

The Roselle Park Veterans Memorial Library

STRATEGIC PLAN



2012-2017

Prepared by Trustee Laura Hahn

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MISSION

Continuing to be a jewel in the community.

VISION

The library will provide a welcoming environment that offers educational and career resources to enrich the lives of everyone in the community, while being fiscally responsible and adhering to state laws and bylaws.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Patrons of the Roselle Park Veterans Memorial Library:

We are improving our service delivery by issuing the first ever Strategic Plan for our town library system. With clear vision and direction, many fellow residents have volunteered creative ideas in order to shape the future direction of our library system. In fact, this document can be viewed as a unifying element in our community.

I am certain of the effective continuity of our library and the continuing faithful support of groups such as the Friends of the Library and our School District. Patrons of our library should be proud of the many excellent resources it provides and will continue to provide for many decades to come. Our ethnic collections are still growing and provide a peek into our multi-ethnic heritage inherent in Roselle Park.

I thank my fellow Board members, especially Laura Hahn, who spearheaded the Strategic Plan project. I wish our library system, its wonderful employees and cadre of volunteers – as well as our entire community - the very best!

Alexander Balaban,
President, Roselle Park Library Board of Trustees
Submitted April 20, 2012

LIBRARY STAFF

Susan Calantone, *Library Director*

Elena Tsomaeva

Debbie Heiss

Kit Rubino

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Candy Hahn

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Marta Pontoriero

Bertha Rodriguez

Margaret Dawe

Catharine Jones

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Mike Yakubov, *Mayor's Liaison*

INTRODUCTION

This year-long process was conducted professionally and from a neutral stand-point. This strategic plan could not have been done without the help of the State Library, the Library Director and staff, the Board of Trustees, and of course, the patrons.

While attending several Strategic Planning seminars provided by the State Library, I networked with countless libraries and obtained the tools and resources necessary for putting together a plan.

A variety of focus groups was attempted, but did not produce suitable research. Instead, more qualitative information came out of one-on-one interviews with the different groups that play a role in the library.

This finished product was put together after careful research and analysis of our library, other libraries, the interviews, surveys, and board packets.

Thank you to all who contributed in framing the future of our library!

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Provide patrons with the resources they need and want.

- ✓ Continue exceptional customer service.
- ✓ Adjust hours to accommodate people's work schedule.
- ✓ Restructure the layout of the library to showcase a comfortable and welcoming environment, and efficient workspaces.
- ✓ Give people an incentive to come and continue to come to the library, such as Patron of the Month, 100th Patron Award/Recognition.
- ✓ Solicit more feedback from patrons by conversations, surveys, and polls.
- ✓ Construct a Technology Plan and implement over the next five years.
- ✓ Create and implement an Evaluation Plan that reflects the services of the library, including staff, the Board and programs.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Reach out to all members of the community.

- ✓ Implement a Marketing/Branding Plan to let everyone know what the library has to offer
- ✓ Create partnerships with different town entities, organizations, businesses and other libraries to get our name out in the community, help others get their name out, and co-sponsor events.
- ✓ Visit the schools of the community to introduce students to the library and what it has to offer, as well as invite classes to come to the library to learn and use its resources and facilities.
- ✓ Utilize the Borough's local access channel more.
- ✓ Recruit patrons that wish to be actively involved in the Friends of the Library and Library Board of Trustees.
- ✓ Establish a relationship with the community by hosting "Meet and Greets" with Library Staff and Board of Trustees for patrons and non-patrons.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Be financially responsible in tough economic times while still providing adequate services.

- ✓ Pass a balanced budget and avoid overspending.
- ✓ Be good stewards of the taxpayers' money that is allocated for library use.
- ✓ Do more with less by prioritizing and thinking outside the box.
- ✓ Enter into partnerships to share services, co-sponsor events and split costs/share facilities.
- ✓ Seek other forms of revenue and donations.
- ✓ Reserve Capital Funding.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Be recognized as a contributor to academic achievement.

- ✓ Visit the schools of the community to introduce students to the library and what it has to offer, as well as invite classes to come to the library to learn and use its resources and facilities.
- ✓ Offer an atmosphere that is conducive to studying and tutoring.
- ✓ Develop learning support programs to fill the gaps in programming and curriculum.
- ✓ Provide online classes and resources for those that do not have access or cannot afford it.
- ✓ Enhance learning skills of student populations by starting at any early age.

