



LYME PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 - 2022

December 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The previous strategic plan for the Lyme Public Library was completed in 2011. Its primary focus was on building a new facility to replace the existing structure, which was completed in 2014. Since the last plan, digital media and online services have expanded rapidly. In January 2019, the Lyme Public Library Board of Directors voted to produce an updated strategic plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee began by identifying the main key questions to address:

- How can the community benefit more from our new Library facility?
- Given the rapid development of technology, how can the Library best respond to the information needs of the community?
- With the changing demographics of the Town of Lyme, how can the Library best serve the evolving needs of our residents?

To answer these questions, the committee undertook a thorough information-gathering process lasting several months and engaging more than 250 members of the community. It included individual interviews, focus groups, online and paper surveys, as well as research and analysis at the Board level.

From this community input, the Strategic Planning Committee developed an entirely new plan with four goals, to be achieved through strategies and their corresponding action steps. In addition, the Committee identified metrics by which the Board of Directors and staff will monitor progress during the next three years and adapt the Plan as needed.

WHAT WE LEARNED: THEMES & TRENDS

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

With the proliferation of digital services (e-books, e-magazines, and streaming video and music), devices (smart phones, tablets and Wi-Fi hotspots), and the availability of information on the Internet, the demand for physical books, CDs and DVDs is expected to continue to decline over time. Many community members had questions about the role of the Library in this new age. The challenge is that not all community members are able to purchase the technology or access these new resources. It is clear that the Library must continue to play a role in providing access to services and equipment, as well as in providing training and guidance for those wanting to utilize these tools. Free public computers, Wi-Fi, and access to other digital services and devices will be vitally important to the community now and in the future.

INCREASING AND CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

The population of the Town of Lyme is aging, with over 30% of the residents now 65 and older. Also, several community leaders noted that there are more new residents who are in town only on weekends and during the summer months. The needs of these families are likely different from longer term and year-round residents.

SHIFTING VIEW OF PHYSICAL SPACE

With the completion of the new building in 2014, the Lyme Public Library can be viewed as a town centerpiece. However, noting the role of technology, many community members questioned how the physical space of the Library is currently utilized and how it should best be utilized in the future.

POWER OF HUMAN INTERACTION AND IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Community members raised significant concerns about being too “plugged in” to their computers, mobile phones and tablets. They asked for more opportunities for people to gather in person to exchange ideas, build relationships, and learn from one another. In addition, they viewed the Library as a refuge from the challenges people may face in their lives. They expressed that the Library should take more of a leadership role in providing educational and enrichment experiences, perhaps even providing opportunities for youth to develop and cultivate their communication and life skills.

ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION IN RECENT YEARS

Community members noted that the Library has evolved in numerous positive ways. The variety of programming (including Children’s Programming), the strength of the staff, and an overall improvement in customer service were noted. The access to the inter-Library system, online book holds, and email reminders were also identified as welcome improvements.

ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

From the information gathered, strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats were assessed in order to help guide the strategic planning process. It should be noted that some factors were perceived as both strengths and weaknesses as well as both opportunities and threats.

STRENGTHS

Although the Lyme Public Library is small by many standards, it does have a number of strengths even beyond those of larger institutions.

- A modern, attractive building with interior amenities including meeting rooms.
- A large and varied collection of books, audiobook, periodicals, DVD’s, etc.
- A welcoming and knowledgeable staff who promote positive interactions with patrons.
- Internet access and generous time availability on terminal usage.

WEAKNESSES

Surveys and focus groups also identified a number of weaknesses:

- The Library's location on the northern edge of town, and the relative proximity of the majority of residents in town to other libraries.
- More restrictive days and hours than other libraries.
- A limited number of programs offered compared to neighboring libraries.
- Need for improved technology assistance, lack of labelling on stacks, and the conflict between the need for quiet reading areas versus open community spaces.
- Most residents are confused about how the Library is funded. (The taxpayer portion of the Library's operating budget is 65%, excluding utilities, building and computer maintenance and employee benefits. The remainder comes from the Lyme Public Library Foundation and the Friends of Lyme Public Library.)

OPPORTUNITIES

A number of conditions could be used to benefit the Town and the Library:

- A willingness of many locals to volunteer.
- The need for community activities in an increasingly isolated world.
- Local residents with expertise in a wide range of areas.
- Other community organizations that want to partner with the Library.
- The Library as a meeting place.
- The need for more services, especially for the elderly.

THREATS

Long term there also appear to be current and emerging factors which could hinder efforts at the Library.

- An aging population who no longer feel able to contribute and an increase in the number of weekend and summer-only residents who have limited time to volunteer.
- Growing number of digital resources and other media commercially available.
- Increasing "competition" from other libraries.
- Pressure on the Town to spend its limited financial resources elsewhere.
- The likely decline in contributions from those no longer itemizing deductions in filing their individual federal income tax forms.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The Lyme Public Library's vision and mission statements remain the same as adopted in 2011.

