



A LIBRARY CONVERSATION

presented by
Bayard Taylor Memorial Library
and
Chester County 2020
September 30, 2008

The Library Conversation launched a new initiative for the Bayard Taylor Memorial Library as the Board of Trustees and Director reached out to the regional community for information to support program planning and facility considerations that will be responsive to the needs of a population rich in civic, cultural, educational, ethnic and economic diversity. The program attracted representatives of organizations active in the broad community as well as volunteers whose interests intersected with more than one organization. In the months ahead, a menu of surveys, online opportunities, small group meetings at the Library, and board member attendance at regular municipal meetings will continue to solicit community input. Throughout the process, the library board members and director will be highly visible, accessible participants. They are easily recognizable as neighbors and business associates as well as fellow volunteers in a vibrant regional community.

Nearly everyone attending this Conversation wore more than one hat; that of an organization and also an individual who lives, works, or volunteers in the Kennett region. These busy people set aside an evening of concentrated thought and discussion because they respect the role the library plays in the broader community. In exploring the Library's potential to serve organizational needs, and typical of all CC2020 Conversations, the ground rules were easy:

Seek common ground.

Listen to each other, carefully.

All ideas are acceptable.

Differences of opinion may be acknowledged, but not debated.

The forty participants included representatives from the Friends Home of Kennett Square; Kennett Square Lions Club; East Marlborough Township; Bernardon, Haber, Holloway, Architects PC; Planned Parenthood of Chester County; BTML Advisory Committee; Kennett Area Regional Planning Commission (KARPC); Kennett Underground Railroad Center; Unionville High School; Kennett Area YMCA; Kennett Area Senior Center; Charles F. Patton Middle School; Alliance for Better Housing; Historic Kennett Square; MCHC's Healthy Start of Kennett Square; Friends of the Library; La Comunidad Hispana; St. Patrick's School; Chester County Library System; Chester County Planning Commission; Kennett High School; BTML Board of Trustees; United Way of Southeastern Chester County; Chester County Press; The Kennett Paper; Upland Country Day School; Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce; Kennett Symphony of Chester County, and several versatile community volunteers.

Ultimately, the Conversation's product was a wealth of information that will assist the Library in being fully sensitive to serving its large, widely diverse constituency. In arriving there, BTML Board President Susie MacDonnell opened the program with a brief outline of the Library's strategic planning process, currently under way. Equipped with previously prepared



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis forms for their various organizations, the participants separated into small breakout groups in which they developed lists of common needs and then lists of specific needs not shared by anyone else in the individual groups. While the lists were long, the easily identified shared needs that surfaced in the overall report might not have been as many as originally anticipated. Nevertheless, each group found more common ground than might be indicated by the final list, so the group worksheets are included in the report. There is far too much good material to risk losing it; it will clearly prove valuable over the long run.

The shared needs were prioritized overall by the number of times they appeared on the group lists, resulting in ties for ratings of 2 and 3. Remember that these are the needs expressed by the participants, discrete needs of organizations not necessarily considered in terms of library services. Some have a clear connection to potential library service offerings; others do not. They all should be of interest in terms of the economic, social, educational, and cultural health of this diverse community.

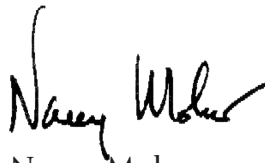
This report differs from other CC2020 Community Conversations in that, rather than working with group-generated solutions to trends and issues leading to action plans, the intent is to supply the widest possible range of expressed needs for the library's consideration. Inclusion of the information from the breakout group worksheets provides a bonus: identification of substantial potential for multi-organization support and broad constituent utilization of specific programs and facility components.

The energy and generous spirit that developed within the breakout group conversations left no doubt in anyone's mind that the library is a strong component of the definition of "community" in the Kennett region. Chester County 2020, the Bayard Taylor Memorial Library Board, and Director wish to express their appreciation to the participants and look forward to keeping them informed as the planning process moves forward.

