

Chippewa River District Library  
Mt. Pleasant, MI  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
<http://www.crdl.org>

Visiting Library Sub-Committee  
Summaries

**Dale Hobart:**

I have a couple of thoughts about what we saw.

It sure would be nice to have the space that they have with shelving with a couple of totally empty selves on each shelf stack. I think that a district library is serving their needs very well and forming one is a very intriguing idea. It would certainly change how we do business. I was also intrigued by the idea that they had no book security system and indicated that there was not a significant difference in loss with or without one. I did not like the bi-level design execution. The transition space between the mid-level and the upper and lower levels was an uncomfortable space for me. They did seem to like the idea of being part of the downtown community.

**Mary Ryan:**

Thank you for our visit to the Mt. Pleasant VML. The neighborhood where the library is located is very well maintained with nice looking houses and offices.

I was most impressed with Director Lise's willingness to share so much information about the things that have worked or not worked as they have planned their building of a new section and renovation of the existing building. Lise spoke very highly of having staff with graphics and marketing expertise.

Obviously, their project is much larger because of the population they serve. It interested me, that they have planned separate areas of their collection for children, pre-teens, teens and adults to better meet their needs. Some new ideas for our needs list is the computer training lab, 15 minute time limit computer stations, and merchandising of the collection.

Careful consideration should go into choosing colors and patterns. Grey and green didn't do anything for me. My compliments to Lise for sharing so much time and information with us.

**Marlies Manning:**

Lise Mitchell, Executive Director of Library Services for the Chippewa River District Library, met with our committee on Monday, April 14, 2008. Mrs. Mitchell was very forthcoming with her experience in creating a district library. The following are points of information that I found particularly interesting:

- A good public library is one of the elements of a "Cool City". It increases the quality of life.
- When asked why Mt. Pleasant needs a public library when they have C.M.U.'s library, she answers: available parking, children's programs and book collections, different book collections for all ages than what is found at CMU; programs that are offered increase the quality of life for the community.

- The district library was created with the school district. They spent years talking to the county about creating a district library and the idea never moved forward. They had one meeting with the school district and it was approved.
- They educated the public about what a district library is through regular presentations to Boards, and other groups; and through newspaper articles.
- The County library board writes service contracts for the townships outside of the district. There are no user fees for out-of-district users.
- Library elections are the same day as school district elections (4 times in a year).
- 70% of their library funding comes from the district millage (1.75%). It allows them to plan ahead and budget knowing what their revenue will be for ten years.
- They used the Breton Group as a library consultant. However they were dissatisfied with their recommendations and have moved ahead with a capital campaign to expand the library on their own. They hired a P.R. person and combined with the graphic talents of one of their employees they have produced all promotional materials in-house.
- The capital campaign will furnish the building; the millage will pay to build the building expansion.
- She recommends hiring an Owners Representative during construction.
- Dennis Jensen, C2AE Architects developed the conceptual drawings.

### **Gaylynn Rorabaugh:**

According to Director Lise Mitchell:

- Libraries are a quality of life issue and an important element of the 'Cool Cities' initiative
- City should build on the importance of strong, relevant libraries
- They receive similar comments about having CMU in the community and not needing a community library. Their answer is the same as ours – different mission, different clientele, different resources, and programs
- Stable funding is crucial for short and long term planning; without it there is no growth or program and collection development
- Renovated their building as it was built in 1957 and it is in very good condition
- Library draws visitors to the area and serves as an anchor for downtown
- Downtown location makes it easy for shoppers to visit the Library and makes the location beneficial for all of the community
- Their architect (Dennis Jensen of C2AE) helped to determine the square footage needs
- The Breton Group was hired to do the feasibility study and organize the capital campaign. Too many competing projects in the community made it difficult for them to get committee members. They were frustrated by the time it was taking and ended the contract after 3 or 4 months of work.
- Hired a person with 15 years of marketing at a local radio station and combined his knowledge with that of a staff member with graphic design skills. All educational and promotional materials were developed in house for use in the campaign.
- Architect helped them scale their project back and they will build a two story addition. The plans will also allow for future expansion if necessary.
- They are asking for a millage for the building.
- Capital campaign will be used for furnishings and equipment.