VISION STATEMENT

"The Lyme Public Library: Connecting Our Community to the World."

MISSION STATEMENT

"The Lyme Public Library serves the Town of Lyme as a community center for lifelong education, cultural and recreational activities, and evolving informational needs. To this end, the Library provides a professional staff, a state-of-the-art facility, current technology, print and electronic material, programs, and services.

We will measure our success through the level of community participation in all aspects of Library services."

Specifically:

- The Library should be the community's gathering place for learning, enrichment, and for the exchange of ideas.
- The Library should offer a large collection of resources, in both physical and digital forms, which continue to evolve to meet the needs of the community.
- The Library aims to offer programming on a wide range of topics to educate our community and inspire their intellectual and cultural curiosity.
- The Library should provide technology support and training to utilize its evolving tools and information resources.
- The Library should promote literacy for all ages, to include financial, health, cultural, and other life skills.
- The staff of the Library should be its strongest asset. Access to professional development should be provided to expand and cultivate their skills to meet the evolving needs of the community.

GOAL 1: EVOLVE THE LIBRARY AS A COMMUNITY CENTER FOR THE TOWN OF LYME.

STRATEGY #1: COLLABORATE WITH OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Seek opportunities to collaborate on programs and services to better serve the interests and needs of groups such as seniors, working mothers, children and young adults, etc.
- Strengthen the relationship with Region 18, especially Lyme Consolidated School, to support and enrich their programs.
- Strengthen relationships with elected boards and commissions and create opportunities for dialogue and learning about Town-wide issues.

STRATEGY #2: ESTABLISH A WELCOMING PROGRAM FOR NEW RESIDENTS

- Develop a comprehensive introduction to the Town of Lyme along with other community groups in order to increase awareness of the missions of both the Library and these organizations.
- Outline ways that new residents can participate in Town through volunteerism and the opportunities to meet others with common interests.
- Work with local businesses to enable them to promote their products and services in ways such as offering discounts to new residents.

STRATEGY #3: DEVELOP A PUBLICITY AND MARKETING PLAN

- Explore creative ways to promote Library activities to the greater community. Highlight all Library events, especially collaborations with partner organizations.
- Review the Library's website and newsletter for their effectiveness.
- Explore eventually replacing the printed newsletter with an online version.
- Share the impact and vision of the Library with Town groups and civic leaders to stimulate improved financial support for the Library.
- Develop an independent report of all activities to town residents.

STRATEGY #4: PLAN FUTURE STAFFING TO EVOLVE WITH THE LIBRARY

- Create a long-term staffing plan which anticipates a changing mix of services and the necessary skill sets to provide the projected needs.

GOAL 2: INCREASE LIBRARY USE BY IMPROVING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

STRATEGY #1: DEVELOP NEW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Establish a Program Committee, made up of members of the Board and the Friends, to work with Library Director to plan and organize a calendar of programs.
 - Determine criteria for the introduction of new programs and services such as having a stated purpose, target audience and a publicity plan.
 - This committee will seek out local presenters with special expertise on topics of interest.
- Develop a database of patrons' interests based on information they provide.

STRATEGY #2: EVALUATE NEW AND CONTINUING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- List existing programs and services, including recorded outcomes such as favorable feedback, success stories, etc.
- Create methods to measure the quality of the programming and provide opportunities for attendees to provide feedback.
- Regularly report to the Board on the progress of new programs and what if anything can be done to improve them.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE PATRONS' TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE

STRATEGY #1: REVIEW EXISTING AND POTENTIAL NEW DIGITAL PROGRAMS

- Provide user guides on how to access such programs in print, and on the website.
- Regularly inform patrons via the Library newsletter and other means about the availability of digital programs.
- Whenever possible, regularly assess and measure the utilization of these programs.

STRATEGY #2: PROVIDE SCHEDULED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Establish and advertise a regular schedule of technical assistance for using digital programs.
- Monitor use of assistance programs and ask for patron feedback.

STRATEGY #3: EXPAND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY

- Establish a community technology committee of volunteers with expertise in software and technology to support the Library's efforts and to suggest improvements.
- Evaluate and improve the functionality and user-friendliness of the Library's website.

GOAL 4: COORDINATE AND CODIFY RELATIONSHIPS WITH LIBRARY-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

STRATEGY #1: DEFINE TO THE PUBLIC THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, THE FRIENDS, AND THE LPL FOUNDATION: CLARIFY HOW EACH ORGANIZATION IS FUNDED.

- Provide a single document, available to the public that outlines the roles of each organization. Include a simple diagram to illustrate how the Library is funded.

STRATEGY #2: WORK WITH EACH SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION TO COORDINATE EFFORTS

- Meet with the heads of the Foundation and the Friends to talk about coordinating their fundraising efforts.
- Ensure that the Library's Board sends a liaison to Friends' and LPL Foundation meetings.

