

Frequently Asked Questions

about moving the Taft Library to the St. Michael's property

Why do we need a new library anyway? Mendon recognized in the 1990's that the current building was inadequate when they began planning for a regional library to be shared with Upton. Since that time the building has only become more challenging as it serves more people and falls further out of compliance with building and accessibility codes. Part of the collection is stored in the old fire Station because the building cannot hold the weight.

Why not stay in the current building? It is charming and part of our history. We are happy that you appreciate the current space. However our mandate is to offer services to everyone in Town and not everyone can access the building. The interior stairway is dangerous for anyone with mobility challenges or small children. There is little room for the Young Adult Program and no quiet study space. Space for computers needs expansion. Our ability to serve all our patrons is compromised and the lack of workspace negatively affects staff.

What will happen to the building? It could be an Annex for Town Hall, which is right across the parking lot. Some Town Hall staff are working in less than ideal conditions. .

Why do we need a larger building when books are going digital? The reality is that the number of books borrowed and the number of visits to libraries have increased nationally and locally, right along with the growth of the Internet and e-books. Visits to the Taft increased by 107% from 2006-2010... Also the Library offers programs as well as books. Last year there were over 3,400 participants in Library programs for children and adults. Many of these programs had to be conducted off-site.

Won't libraries become obsolete in the digital age? Libraries are not just a collection of books on shelves. Our goal is to turn people into readers and thinkers, beginning at a young age and continuing throughout a lifetime. We do this through programs, from story times to individual tutorials on how to use the Internet, as well as providing print and e-books, digital databases, etc. The Taft provides free access to knowledge and information and computers for everyone in Town.

How much will a new Library cost? The purchase price for the building is \$360,000, down from the original asking price of \$800,000. This will cost \$13 per year for the average-size home. The cost to renovate the building is 1.7 million. This will cost \$59 per year for the average size home. It will be funded by a debt exclusion for a period of twenty years. In year ten of the debt exclusion, a significant debt for the school will be retired, making this even more affordable.

Why do the renovations cost so much? We are making every effort to hold down the renovation cost through careful planning with the architect, and by not renovating the Rectory. Much of the renovation budget is to bring the building up to code, especially for accessibility. For example, an elevator will cost approximately \$100,000. The Trustees are exploring ways to reduce this budget, including discussions with BVT and a grant through the Green Communities Program. Fortunately the building has a new septic system, new roof, and a new drainage system.

What will happen to the Rectory? A number of possibilities are under discussion. The Community Preservation Committee is exploring using its use for affordable housing. The Town may want to use it for office space for certain Departments. It can also be used for further Library expansion in the future. The building can help the Town meet several goals.

Will the operating budget increase in a new site? The biggest expense in the budget is for staff, and we can operate the new building with the same staffing pattern. We expect to see increases in only three areas: utilities, maintenance, and plowing

Why not build an entirely new building? The cost of a similar size building would be 3.5 million.

Why purchase a building in an economic downturn? This is an excellent time to purchase real estate. The purchase price is \$440,000 less than the original asking price. In addition the cost of borrowing has never been lower. The quality of architectural firms bidding on such a small project is tremendous. This can be the best of times to secure such an asset for the Town.