the Meeting Room Policy as presented.

(Dubois / Egan)

Vote: Approved 4-0

VI. Discussion and Vote: Tutoring Policy

Ms. Lannon summarized changes to the Tutoring Policy, including clarifying language, formatting, and numbering to make the policy as reasonably enforceable as possible.

Motion: To approve the changes to the Tutoring Policy as presented.

(Egan / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 4-0

VII. Discussion and Vote: FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan

Ms. Lannon thanked the Board for their work refining the language in the Strategic Plan after robust discussion at previous meetings. The updated language expands the fourth "Community Learning and Engagement" goal to include transitions for tweens and post-secondary emerging adults and addresses assessing the usability of the existing Teen Room. Other changes include broadening the second "Library as Space and Place" goal around community engagement and a sense of belonging at the Library by strategically

increasing diversity among library staff and volunteers at all levels. The FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan must be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) by October 1.

Motion: To adopt the FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan as presented in substantial form, with any minor corrections and typos to be corrected.

(Egan / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 4-0

VIII. Reminder: State Ethics Commission Advisory 11-1: Public Employee Political Activity

Ms. Lannon reminded the Board of their ethical obligations regarding political activity as publicly elected officials ahead of November's upcoming Federal and State elections. It is important to remain as neutral as possible in the political arena. Additional information is available in State Ethics Commission Advisory 11-1 and the required ethics training. Town Clerk Laura Gemme can also answer any questions.

IX. Financial Report and FY25 Supplemental Spending Recommendations

The financial report and state aid application have been filed with the MBLC. The Library has satisfied materials expenditure and minimum service requirements.

The MBTA Communities Act will be a major topic at the upcoming Town meeting. Ms. Lannon noted that failing to pass the MBTA zoning changes may affect funding for state aid.

Ms. Lannon reviewed FY25 supplemental spending plans from gifts, state aid, and trust income. Uses include support for additional programming, furnishings, equipment, staff development, and other special projects outside the municipal operational budget. Examples include:

- Digitization and preservation of local history materials
- In-kind contributions for programs and services associated with the "Dig In!" grant. These contributions will help ensure success and sustainability of the program after the conclusion of the one-year grant.
- All marketing and communications expenses
- Upgrades to the Library's mobile application, website, room management software
- Hybrid meeting room technology

Mr. McDonagh asked about variances in annual state aid awards. Ms. Lannon explained that state aid awards dropped significantly a number of years ago, and the recent increases have helped state aid catch up with inflation. The growth will likely level off within the next few years, even with the recently approved and generous state budget. Ms. Lannon clarified that state aid funds are earmarked separately from the municipal budget for special projects of the Library's choosing.

While gift funding is less predictable, the Library hopes to implement a fully accessible public workstation featuring an adjustable table and wheelchair accessibility. Other projects include purchasing a more centralized shelving and storage solution for the Library of Things collection. Ms. Lannon mentioned that gifts also supplement professional development, including tuition reimbursement, as permitted by policy.

Each trust fund has expendable and non-expendable amounts. The available balance of expendable trust funds is currently \$112,793. Planned FY25 supplemental spending from these accounts is \$5,000, which will be spent according to individual trust guidelines.

The Library typically receives \$6,000 to \$7,000 in annual gifts in addition to larger gifts, bequests, and memorial donations. The Library did not spend gift funds for the first five years in the new building. The Board discussed that although projects come and go, donors generally like to see their money being put to good use.

As mentioned in the Strategic Plan, future large projects include furnishing and equipment updates to the Teen Room. Recently, the Reading Public Library Foundation has funded larger capital projects such as the book bike, exterior pickup lockers, and hybrid technology upgrade, funded by such gifts.

Concerns were expressed regarding gift expenditures outpacing incoming donations. Per Ms. Lannon, the available gift fund balance is currently rather high. She will check with the Town Accountant about the possibility of investing a portion of the \$188,572 available gift funds to generate a higher return. However, certain gifts may be restricted. Transferring gift funds to interest-bearing accounts may limit flexibility and access to funds.