MONITORING PROGRESS

A. The Board of Directors will regularly monitor the implementation of the plan and will adapt it as necessary.

The Board will strive for the following measurable results:

- Increase in the number of registered cardholders, visitors per day, attendance at Library programs, and usage of Library meeting space.
- Increase use of the website as a portal to access digital information resources, as measured by page views and unique visitors.
- Increase in the number of circulated materials.
- Increase satisfaction of Library patrons through on-going feedback.

- Continued financial support from the Town of Lyme with wide support of town residents.
- Increase the private donations to the organizations that support the Library.
- Increase the quality and quantity of Library-sponsored programs, including the number of collaborations with other Town organizations.

B. As part of the annual budgeting process, the Board of Directors will meet with the Town Selectmen and Board of Finance to discuss progress toward the goals of this Strategic Plan. The purpose of this discussion will be to highlight the positive impacts on the community as a result of any actions taken and, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the most cost-effective means were considered in adding or in seeking monies for additional services and programs.

HOW THE STRATEGIC PLAN WAS CREATED

The Strategic Planning Committee was formed in January 2019. It included:

- Jack Sulger, Chairperson, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors
- Diana Fiske, Secretary, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors
- Mary Stone, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors
- Theresa Conley, Library Director

Assistance was also provided by:

- Diane Brown, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors
- Holly Rubino, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors
- Judy Ulrich, Lyme Public Library Board of Directors

INFORMATION GATHERING

The following measures were taken to solicit feedback from the community:

- Developing an online and paper survey
- Conducting interviews with Community Leaders
- Holding focus groups with select residents
- Interviewing staff

The summaries and reports of these actions are attached as appendices:

Appendix	Subject:	Author
A	Survey Results Summary and Report	Diana Fiske
B	Summary and Interviews with Community Leaders	Mary Stone
C	Staff Survey Response Report	Holly Rubino
D	Focus Group Summary and Report	Fio Partners

BOARD RETREAT

After reviewing the results above, the Board of Directors held a board retreat on September 4, 2019. During this session the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats were identified as well as the beginnings of goals and strategies. These were then further discussed and finalized in two subsequent sessions. This work forms the first sections of this Strategic Plan.

Survey of Lyme Residents – Summary of Results

August 15, 2019

Of the 191 surveys completed between March and July 2019, 159 respondents had used the LPL in the past year; 32 had not.

Not surprisingly, the large majority (142, or 90%) still visit the Library to check out materials (books, DVDs, etc.), as well as to attend adult lectures/programs (69) and to use the public meeting rooms (50).

Other popular reasons to come to the Library were to read newspapers and magazines (41, or 26%), use public access computers (35), use printers/make copies (35), attend concerts and music programs (33), and study/research (30).

Fewer than 20% of respondents were drawn to attend children's programs, use online resources (21), meet with friends, attend book club/reading group (10), use the Lyme historical archives, or to obtain tax forms (8). Just over one third identified the helpful staff and welcoming environment as an incentive to visit. Several respondents noted that they drop off books for the sale, another liked the 'new books' section, and a couple come for the Children's Room.

Almost half of the non-user responses (14 of 32 total) cited getting information from other sources, while a third buy/rent materials from another source. Some say it's too far to travel (8), and others are too busy or use another Library (8). Only one respondent didn't have a library card. One person commented that the new Library has no section markers, thus making it harder to find books by category (cooking, photography, etc.), and another stated that other libraries in the area are more welcoming and offer more programs.

Regarding digital/online services, about half of survey fillers were aware of them but haven't used them to date, while only 30% have used at least one electronic service. 38 respondents (24%) noted that they are either unaware of these services or simply don't know how to use them.

When asked what other services people would like the Library to offer, computer classes/assistance and yoga classes were noted most often (50 and 47 respectively), followed by genealogy research, older adult programs (28), bridge or mahjong groups, and tax assistance (13 respondents). Only 4 patrons requested ESL classes. There were over 30 specific "Other" services requested on the surveys, including a wide variety of options for groups or classes, such as games (chess, scrabble), crafts (knitting, scrapbooking, sewing), cooking, foreign languages, gardening, photography, creating a community gathering place (like a café), current events, "town hall" discussions, meet and greets, and generally more programming for children and a call for events on Saturdays.

The majority of respondents (65%) learn about the Library's services and programs through the Quarterly Newsletter. Signs in the Library/on the road, the website, email blasts, via Library staff or friends and neighbors were other popular forms of communication (each selected by 42-60 survey takers). The newspaper (29), Facebook (20) and Twitter (4) were less frequently cited. Lyme/Old Lyme Neighbors magazine and Lyme school flyers were also mentioned.

The final survey question, asking “How could the Library be improved?” naturally elicited the most comments, with over 50 people sharing their thoughts.

