

## **Library looks forward to working with community**

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Article by Tom Wontorek, President of the Rehoboth Beach Library's Board of Trustees

The announcement of Rehoboth Public Library's long-range plans unfortunately caused many to believe this process was much further along than it is.

The plan of the library's board of trustees has always been for the library to remain in the City of Rehoboth Beach. At the same time, we face the need to serve our entire library district by having a second facility that will be easier for many patrons of our growing service area to use.

The Rehoboth Beach Public Library owns the downtown library, which sits on three 50-by-100-foot lots on Rehoboth Avenue. One of the lots, gifted by the City of Rehoboth Beach, requires that it be used for the delivery of library services. At the very minimum, this area of the library, if not more, will be permanently maintained.

As a board, we could have been more proactive in communicating this need for expanded services; however, we could not reference a potential location out of town until one was secured. It was only during the last month that we acquired the right to purchase a five-acre parcel on Warrington Road for an additional building.

We have been fortunate to partner with a community-oriented local developer to secure this centrally located parcel of land to better serve our population, including downtown patrons. That is as far as any decisions have been made.

We surveyed patrons and area residents in 2022 to determine their feelings and requirements for a library. The major concern of most was traffic and lack of parking, which reinforced our decision to investigate a second location.

A larger facility will also allow us to offer other services that our present location is unable to provide due to its size and access issues, particularly during the summer season.

We are now at the point where we need the help of current and future patrons in deciding which services and programs both your new library and the downtown facility should provide. We are launching a Rehoboth Library Task Force to engage a wide range of local and area residents in our service area to participate.

Task force participants should include residents from Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach, Henlopen Acres, West Rehoboth and newer communities such as Wellesley and Saddle Ridge, as well as representatives from the city and business community.

This process will include meetings of task force members, surveys of patrons' library use and public presentations to keep the community informed.

We will announce the task force members by mid-May, at which time a schedule of planned meetings and topics will be presented.

If you wish to be considered to serve on this task force, please complete and submit the Library Task Force Application form by 4 p.m., Friday, April 28. The form will be available on the Rehoboth Beach Public Library website and Facebook page, and other social media sites.

There will be many critical issues to consider as we jointly move forward. We look forward to working with the community in determining what services and programs your Rehoboth libraries can provide.

Your Rehoboth Beach Public Library is not leaving town. We are instead adding important new programs and services at a larger nearby location that will complement what is currently available – with your help. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Tom Wontorek, president  
Rehoboth Beach Public Library  
Board of Trustees