X. Director's Report

An article about the Library book bike's positive value in the community was published in the Fall 2024 issue of Readings magazine.

Keri Bradeen started as a new Children's Librarian position on August 26. The Library is working on hiring two new high school pages. Ms. Clemente received a Massachusetts Library System Conference Scholarship to attend the New England Library Association Conference (NELA) Annual Conference in October.

The hybrid technology upgrades in the Conference and Community Rooms will take place the week of October 15. Ms. Lannon recognized Ms. Filleul's hard work transitioning to the new Communico event calendar system, meeting room reservation system, and mobile application. Ms. Filleul will reach out soon regarding beta testing for the mobile application.

XI. Ad Hoc Commemoration Establishment Committee Appointment

The Board of Library Trustees can appoint one designee to the new Ad Hoc Commemoration Establishment Committee (ACE). This may be a Board member, Library staff member, or other Reading resident. The appointment process will be similar to the Board's other appointments to the Celebration Trust Committee or the Charter Review Committee and require a vote. Director of Equity and Social Justice Albert Pless will also use his discretion to appoint one designee on behalf of the Office of Equity and Social Justice.

Ms. Lannon will reach out to Library staff to see if anyone is interested. However, public committee members must be Reading residents. Members of the Friends of the Reading Public Library or the Reading Public Library Foundation may also be interested. Ms. Lannon reminded the Board that nothing precludes them from speaking to other interested residents but that they should not communicate with each other about their choices or suggestions.

Although no specific deadline has been provided, the Board hopes to discuss this issue in October, with a final decision being voted on in November.

XII. Approval of August 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes from the August 12, 2024, Board of Library Trustees meeting as written. (Egan / Dubois)

Vote: Approved 4-0

XIII. Future Agenda Items

Due to the scheduled hybrid technology upgrades, the October meeting will take place in the Local History Room. The annual Toys for Tots collection will be voted on in October, well ahead of the collection period. Ms. Lannon will follow up regarding the Festival of Trees and the possibility of the Reading Lions scarecrow fundraiser.

Ms. Lannon will present the FY26 Level 1 Budget to the Board at the November meeting. The budget will then be presented to the Select Board in December. In October, the Finance Committee will provide additional details on the state of the municipal budget.

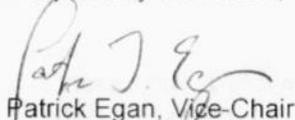
Adjournment 8:50 p.m.

Motion: To Adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

(Egan / Dubois)

Vote: Approved 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,


Patrick Egan, Vice-Chair



LIBRARY LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE (LLC) UPDATE PART DEUX

Cherrie Dubois - LLC Vice-Chair; Library Trustee
Andrea Hogan - Senior Library Associate, Reading Public Library
Gena Pilyavsky - LLC Chair; Climate Advisory Committee Member
Cappy Popp - Library Trustee
Jake Soucy - LLC Secretary
Elaine Stone - Reading Community Garden Member
Desirée Zicko - Communications Specialist, Reading Public Library

AUGUST 15, 2024

SUPPORTING RPL'S CORE MISSION:

Building Community, Creating Connections.

Reading Public Library's mission is to connect all people with opportunities to grow and learn and to provide resources to support a welcoming and engaged community.

Mission statement pending approval of RPL's new strategic plan.



BY CREATING:

A dedicated outdoor space for learning & engagement

- E.g., a performance space for educational events about nature, plants, & gardening, outdoor storytimes, and other programs and events for all ages

Enhanced space for small groups

- Small groups may include: study sessions, book clubs, and other community discussions.
- Enhancements will provide improved accessibility.

PAST ACTIVITY UPDATES..