Some were more general, with many requesting expansion (in number and variety) of both adult and children’s programing. Some were very specific, such as “Broadcast information about new book and DVD acquisitions, perhaps by inviting patrons’ reviews”, “Alternative book drop location” (in Hadlyme and southern Lyme), and “Make downloading digital services easy” (another suggested including step by step download and use instructions on the website).

Several patrons wished to see the Library as more of a community meeting spot and outreach source for new residents, with one resident outlining a plan for converting part of the space into a coffee house meeting area, and another suggesting the Library collaborate with other Lyme community organizations such as the Senior Center, the Garden Clubs, and the Public Hall.

To conclude, there were about a dozen comments concerning gratitude to the Library for running the survey, with one person stating “Thank you for this survey which has raised my awareness. Now I will make a point to come!”

Report

Lyme Public Library Survey Results - as of 7/26/2019

191 Surveys completed (101 paper, 90 online)

1. Have you or your family used the LPL in past year?

- Yes 159
- No 32

2. Why don't you use the LPL?

- Too far to travel 8
- Too busy 6
- The staff and/or Library aren't welcoming 4
- Don't know about the Library 1
- Get information from other sources 14
- Don't have transportation 1
- Hours are inconvenient 2
- Use a different library 8
- Buy or rent from another source 11
- Library doesn't have desired materials 3
- Don't have a library card 1

OTHER:

- *Don't have need (2)*
- *Here just for the summer*
- *Not part of life*
- *Haven't thought about it, other places to take kids*
- *Other libraries in area are much more welcoming & provide variety of options & programming*
- *I used to browse in the old Library frequently. Hard to do this without markers revealing where the various sections are: Cooking, Photography, Music, et al.*
- *I like to underline and tear down the corners (of books)*

3. Why do you visit the Library?

- Check out books/audiobooks/music CDs/DVDs 142
- Study and research 30
- Use public access computers 35
- Use online resources 21
- Attend children's programs 25
- Attend adult programs or lectures 69

- Attend library book club or reading group 10
- Read newspapers and magazines 41
- Make photocopies and use printers 35
- Use the 3 public meeting rooms 50
- Meet with friends 19
- Attend a concert or music program 33
- Obtain tax forms 8
- Use Lyme historical archives 20
- Helpful staff & welcoming environment (60)

OTHER:

- *Movies*
- *Magazine exchange*
- *Learn about online streaming services*
- *Drop off books for sale (4)*
- *Client meetings*
- *Hang out*
- *Warmth, clean dry air, cozy fireplace*
- *Children's library (2)*
- *Read and play with grandson*
- *Get a Library card*
- *You have a great new books selection!*
- *Sit & look through books that are new*
- *** Inside play space*

4. Did you know the Library provides many digital services?

- Have used one or more of these services 48
- Was aware of them but haven't used them 79
- Not aware of or don't know how to access services 38
- Don't use digital services 14

5. Are there other services you would like the Library to provide?

- ESL classes (English as Second Language) 4
- Older adult programs 28
- Yoga 47
- Bridge or Mah Jong groups 19

- Computer classes and assistance 49
- Tax assistance 13
- Genealogy research 37

OTHER:

- Chess
- Scrabble
- Games
- Photo books (scrapbooking?)
- Crafts
- Sewing & crafting classes
- Knitting group
- Cooking
- Gardening
- Photography
- Apple computer classes
- More programs
- Lectures such as Audubon, local/state town hall forum type meetings with politicians, discussions on local flora/fauna
- More Children's programming
- More Saturday activities
- In-depth conversations/lectures on current events
- Café-type community gathering place for (groups?)
- Ability to use rooms for knitting, games and projects.
- Social events like a meet & greet
- Foreign language classes (Italian, French, Spanish)
- Language CDs
- Children's program needs to be updated/expanded (2)
- Middle School program
- Closed caption on Library computers
- Consumer Reports
- Literacy Volunteers
- Make historical info collection (available?)
- Doing research
- <2-yr program (?)

6. How do you find out about the Library's programs and services?

- Newspaper 29
- Library website 58

- Library newsletter 125
- Friends/Neighbors 42
- In-library flyers & signs 60
- Library staff 50
- Twitter 4
- Facebook 20
- Email blasts 52

OTHER:

- Signs on road (3)
- Lyme/Old Lyme Neighbors magazine
- Lyme Schools (flyers/emails) (2)

7. How could the Library or its services be improved?

A full list of comments is available upon request. Most comments asked for more programs, services and hours, as reflected in the responses to Question 5.

Summary of Interviews with Community Leaders

The Strategic Planning Committee sought to form a base of knowledge about the Lyme community from which the Board of Directors could formulate the strategic plan. First, the Committee identified the leaders of key organizations in Lyme. Then, they devised interview questions about community values, the challenges and opportunities for the leaders' respective organizations, and the role the Library could play in the community.