Sincerely,



Susan Macdonnell
President
Bayard Taylor Memorial Library
Board of Trustees



Nancy Mohr
President
Chester County 2020

The Library Conversation truly represented a community partnership. The BTML Board wishes to acknowledge the generosity of:

- Every participant willing to set time aside for this important exercise.
- Chester County 2020 and Nancy Mohr for facilitating the Conversation.
- Genesis Healthcare Corporation for providing the venue.
- BTML's Events Committee for providing a late day snack.
- Starbucks

THE REPORT: A LIBRARY CONVERSATION

SHARED NEEDS

(As identified from the report session at the conclusion of the evening)

1. Historic /cultural preservation
2. Parking
 - Technical education opportunities for all ages and economic levels
 - Library as multi-use civic space
 - School-age programs including computer access
3. Regional short/long term planning
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Parking
 - Workforce
 - Water resources
 - More evenly distributed funding
 - Meeting rooms for varied uses
 - Marketing library services community-wide
 - Coffee shop
 - Partnerships and partnership opportunities
 - Volunteer opportunity and need clearing house



UNIQUE NEEDS

The additional needs identified within the breakout groups have been divided below into categories. In the interest of recording specific needs of the various organizations, the breakout worksheet information appears at the very end of the report.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- After-school programs plus volunteer staff with tracked outcomes
- Adult literacy
- Diversity in education opportunities
- Teacher resource area
- Spanish language materials
- Audio materials
- Large print resources
- Book talks
- Language and computer classes
- Computer access
- Productive, safe web browsing help via classes and other venues
- Supplement to traditional education (lifelong learning)
- Specialized instruction in library use
- Standardization of services
- Spanish conversation classes (Spanish as a second language)
- Efficient collaboration with school libraries
- Wide-open library outreach

Mobility for library services
Satellite resources

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

A place for young people to be
Advocacy (awareness-raising)

FUNDING ISSUES

Staffing issues
Capital funding opportunities
Access to needs assessment data
Readily available information for decision makers
Need to encourage development of the right things in the right places
Broader tax base support



MARKETING

Clear communication of mission and accomplishments
Volunteers
Speakers
"Bulletin board" service
Real world delivery system
Improved handicapped access
Transportation
Speaker/presentation clearing house
Open door for community needs, especially re information
Storefront office space, for visibility
More diversity in response to community need
Human resources facilitation and access for the community

BUILDING DESIGN (LIBRARY SPECIFIC)

First floor service area
Museum space

WITHIN THE BREAKOUT GROUPS

Each breakout group developed its own list of shared and unique needs. All of them did not reach the final combined list but represent valuable additional input for the library.

Group 1

SHARED NEEDS

- Better short and long term planning (10 year/50 year)
 - Housing
 - Essential workers
 - Sewer

- Transportation
Variety: bike, public, pedestrian
- Parking
- Computer and technology literacy (or lack of it) accounts for cultural and age distinction
- Children
 - Youth programs up to age 12
 - Teen programs
 - “After the Bell” type activities (graphic novels, poetry slam)
 - Cross community interaction (KHS and UHS)
 - Computer access
 - 33% of KHS students from economically distressed households
- Preservation of historical and cultural resources
 - Local history – underground railroad, Burton’s Barber Shop, capture other things.
- Library
 - Central
 - Appropriate civic space
 - Performance space
 - Tutoring
 - G.E.D.
 - Equitable funding
 - Mobility (service to elderly)
 - Professional testing site

Group 2

SHARED NEEDS

• Meeting rooms/space	Literacy, BTML, Friends, URR, Senior Center	6
• Better visibility/marketing		5
• Parking	BTML, Literacy, Friends	4
• Space for lectures, authors	BTML, Senior Center	3
• Interesting speakers	URR, Senior Center	3
• Coffee shop		
• YMCA		
• Reading materials		
• Computers		
• Story time with guest musicians		
• Marketing at the Y, schools		
• Teacher resource area		
• Spanish language materials		
• Audio – lots!		

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

- Large display cabinets and bulletin boards for community/cultural displays

FRIENDS (perceived library needs)

- Book/DVD delivery van
- Handicapped access

- Library on one floor
- Large print books
- Book talks
- Language and computer classes

SENIOR CENTER

Transportation to the library

Group 3

Organizations: Historic Kennett Square, Chester County Library System, Planned Parenthood, St. Patrick School

SHARED NEEDS

• Funding needs	<i>highest shared item</i>	SPS
• Understand how a library is organized		SPS
• Teaching how to research-bibliography		SPS
• Understand the purpose of the library in community –		
• supplement to public services		SPS
• Vocational interest research		SPS
• Supplement to traditional education – lifelong learning		PP
• Include schools in children’s programs		SPS
• Staffing		HKS
• Clear communication of mission & accomplishments		HKS
• Volunteers		HKS
• Streetfront office space		HKS
• Difficulty finding meeting space*		PP
• Place for young people		PP
• Advocacy		CCLS
• Standardization		CCLS

*(HKS has meeting space available)