01 Discussed Engagement

- Public listening sessions & community survey
- Activities proposals

02 Covered the initial Concept

- Discussed shading/seating
- Provided a bird's eye-view of the grounds

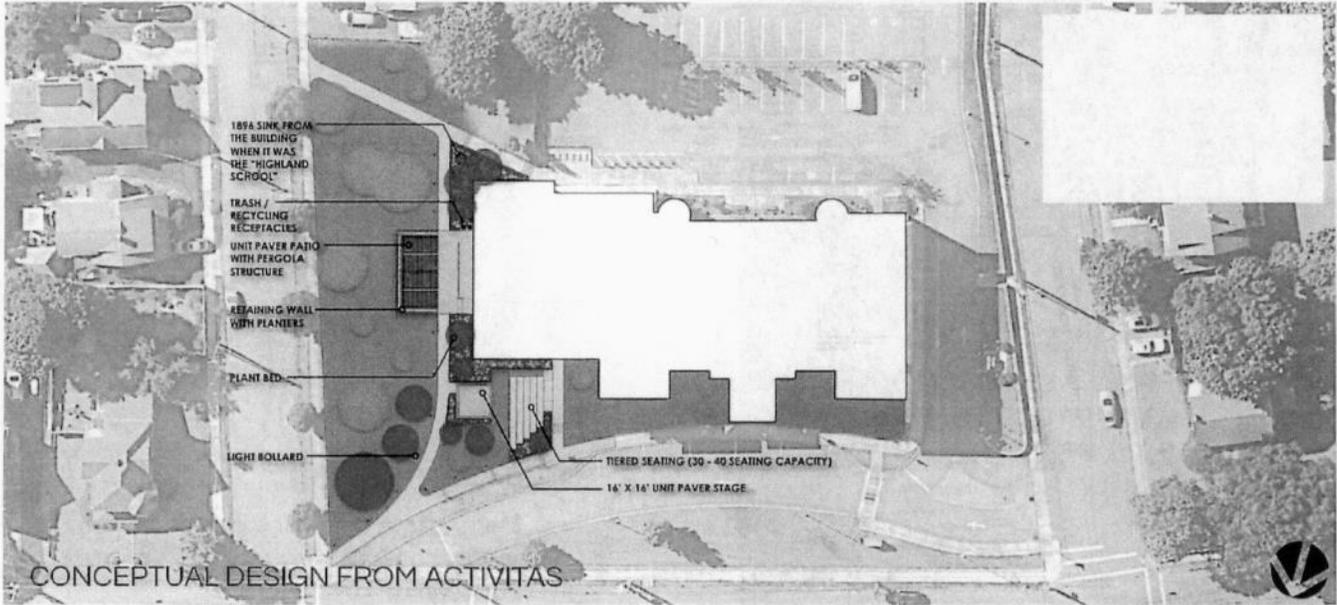
03 Preliminary estimate

- Original pricetag = \$1.2m
- Value engineering option = \$800k

04 Since last meeting

- Committee undertook a thorough evaluation and discussion of options.
- Focused on key options & cost-conscious solutions.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT





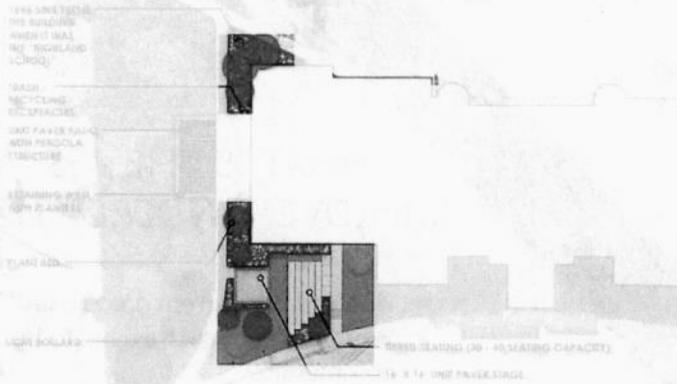
WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD BE MOST MEANINGFUL?

- Patio space (for active programs and group gathering space)
- Shade and seating
- Native plants (for sustainability)
- Easy to maintain (e.g., access to water)

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE *UNDERUTILIZED* AREAS?