The in-person interviews lasted between 15 and 90 minutes. (Full accounts of the interviews follow this summary.) The Committee either spoke to or received written answers to their questions from:

- Steven Mattson – First Selectman, Town of Lyme
- Linda Winzer – Town Clerk, Town of Lyme
- Daniel Hagan – Chairman, Lyme Board of Finance
- ^a Kathryn Wayland – CEO and Controller, Reynolds Subaru; Lyme Board of Finance
- John Evans – Emergency Management Director, Town of Lyme; Chief, Lyme Fire Company
- James Cavalieri – Principal, Lyme Consolidated School
- Stephanie Gould – Director, The Lymes Senior Center
- John Pritchard – President, Lyme Land Conservation Trust
- Jeanne Rutigliano – Realtor, Coldwell-Banker, Old Lyme; Lyme Public Library Foundation

While the Committee expected that some common themes about Lyme's values and its challenges would emerge from the interviews, the leaders spoke with one voice on these points:

1. Lyme is a rare and beautiful place in which to live and work. Its citizens value its rural and historic character, privacy, tolerance, low taxes, quality public education, and neighborliness.
2. The population is growing slowly, but aging at a faster rate. The elderly will need more services.
3. Lyme's land preservation, low taxes, and pleasant character depend upon its residents' self-reliance and willingness to volunteer for duties that paid staff perform in larger towns, particularly the fire and ambulance companies. In order for Lyme to function properly in the future, it will be important for new residents and rising generations to learn the critical importance of volunteering.

Leaders were asked the following questions. Their responses are quoted or summarized below.

1. Briefly, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

- a. "Lyme is a mixture of old local families, executives employed in other towns, and weekenders from NYC." "Lyme values its history and consistency, maintaining what they've always liked. Longtime residents know what to expect – they're more self-reliant. New residents want to be spoon-fed. They want immediate action."
- b. "Lyme is a world unto itself, frozen in time, quaint, serene...embodying the better qualities of a community where people care about their neighbors." "They're very welcoming and very philanthropic...old fashioned in their neighborliness and community-mindedness."
- c. "It's a low-key community that really supports public education."
- d. Lyme residents are very conservation-minded; they support open space and land conservation,

and they appreciate nature and beautiful surroundings.

- e. "The Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development speaks to what residents of Lyme hold dear."
 - f. "They are frugal, environmentally involved, and largely apolitical."
- 2. What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?*
- a. Lyme's leaders did not expect to see much growth in total population or housing development. However, they all expected to see an ageing of the population, along with greater needs for senior services. "There is huge growth in the senior population, which will continue. In the town of Lyme, as of 2016, about 35% are 65 and over."
 - b. "We're getting an influx of new residents who don't have a historical connection."

Appendix B-1

- c. "Growth appears to be with empty nesters, but not with young adults who can be the lifeblood of a community, infusing the school system with students, being active in community groups, or volunteering for emergency services."3. *What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?*
 - a. Several respondents lamented a continued decline in the numbers of school-age children and of adults "willing to be civically involved or volunteer for much-needed town services. This trend, if not reversed, will have adverse effects on the quality of life in Lyme. It is important to address this point proactively instead of reactively."
 - b. Ability to hire staff and create space and programs to serve more senior citizens.
 - c. "How do you manage change to [keep the Town] the same? Putting land into conservation reduces the potential for bad change."
 - d. "[We must] raise money to preserve land and recruit active board members."
 - e. "We struggle with communication with families. How do you get people to pay attention? Technology should improve the level of awareness, but it hasn't."

4. *What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?*

- a. "No major controversial decisions affecting the Town. We'll adhere to the 10-year Capital plan. Improve execution, but don't change the concept."
- b. "Our challenges are 1) recruitment of firefighters; 2) replacement of the Hadlyme Fire Station; 3) creating a code-compliant training location."
- c. "Our biggest decision is planning and building the addition so that we can meet the needs of all our incoming seniors."
- d. "We need to keep an open line of communication to parents."
- e. "The older population will continue to either downsize or move to assisted living facilities. Prices have dropped, as they have nationally, and there are many affordable, smaller homes for younger families."

- f. "[We must] be continually aware of available lands... and work closely with the Town to preserve as much open space as practicable."

5. *What opportunities do you envision for your organization?*

- a. "First, to better educate our community that we are a 100% volunteer organization."
- b. "Opportunities are available in all facets of our town government, both elected and volunteer positions.... The present dilemma is that there are not enough concerned or interested people to fill the positions."
- c. "Affordable housing (unfortunately, it doesn't have the support of the town). Re-doing recycling will save the town many thousands. We don't want the growth that most other towns seek. Most of what we do is blocking and parrying bad things."
- d. "There may be grants for infrastructure."
- e. "We are pivoting to a more educational focus...with additional programs and opportunities to...educate the next generation about conservation here in Lyme, and beyond."
- f. "Using social media as a means of alleviating loneliness and spreading the word about programming, and as a way to learn about what's going on in the world."
- g. "Limitless opportunities for designing programming to meet the needs of current and future seniors."