Group 4

SHARED NEEDS

- Museum space; exhibit space for rotating displays
- Access to computers and Internet
- Spanish conversation classes for English-speaking residents
- Satellite resource programs and facilities
- Partner with other organizations including Friends of the Library
- A place where the community can come to relax and participate in shows, extravaganzas
- Find ways to get capital funding
- Program space for After-the-Bell; generate volunteers
- Display outcomes for After-the-Bell
- Access to the library’s needs assessment for the Rotary
- Collaborate with agencies and municipalities
- Need to make information available to decision makers
- Need to encourage the development of the right things in the right places

- Protect historic resources and inform the public of them
- Outreach for local volunteers
- Community center, a coffee bar, place for town meetings
- Collaboration with school libraries, to avoid duplication of resources

Group 5

SHARED NEEDS

- New clients/business partners/members ChesCo Press, Richardson Properties, UCDS, SCCCC
- Human resources BTML, Chester County Library
- Finding resources on the Internet SCCCC, Richardson Properties
- Assistance with business research
- Information for legislative actions
- Knowledge about the area

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FROM THE WORKSHEETS

Group 1

- Under better planning:
 - Traffic management
 - Improved methods of transportation
 - Diverse and mixed cost housing
 - Affordable schools that still deliver excellent education to our children
 - Improved and affordable emergency services
 - Improved and affordable police force
 - Improved, expanded and durable recreational facilities and fields
 - Improved cultural draws including libraries, musicals and drama
 - Better ecological treatment of wastewater and sewage
- A fair and equitable means for funding the diverse and large desired needs of the community
- More dedicated volunteers
- Ways to move people from point A to point B without vehicles, e.g., **bikeways** that connect nearby communities to shopping, schools (after-school sports), library, athletic fields. **Pathways** that could accommodate electric mobility chairs (such as Hoveroand, or like device), pedestrians, child strollers.
- Large meeting space for civic gatherings
- Many community needs are already being addressed, though probably not fully. Major organizations include La Comunidad, His Mission, The Garage, After the Bell, language tutoring, tax preparation, service clubs.
- Parking
- Repository for historical objects and local legends
- Underground Railroad Museum
- Convocation space
- Summer children's programs
- To be known in the community
- Larger (better) donor base
- Less government intervention rules/regulations
- Expansion of number of residents, possible Alzheimers unit (Friends Home)

- Re library
 - Continued books on loan
 - Transportation – 2 whole blocks is long
 - More large print books- varied
 - Computer education for seniors
 - Volunteer opportunities for residents

KHS

- More hours: after school, weekends, vacations, summers
- Venues for student performances: coffee house, poetry salms
- Alternatives for non-traditional students
- Programs for teens: book clubs, graphic novel groups
- Program for parents re student use of computers
- Access to resources “not allowed” in school.
- My Space
- More tutoring
- Community service opportunities
- Parenting program for students
- Children’s programming
- Increased library hours (Sunday)

GENERAL

- Parking in the Borough free. (Borough has turned people off with parking meters.)
- Information sharing among non-profit groups. Coordinate services
- Understanding **genuine** community economic needs. The Lions Club can perhaps fund from its fundraising programs, i.e., eye exams, glasses for needy children
- Cooperative community organizations linking and sharing information.
- Architectural reference resources
 - Design reference
 - Technical reference/ordnances etc.
 - Testing facility
 - Sylvan learning center or similar organization that provides test center for various professional registrations
- An appropriate civic space for the library
- Accessibility for all = centrality.

Group 2

SENIOR CENTER

- Better access to DVD collection for borrowing – possibly a book mobile or vanmobile. Order and then delivered to town locations.
- Handicapped access
- Space for meetings
- A library on one floor for easy senior access
- Parking
- Large print books
- Books on tape locally

- Book talks
- Funding
- Sufficient parking
- Transportation for seniors to and from the library or special events
- More strong volunteers from the community
- Local history displayed and story telling (time capsule)
- Movie theater

FRIENDS HOME

- Space for book talks in library
- Borrowing DVDs
- Space in library for group discussions and speakers about books etc.
- Handicapped access
- Language/computer classes
- Large print books
- Books on tape

GENERAL

- Supportive Borough Council
- Citizens who think out of the box
- Flexible thinking
- Parking

BTML

- Adult literacy program
- Free parking
- Individual space – volunteer tutors (tutoring stalls)
- Literacy/computer classroom
- Supply area
- Program director/administrative literacy office
- Free parking-safe parking
- More meeting/activity space in library more space for books, CDs, magazines
- Some quiet space
- Spanish language materials
- Longer hours