- How are the current areas used?
- What areas could be used to benefit the community?

RECOMMENDED FOCUS

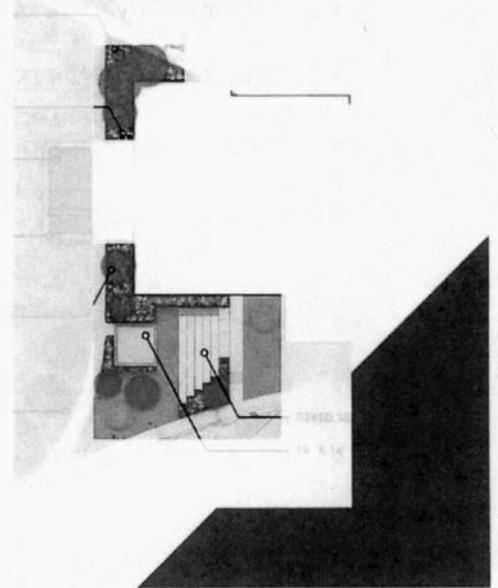


CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FROM ACTIVITAS



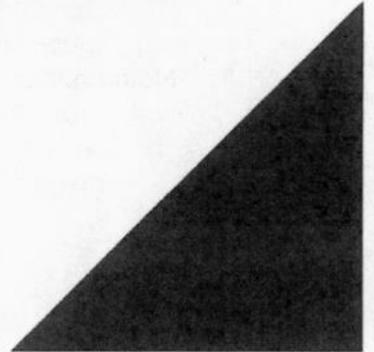
FOCUS ITEMS

1. **Active Program space:** A 16'x16' patio
 - a. A permanent or temporary (seasonal) shade option for a patio performance area
 - b. Tiered seating for 30-40 people built into the hillside
2. **Landscaping:** School Street side of the library
 - a. Educational native plants garden spaces
 - b. Educational rain garden along the parking lot and School Street sides)
 - c. Incorporation of an original Highland School sink
3. **Maintenance items :**
 - a. Trash & recycling bin
 - b. Access to water for irrigation such as wall mounted spigots on the northeast side



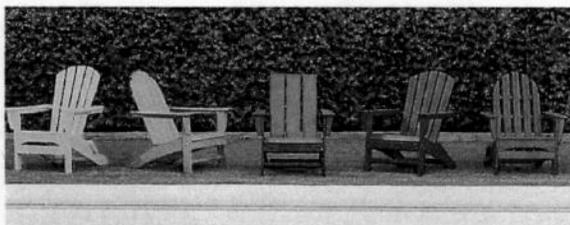
NICE-TO-HAVES

- **Sustainability:** Rain collection options to minimize water use
- **Small Group Seating:** Space for 3 picnic tables or seating for 10-12 on the hillside
- **Outside Power:** Connections for charging electronic devices
- **Lighting:** Update existing light bollards to safely illuminate walkways while maintaining dark sky compliance and minimizing neighborhood impact
- **Declutter:** Relocate bike racks to create additional patio space
- **Larger Patio Space:** Could be 16' x 20' or 20' x 20'
- **In-ground irrigation system:** backup in times of drought



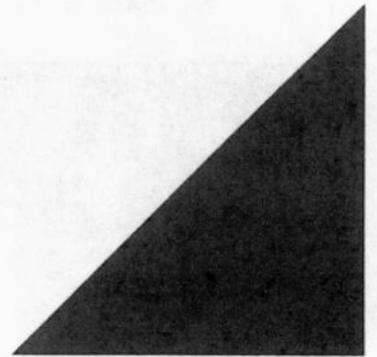
DO-IT-YOURSELF

- **Minor Landscaping with DPW** : Remove the yew shrubs near Bradford Pear trees; add shade trees where granite slabs currently sit.
- **Provide Seating:** Adirondack chairs (8-10) in pairs or trios across the School Street lawn
- **Small Group Areas:** Add two picnic tables with umbrellas in the existing level areas
- **Funding** : RPL's supplemental spending budget including trusts, gifts, and state aid