6. *How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?*

- a. "It should be more of a community center than a place to check out books."
- b. "The Library has had an inward focus. It could have a potentially valuable role in community outreach and education to boost volunteerism."
- c. "I am an avid reader, so I think a library is essential. I look forward to developing programs jointly with the LPL that our seniors would enjoy."
- d. "This is a difficult question in a digital world. A traditional library is hard to garner support for...The keyword is reinvention. Humans still crave communal activities, and we need to leverage that better and redefine the library as the

communal heart of Lyme. The meeting rooms are a step in the right direction, but we also need targeted activities that reintroduce the space to new generations [so they feel that] such a soul of our town is not only needed but supported.”

- e. “I’m pleased that the old Library was replaced with the new building, as it is a great amenity for the Town. We use part of the basement for storage, as do several other organizations. My wife and I go to events and lectures, and I read the Newsletter regularly to see what’s coming up. The Library has an opportunity to be a center for education. The goal should be to expand programs and usage and to entice more use of the children’s area.”
- f. “Our technology has jumped 100 years ahead of our libraries. For the most part, our elementary kids don’t have cell phones. How can we get them to develop a foundational habit in elementary school? It would be great for our kids to use the Library after school. Having a book in your hands is still important. Let’s talk about what we can do. When parents pick up their kids, you have to hook in the parents. That’s what you need to explore. Even though half our population comes from Old Lyme, the town line wouldn’t be an impediment. We visit the LPL a couple of times a year. We do a fifth-grade art show at LPL. What’s the message we want to give kids about the public library experience?

We need programs where kids are walked over to spend an hour-and-a-half. I’d start by doing a survey of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, or asking a few questions of the summer reading kids about

what they’d like to see in kids’ programs. Maybe a community project for the library like the mural project we did – maybe there’s space that would lend itself?

- g. “I think the community grows around a library. Our Library is the center of learning and enrichment...and of activities for all ages. Technology has changed the functions of the library...The challenge is to keep up with what the public requires while being faced with constantly reduced budgets. I cannot imagine ours or ANY community without a library. In addition to reading material, I consider our Library a refuge...”

7. Other thoughts?

- a. “It’s important to share ideas among organizations. It can be on a personal level, like now. Could it be something as simple as people getting together after work? I need things to be scheduled, but it could have an informal format, just to share ideas.”
- b. “Charting a course for Lyme is a balancing act that will really “take a village” to preserve our best qualities, while also not [ignoring] ...trends, a rapidly changing world and demographic, and fading traditions ...that were the building blocks of our Town.”
- c. “How do we keep young people here and get them to volunteer?”

Mary Stone

August 31, 2019

Steven Mattson
First Selectman, Town of Lyme

March 19, 2019

1. *In a few words how would you describe Lyme and its values?*

This town values consistency, history, and maintaining what we have always liked. You can take those values at whatever level you want, from “Leave us alone” (the mantra of Lyme) to “We want to preserve open space because it keeps the land in the condition it always was.”

2. *What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in population?*

We’re getting a lot of new residents who don’t have a historical connection to the Town. And we are seeing an aging of the population. So, that affects the traditional values of Lyme like volunteerism and self-reliance. Will we be able to teach the old values to new people? Or will we lose them completely?

3. *What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?*

My fear is that we’ll lose a base of families with that historical knowledge. Among those who’ve been here for at least two generations, we’ll lose that third generation. How do we keep young people here and get them to volunteer?

Another challenge is: how do you manage change in order to stay the same? For example, getting land into conservation reduces the potential for bad change. When a family passes on 400 acres after 4 generations, that’s a major change for the Town. But the land itself hasn’t changed. That’s what I’m trying to manage. And again, time will tell whether we’ve succeeded or not.

A third challenge is the change in the expectations of those moving into Lyme, replacing longtime residents. Longtime residents know what to expect: they’re more self-reliant. New residents want to be spoon-fed: they expect immediate action. From a government standpoint, the expectations of someone who moved up here from Westchester County are entirely different from someone who grew up on Grassy Hill.

In 5 or 6 years, the amount we will pay out for teacher pensions will exceed the amount we receive in State reimbursement. So, we are all alone, and we have to take care of ourselves.

4. *What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?*

No major decisions affecting the fabric of the Town. Among Town agencies, we’re trying to increase professionalism and improve execution to enable the Town to move forward, while maintaining the same concepts by which Lyme has always lived. Lyme does not change quickly: a 3-year timespan is nothing. I’m dealing with 10- to 20-year timeframes on most of what we do. We now have a 10-year Capital Plan. This is a major change, but it’s mostly unseen.