YMCA

- More of a cultural center with displays
- More reading materials for our members
- Provide computers for the families to use.
- Continue to offer children’s librarian visits to our school
- Offer “mommy and me” group demonstration classes for the community
- Meeting rooms
- Offer an opportunity for our members to sign up for library cards.
- Teacher resource area
- Interpreters – Spanish-English, children and adults

- Large audio books
- Book clubs
- Parking

Group 3

ST. PATRICK'S

- Understanding of the organization of the library
- Teaching how to research a project
- Purpose of library in the community – understanding of – and how it supplements services – job searching etc.
- Understanding bibliography
- How to research vocational interests
- Invitation to children's programming

HISTORIC KENNETT SQUARE

- Funding
- Staffing
- Communicate clearly our mission and accomplishments
- Volunteers
- Street front office space

CHESTER COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES

- Apply to all libraries in Chester County:
- Continued increases in library usage to justify funding
- General advocacy re all factions of the community – funders, staff, public
- Continued willingness to standardize policies and procedures to facilitate services – cooperation at the system level.

GENERAL

- Meeting space (book clubs, non-profit meeting space, speaking programs)
- Educational support (homework, internet)
- "Hangout," "hub"
- Mid-size/small business info needs
- Accessibility – parking, outreach
- Literacy – early intervention, life stage
- A community center where people of many age groups can come together. A place where people can relax – a coffee bar, get something to eat
- Technology and electronics - Internet
- A high number of computers – many for adults, and a separate (room) area for children
- A place where the community can produce or have shows – celebrations – town meetings with **electronic** equipment
- Cooperate with the Kennett and Unionville school libraries. We would not need to duplicate what they already have.

Group 4

LA COMUNIDAD HISPANA

- Free meeting places for small groups like GUAPAS
- Accessibility to Internet connections on computer
- GED books in Spanish
- Spanish/English translators for residents
- Storage space for donated clothing and furniture
- Pool of available teachers for GED and ESL
- A place to get MicroSoft-credentialed

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- Acceptance, shared mission

BTML

- Need library!!! Governance/leadership. Funds (capital and operating)

AFTER THE BELL

- Fundraising, volunteers, program space, programs

ROTARY

- Community needs assessment, volunteer projects

KENNETT UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CENTER

- Museum
- Outreach so more local people learn this part of our local history. Maybe with rotating/traveling display in Kennett Township, Pennsbury etc.
- Volunteers

CCPC

- Need cooperation of municipalities
- Need to make information available to decision makers and the public
- Need to invest in community infrastructure
- Need to encourage development in the right places
- Need to protect and preserve historic resources of communities to maintain a unique character and to inform the public on the significance of our heritage
- Need to protect the public health with adequate infrastructure, water supplies, and environmental remediation
- Need to create walkable communities to promote health, reduce obesity and to encourage physical fitness

LIBRARY

- Classes – Spanish for English-speaking residents
- Satellite library services and programs
- Satellite children's programs

- Interesting and current speakers' programs on a variety of issues
- Museum space for traveling collections (not specific to library history)
- Travel/tour coordination with local universities or other organizations
- Art shows and classes, in art and art history
- Computer access
- Computer literacy
- Volunteers in constant need
- Need more library dissemination of information and its service area

GENERAL

- Large display cabinets and bulletin boards for community groups
- Good lecture room/auditorium for 50-100 people
- Local history collection and display
- Conference rooms – small and medium

Group 5

COMMUNITY

- Service personnel
- General information on area
- Current statistics, for example:
 - Apartment/community (twp etc)
 - Historic growth by building type
 - Office/industrial building areas and occupancy
- New business/clients
- Park system
- Knowledge of community needs
 - Services
 - Buildings
- Computer training
- Opportunities for development

SCCCCC

- Assistance with business research
- Legislative/regional planning committee needs current legislative issues/events to share with the Board and membership.
- Needs connections with regional planning initiatives
- Communications committee
- Membership Committee needs resources/advice from other Chambers for growth.
- Using Internet assistance. Business reference materials available on-line, how to find and organize for effective use.
- Need to know new businesses moving into the area.

UPLAND COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

- Bilingual (Spanish/English) easy books and early chapter books
- More publicity about Summer Reading Programs – perhaps a way to recognize summer readers – a list of participants

- Is there a way I can help sign students from Upland up with public library cards? Can DE residents who work (teachers)/attend school (students) get PA library cards?
- Can we collaborate on children's programming? (maybe share speakers, travelling displays or at least share publicity?)
- Are there service opportunities for elementary/middle school students? "Could the library serve as a clearing house for requests? One thing we need is one-day, one-time only projects.
- Consider collaborating to develop Internet safety courses for either students or families.
- Admissions inquiries

CHESTER COUNTY PRESS

- Human resources
- Equipment – computers, telephones, cameras
- Contacts
- Information – books, magazines, sources
- Business partners –advertisers, story subjects, printer
- Internet access
- Community involvement
- Readers
- Local government meetings
- Civic organization functions
- Schools

BTML LIBRARY

- Broader tax-based support for operations
- Parking



GARDEN CLUB

- More vendor interest in keeping barrels watered.