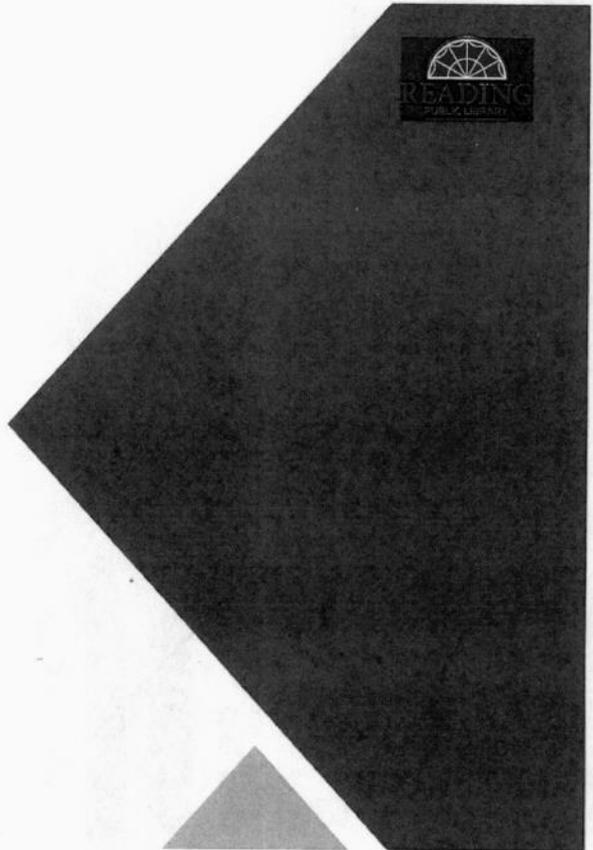
RECOMMENDATION & NEXT STEPS

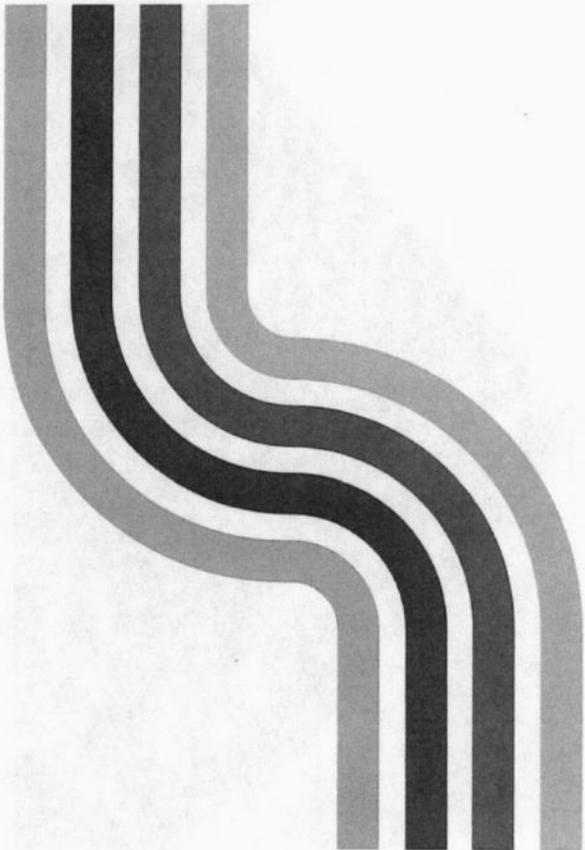
- LLC recommends targeting \$350k budget for project
- Allow LLC to:
 - Work with the town staff on an RFP
 - Explore fundraising options
- The purpose and mission of the Committee should be revisited for next steps of the project.