5. *What opportunities do you envision for your organization?*

I interpret this question as “What opportunities do you see to stop bad things from happening? I don’t see many opportunities, aside from continuing efforts for land preservation. Affordable housing is an opportunity, but unfortunately, this doesn’t have the support of the Town. How do we incentivize young people to stay here and stay involved in their town? How do we get people to see affordable housing as a way of preserving what we have? For example, we’re going to redo recycling at the Hamburg Station, and it will save the Town \$25,000. But we’re not inventing anything new; we’re just getting better at what we already do. I spend more time blocking and parrying bad things from happening than from seeking out opportunities for new things for the Town. That’s because we don’t want what other towns want, like housing developments, commercial zones, shopping areas, or sidewalks!

6. *How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?*

The Library has a major role in this community, and it could be even more integral because it has a built-in audience. In the past, the Library has had an

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inward focus. I would like to see that focus move outside. You have a tone perception problem that the Library is not welcoming.

The Town government, the Library, and the schools need to band together with objective of community outreach and education about the need for the public to volunteer in local organizations and Town government. The Library can provide connections to the greater world to inform action in our world of Lyme.

When we were planning the new Library building, we thought that the Library needed a set of metrics to measure how it is serving the Town. The metrics

it does report on are not particularly useful. It needed to develop a data system, asking what's our objective, what data supports that objective, and how do we collect it?

7. Other thoughts?

I think the Library has a built-in audience in some areas of town, and you ought to do more outreach, not just in cultural areas. The Library can be an even more integral part of the town.

Transcribed and edited by Mary Stone

Linda Winzer
Town Clerk, Town of Lyme

March 19, 2019

1. In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

Traditional, frugal, environmentally aware and active. We harken back to simpler times, and the preservation efforts of the town and its residents reflect that. The Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development speaks to what residents of Lyme hold dear.

2. What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?

While there is no way to predict the comings and goings of residents, since so much of Lyme's land is preserved, the likelihood of large increases in population is small. With the state tax burden increasing, I envision more people with financial considerations leaving, meaning those who might make impactful donations may relocate to states that are tax friendly.

3. What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

Lyme continues to struggle with maintaining an adequate volunteer base. As more people who are volunteers historically move away and more people

purchase homes for weekend use only, the volunteer base shrinks. Also, some of those who already volunteer, especially the younger ones, find it difficult to find housing in Lyme that they can afford.

4. What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

I don't have an answer for this. The First Selectman handles long range planning for the town.

5. What opportunities do you envision for your organization?

There are always opportunities for individuals to volunteer their time on boards, commissions, etc.

6. How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme Community?

For some, it is important. For others it is of no importance. There are some who were in favor of the construction of a new library, and others who were adamantly against it. Some are regulars, some have never step foot in it. I have no way of knowing the percentages that fall into each category.

Daniel Hagan
Chairman, Lyme Board of Finance

In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

Frugal, environmentally involved (e.g., open space), apolitical (i.e., little concern about who is a Democrat or a Republican), self-reliant and independent, and a sense of volunteerism. As we talked about demographics and more working couples with and without kids not necessarily able to volunteer as much, he held himself as an example of what is possible. He felt we all needed get the message out that the character of the town would change if more people did not volunteer their time and did not give of themselves.

What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?

Dan wasn't sure what trends would occur, but we need to be in more of a reactionary mode to preserve what we have.

What opportunities do you envision for your organization?

Dan thought there were more opportunities for grants for things like infrastructure, but was aware of the fact that grants for the library were likely to have strings attached like longer term costs.

How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?

Dan felt that it needed to be more of a community center than a traditional library.

Notes by Jack Sulger

Kathryn Wayland
CEO and Controller, Reynolds Subaru; Lyme Board of Finance

In a few words how would you describe Lyme and its values?

Private; residents appreciate nature and beautiful surroundings.

What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in population? Expect more part-time residents (weekenders) to move into town, and continued aging of the population.

What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years? Most commerce is done outside of Lyme itself. Residents spend most of their time shopping, working, and doing errands in surrounding towns like Old Saybrook, Old Lyme and further afield. Harder to get people to come to our Library for any reason because it is out of the way for most.

It's also difficult to get people to commit to anything anymore. Getting RSVP's for events is challenging. This can make it hard to plan ahead.

What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years? It will continue to be a challenge to get volunteers for

local services, especially emergency ones like Fire Department and Ambulance. We will probably have to switch to paid services such as these in the coming years. Important to seek out and then support our volunteers who help to run so many aspects of the Town.

How do you see the Library fitting into the Lyme community? Couldn't imagine Lyme without a Library. See the value of our Library, as long its services and programs are easily accessible to the community (e.g. are meeting rooms available at short notice, etc). Many people she knows in town don't use the Library at all – for both in-house as well as electronic offerings. Don't think lots of residents are generally aware of the Library's offerings, and/or perhaps they don't know how to access/use them?

Other thoughts? Suggested meet-and-greet for new residents. Offerings for military families and former Pfizer families – several have moved to Lyme to retire.

notes by Jack Sulger & Diana Fiske

John Evans,
Emergency Management Director and Lyme Fire Company Chief

1. In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

Lyme is a world upon itself, somewhat frozen in time, quaint, serene, vast, still embodying the better qualities of a community with people caring about their neighbors.