RESEARCH
&
ANALYSIS

LIBRARY BOARD 'SWOT' ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS

- Friends of the Library organization
- Adult and Children's programs
- Computer services
- SKILLED STAFF available to handle myriad of issues
- Foreign language books/publications
- Donations made annually to library by various donors
- Library décor
- Shared services – schools/borough
- Quantity of services (ie: programs, books, videos, CDs, etc)
- Integrated community– youth, parents, seniors, teens, singles, etc. – with various programs
- Offers many programs for all ages
- Active in community/community service
- Good location in the center of town
- Creative programs and activities
- Large, knowledgeable staff
- Numbers (circ, attendance, cards, etc) pretty much progress/increase every year
- Up to date technology

LIBRARY BOARD'S 'SWOT' ANALYSIS: WEAKNESSES

- Bulk of Budget goes to Salary, SS, and Benefits; not returned to public
- Hours of operation.
- Limited cultural representation from the
- Fiscal controls and management
- Space limitation of building for community events
- Public relations
- Budget
- Not good stewards?
- Small library – limited space
- Cater to same demographic(s)?
- Do a lot of the same programs...are they all “successful”?
- Base success on numbers...need more
- Function more as community center...stepping on others' toes

LIBRARY BOARD'S 'SWOT' ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand on operating hours to make the library a place residents can go to after work or a late Saturday.
- Increase usage of CATV-34 to get the news out
- Seek shared services with other library entities
- Control personnel costs
- Library lawn can be used for outdoor events such as concerts and movies, and indoors we could have roving art shows
- Board can reform personnel practices (benefits)
- Board can keep close eye on and clear records of spending and BUDGET
- School system – go to classes, traveling story times
- Intimate/small town
- Partnerships with businesses, and municipal/volunteer services
- Transition with the times
- Fundraising
- Enhance learning skills of student populations
- Inter Library Loan (ILL) with schools?

LIBRARY BOARD'S 'SWOT' ANALYSIS: THREATS

- The budget
- Weak internal organization
- Part-Time employee payments exceed budget
- Account (budgetary) spending caps limits are ignored
- Community Center
- E-books
- Other libraries
- Book Stores
- Absent and inactive trustees

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – STAFF

1. What are some of the roles that the Library plays in your community?

- Not just books anymore. Knitting/Crocheting. Cozy and comfortable to be here to sit down and read (even newspaper).
- Offers a lot. Staff has diff/diverse expertise.
- “Small library, Big Attitude”
- Reaching out to other places.
- Place for part-time workers; winding down from working/retirement.
- Brings community together.
- Career Service Center. Movie Rentals.
- Serves some other cultures – ESL, different books in different languages, etc.
- Service from infants to seniors.
- Storytimes –moms who can’t afford nursery school bring kids to meet other kids and learn.
- Internet provided for those that don’t have. Ellen offers classes for non-comp savvy people.
- Help people obtain what they need. Provide mtg place for community, ie senior men.

2. How would you describe or characterize the community that this library serves?

- Seniors and young mothers
- More summertime patrons because of beach reads
- Multi-ethnic. –should capitalize on that. Don’t need language to show how to do crafts
- People who have time to use facilities
- Story time kids and parents
- Changed over years. More cultures. (offer ESL class) try to change services to meet community needs.

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – STAFF (cont'd)

3. What should the Library consider when creating the new Strategic Plan?

- Keep up technology
- Provide good interpersonal relations
- Continue to be a library family. Need books
- Try to get more people, particularly women
- Technology Plan.
- Buy new books, especially in different languages. Get rid of outdated books and get more from other libraries
- Needs of community
- More funding for library...fundraisers, donate craft supplies

4. What kind of image would you like to see the Library project in our community? Should it be traditional, hi-tech, energetic, like a bookstore?

- Patrons.-nice people, family
- Availability of the books
- 1 on 1 help

5. What things do you like best about the Library?

- Seeing patrons come in, and find what they need/ seeing them satisfied
- Small town feel
- Storytimes
- Personal 1 on 1 help

What needs improvement?

- Middle School kids using library as a hangout, disrupting and deterring patrons
- More night time hours...back to 9pm (not rush people out after event when library is closing)

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – STAFF (cont'd)

6. What one thing would you do to motivate more residents of the community to come to their library? How can we advertise better?

- More and diverse programs
- Expand advertising around town
- Once a month program talking about a different culture More clubs for kids...so kids of all ages have something to do
- Program with school to bring kids here

7. In an environment of fiscal constraint, what should the Library's priorities be when considering the needs of its patrons?