THANK
YOU





Fall 2024

Public Services Update

Summer Reading Recap

Stick with Summer Reading
June 14-August 16

366 kids participated in the Stick with Summer Reading Program	57 programs RPL offered to children ages 0-11	1,150 attendees at programs as of 8/12
2,887 kids completed our passive programs as of 8/12 (i.e. scavenger hunts, Cloud Corner crafts, etc)	175 kids found Spot our jet-setting giraffe	5 karaoke machines won by kids



2024 Summer Reading Bingo
June 14 - August 9 www.kidsworld.com

7 weeks of summer reading fun for readers age 6 and older! Book titles and activities may be used once per card.

WILD CARD Draw a book title or activity from the Wild Card box.	Read a book or listen to an audiobook.	Visit a library.	Attend a reading program.	FREE SPACE Draw a book title or activity from the Wild Card box.
Read a book or listen to an audiobook.	Visit a library.	Attend a reading program.	Read a book or listen to an audiobook.	FREE SPACE Draw a book title or activity from the Wild Card box.
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Drawn by Libby's Club P.

PROGRAMS Total number of teen programs offered: 9 Total number of attendees: 88	88
37 PARTICIPANTS Teens earned raffle tickets by attending programs and writing book reviews. 37 Teens entered into the raffle.	206
RAFFLES There were 3 raffle prizes offered this summer and there was a total of 206 submissions.	206
98 BOOK REVIEWS Total paper submissions: 86 Total online submissions: 12	
SUCCESS! Full STEAM Ahead was a success. There were some new teen faces and everyone had a fun time during the programs. Those who participated liked the competition.	



RPL UnBound

- Friends Speakers Series @ PSC
- Book Bike at Reading Rec Performances
- Sunset Storytimes
- Treats & Beats-apartment complex concerts
- Lions Friends & Family Day
- Reading/Lions Annual Fun Run



Friends Speaker Series

Celebrated authors & compelling speakers to watch live and on-demand, at home or at the library!



Fall Highlights

Adults

- Mental Health First Aid
- Disaster Preparedness
- The Salem Witch Trials with Author Dan Gagnon
- The Search for Alien Worlds From Earth's Largest Telescopes
- FSS: Liane Moriarty
- FSS: Liberating Latin American Literature with Author Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- Artist Reception: Community Seed Beading Project

Children

- Tween Space Ribbon Cutting
- Creeping It Real-Horror Writing Workshop for Tweens
- Trails and Tails Series
- Sulinha Trio Brazilian concert
- Plant Lab on the Patio: Pumpkins, Greens, Houseplants

Teens

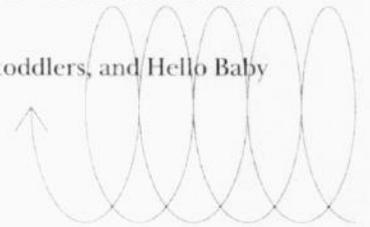
- 6th Grade Tours
- Cemetary Craft
- TAG
- Buildwave: A Hands-On Building Game
- K Pop Craft

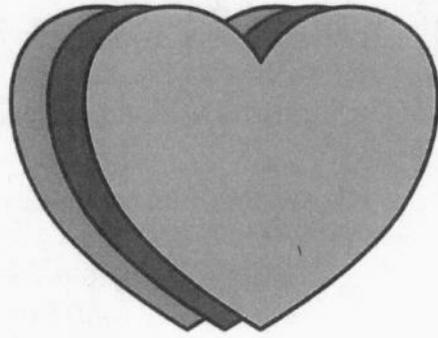




New & Renewed

- 1 Dig In Grant Awarded! Runs Oct-Sep
- 2 TAG: Revised & Aligned With Grant & Building Job Skills
- 3 Knit Crochet & Mah Jongg Meet Ups
- 4 Book Groups: The Real Story: Non Fiction , Peter Sanborn Place, Fact or Fiction, Word of Mouth
- 5 Kids Concert Series: Sulinha Trio, Mara & Motoko, Movement and Music with Ms. Julie, and local legend Peter Sheridan
- 6 National Voter Registration Day with Town Clerk Laura Gemme
- 7 Mandarin Storytimes, Music Makers for toddlers, and Hello Baby new parent group





Thank you!