GENERAL

- Large display cabinets and bulletin boards for community groups
- Good lecture room/auditorium for 50-100 people
- Local history collection and display
- Conference rooms – small and medium

SWOT FORMS: *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis Forms* prepared by organizations prior to the Conversation.

TOGETHER FOR EDUCATION

- S - Organizing and training volunteers to support the KCSD
- W- In the infancy stage
- O- To develop a greater community network of volunteers.
- T- Over-extension

KENNETT UNDERGROUND R.R.

- S - Rich local history to explore and communicate
Much local and national interest in URR
Broad grassroots support, especially in the Quaker and African-American communities, both of which have long traditions relating to URR
Modest low-key approach, i.e., keeping it simple and low cost
- W - No museum, though likely to have one soon
- O - Museum, greater awareness, especially locally
- T - No museum, need younger peoples' involvement

KARPC (BILL HEWTON- KENNETT TWP)

- S - Regional coverage and influence
Financial; support for specific non-profits
- W - One municipality is oriented to the WC library
Two municipalities are partially oriented to KS
- O - Coordination of municipal activities and issues
- T - Increased responsibilities for individual munis.
Decreased attention to regional issues

KARPC (Bruce Yelton - Pocopson Township)

- S - KARPC has existed for 20+ years, working to discuss and resolve regional problems.
Success in developing an approved regional comprehensive plan, forming a regional co-operative for purchasing road materials (15+ years) that has saved significant dollars.
Successfully established a funding formula to support our local emergency services.
- W - KARPC is only an advisory committee serving the elected municipal officials.
- O - Improvement to traffic problems in the region
Establishment of a regional Act 537 plan to serve sewer needs in New Garden and Kennett Townships and the Borough of Kennett Square.
Improvement and additions to regional recreational opportunities
- T - PennDOT funding of needed projects
DEP approval process and NIMBYism
Cost of land and improvement costs for recreational fields

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- S - Friends members care deeply about the library. Our core organization of 85 community members was a spontaneous response to open dialogue and discussion with the library board regarding the proposal to build a new library at their recently purchased site in Kennett Township. In addition to experienced planners and fundraisers for non-profits, our membership includes many of the most respected and philanthropic members of our community.
- W - Our inability to engage the library board in a dialogue with our organization and the community through Friends-sponsored forums with well-known speakers including Thomas Hylton, author of "Save Our Land, Save Our Towns," and Leslie Berger, the head librarian of the Princeton library which had successfully undergone a similar discussion about building a new library in downtown Princeton.

- O - In this structured planning process now under way, it might be helpful if other active Friends members were included. We, as an organization, would like to have all the talent in our organization contributing to the discussion.
- T - (or obstacles) The library board is changing, and we sense a renewed vigor and openness to the concerns of outside organizations and the community at large. Hopefully this will eliminate a major obstacle.

The Mission of the Friends of the Bayard Taylor Memorial Library is:
 To promote and assist in the development, operation and use of the BTML as an important educational, cultural and historic resource for the Kennett area.

AFTER-THE BELL

- S - Important mission – provide safe, fun, and learning after-school activities for KCSD middle school students.
 Many loyal volunteers
 Strong public support, foundations
 Good staff. good board and committees
- W - Not enough volunteers
 Costs keep rising
- O - Pull more students (clients) into program
- T - Lack of volunteer facilitators

KENNETT AREA YMCA

- S - Large community base
 New income-based board membership (IBM)
 Wide variety of programs
 Free babysitting
- W - Physical space constraints
- O - More offsite programming
 Partnering with other organizations
- T - The current economy

PARTNERSHIPS

Chester County 2020 is grateful to the annual partners whose support is important to all our programs but especially to the Community Conversations. For 2008, they include:

- PECO
- Saul Ewing LLP
- J.D. Wood & Co.
- Bryn Mawr Trust Company
- Fulton Bank
- Herr’s Foods, Inc.
- The Michael & Nancy Pia Foundation

A Pennsylvania DCED grant sponsored by Senator Dominic Pileggi also helped to defray the cost of the Library Conversation.



Conversation, Community & Conservation

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