- Keeping patrons and offer more of a variety of what they want
- Buy more books for them.
- Servicing technology -more computers, updated, new programs.
- More DVDs
- Books- best sellers, large print

8. Anything else?

- Book Sale downstairs: maybe get rid of? Not used enough?
- Transform back room-look more presentable: couch, table cloths
- LMxAC – Don't get rid of...does so much. They do whole computer system, mailing of notices, placing holds, email, easy to communicate to them and to other libraries. To change systems is a big expense, have to go through lengthy training. Transitioning is difficult.
- Board of Trustees - support and use library more
- Publicity/Public Relations Committee/Plan
- Teens read new book series...get more of those.
- Need two people in Children's Room. -especially with middle school students
- ILL – every library should participate. Some don't give out books but can receive
- Loves story times. Maybe do sleepover story night or something like it
- Showcase a new book of the week/month. Have reviews of a book, then have raffle for participants.
- Create an incentive such as 50th/100th patron to check out book.

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – COMMUNITY

1. What are some of the roles that the Library plays in your community?

- Community collection of library materials; written, visual and media driven items.
- Central area for community members to meet for exposure to the arts and other events
- Place to meet for book clubs, reading clubs, poetry readings, etc.
- Research, entertainment (pop books and other types of entertainment)
- Involved process, staff is wonderful and very accommodating

2. How would you describe or characterize the community that this library serves?

- Moderately blue collar working class community, small volume of senior citizens, approximately 2,000 school aged children
- Back 20 years, RP was basically blue collar Italian town. Still mostly that, but has changed ethnicity...more foreign influence. People that use library are the ones that can't afford to do what library does in any other way (use computers, research, get help from library)

3. What should the Library consider when creating the new Strategic Plan?

- How to utilize any and all technology available to attract the youth of its community into the library on a regular basis.

4. What kind of image would you like to see the Library project in our community? Should it be traditional, hi-tech, energetic, like a bookstore?

- To succeed in bringing in middle-aged and school-aged participants, the library must upgrade to significant use of technology – more use of computers, video rooms, coffee bar, and must have wi-fi throughout the library.
- All of the above. Want residents to know that it's a place to come that's friendly and comfortable

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – COMMUNITY

(cont'd)

5. What things do you like best about the Library? What needs improvement?

- It's centrally located, which should work in its favor.
- Staffing has always been mature and kind.
- openness to everyone; accessible
- programs
- makes resources/opportunities available to those that need

Improvements:

- More focus on its direction, as opposed to “just waiting for people to come in” has to be in the forefront. i.e. - Campaign in the community “Visit the NEW Roselle Park Library”..... and highlight its new attractions.
- Use TV 34 to promote it – Create a position within the library of Community Liaison, Public Relations.....
- Have more events there to drive community members there
- More space for events
- Board of Trustees: Mayor shouldn't be part of Board of Trustees because it gives off the feeling that he is influencing trustees (just liaison); people who use the library should be on it; seems they're trying to keep funds from library

6. What one thing would you do to motivate more residents of the community to come to their library?

- Promote, promote, promote. TV 34 – Replace the CAASA train trestle art with “Did you visit your Roselle Park Library today”
- Have Borough Council reach out to constituents. More communication.
- Town newspaper
- Word of mouth...personal communication

COMBINED INTERVIEWS – COMMUNITY

(cont'd)

7. In an environment of fiscal constraint, what should the Library's priorities be when considering the needs of its patrons?

- Follow the path of technology – provide computers, provide IPADS for downloading of book reading, stop being afraid of spending money.
- Traditional library...keep up references/resources (set). People come for new books...keep up with new ones.
- Keep story times and kids programs.
- Municipality should pay benefits.
- Director should have more input in budget.
- Keeping public happy

8. How has the Library changed over the years?

- Not much. Even the political influence.
- The people that visit the library – more ethnic, more moms with kids
- Staff, programs, services have greatly improved since last 7-8 years.

SENIOR SURVEY RESULTS

Why do you visit the library?

Books	50%
Programs	40%
Newspapers	20%
Computer	70%
Socializing	10%

How often do you go to the Library?

Every Day	20%
Once a Week	20%
2-4 Times a Week	40%
Once a Month	10%
As Needed Basis	10%

What do you like about it?

Everyone raved about the staff and said they were very helpful and friendly. A couple people said it was a quiet atmosphere with convenient resources.

What needs improvement?

More of the latest movies, activities for kids, more funding, no cell phone usage in facility.

~A total of 10 senior citizens participated in the survey~