2. What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?

A positive and negative, Lyme's growth is restricted by its protected spaces, lack of affordable housing or economical rentals. Growth appears to be with "empty nesters," but not with young, out-of-college individuals who can be the lifeblood of a community, infusing the school system with students, and being active in community groups or volunteering for emergency services.

3. What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

A continued decline in a population willing to be civically involved or volunteer for much needed town services. This trend, if not reversed, will have adverse effects in the quality of life that we equate with Lyme. Regionalization will not solve this, and paid services will only increase our "famously low" Lyme taxes...It is important to address this point proactively instead of reactively, since under duress, humans tend to make expedient decisions that are not always the best for a community.

4. What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

1. Additional fire department recruitment methods, though sending additional people with buckets to a dry well does not produce more water. So, even with the best recruiting methods, adding resources won't change the efficacy if there are no eligible candidates.

2. Start the process of replacing the Hadlyme Fire station which, through its crumbling foundation and size, cannot support modern firefighting apparatus and an appropriate bay and equipment storage space for Lyme Ambulance.

3 Create a suitable firefighter training location that meets State and Federal requirements for safety and environmental compliance.

5. What opportunities do you envision for your organization?

First, to better educate our community that we are a 100% volunteer organization. We have a large part of our community who come from large metropolises with well-funded, paid emergency services and innocently assume that the same exists in Lyme.

Other opportunities include continuing to pursue grants and other funding sources and looking to individuals in our community to support targeted fundraising initiatives where they see their support going towards items that are easily recognized as bettering our response or protecting our volunteers.

6. How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?

This is a difficult question in a digital world. A traditional library as we used to define it, is hard to garner support for based on our ability to access content in our homes through streaming, e-books and other forms. Though many still enjoy "tangible" printed books, that is increasingly a minority. The keyword is reinvention. Humans still crave communal activities and tribal get-togethers and we need to leverage that better and redefine the library as the communal heart of Lyme. The meetings rooms are a step in the right direction, but we also need targeted activities that reintroduce the space to new generations that feel such a soul of our town is not only needed but supported.

7. Other thoughts? In response to all of the questions, charting a course for Lyme is a balancing act that will really take a "village" to preserve our best qualities, while also not having our heads in the sand about trends, a rapidly changing world and demographic, and fading traditions or passions that were the building blocks of our Town.

James Cavalieri
Principal, Lyme Consolidated School

1. In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

I think the world of this place, both towns. I look at Lyme as a low-key community that really supports public education. They've always supported the budget and been active with Lyme Consolidated. Their values are in the right place. There's not a lot of change in Lyme: compared to most towns, not many families coming into town. You've really got to really want to live in this community to move here.

We expose kids to giving back to the community, and the Lyme Land Trust and CT Audubon also teach our kids about volunteering.

2. What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?

I don't see a lot of change in the future. Lyme's philosophy of open space preservation and keeping the landscape as it is will continue. We're not going to build a big hotel.

Our school demographics have been sliding. We've been able to slow down the downward spiral of enrollment due to 3 factors:

- a) Recruitment of tuition-paying students from other districts.
- b) Parents do their homework, and they choose to come to L-OL based on our results: they want their children in a high-achieving district.
- c) The commitment both communities have for public education by passing school budgets is windfall for housing values.

3. What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

- a) Student enrollment is key. We need to turn the State around so that people are not moving out. When you lose the high end jobs, they're hard to replace. The EB jobs don't let families move into this town. They'll move to where they can rent.
- b) When you have an influx of people who don't have school age children, we lose that population. I'd like to think there won't be any change in support for public education because

the people moving here now have made great decisions in their lives, and they know the value of public education. Our Lyme town leaders have been pretty stable over the years.

- c) School staff is frustrated with families' lack of awareness and attention to reading school information. My PTO struggles to get the word out to folks, yet they're still not informed.

4. What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

- a) We struggle with communication with families and whether people will read it. You don't want to use robo-calls too often. How do you get people to pay attention? Technology should improve the level of awareness, but it hasn't. There's a trust and an expectation parents have with us. But we still need an open line of communication to parents, and they have to be diligent about updating their contacts and their children's medical information every year.
- b) NGSS (teaching of science) standards are starting to be implemented across the state. We were already preparing for Common Core ahead of state requirements. As a diligent district, our leadership followed the rules and stayed ahead of them.
- c) The teacher evaluation component was a huge change. As a high-achieving district, we were allowed to develop our own model, managed by the Superintendent and Director of Curriculum. We've always tried to stay ahead of coming changes, so we've been less impacted by new state regulations.

5. What opportunities do you envision for your organization?

Implementing preschool is ahead of the curve. We can do it because we have the space. It will make kindergarteners school-ready. There is a variety of care in local pre-schools. Now they will have had a year to acclimate to expectations for school behavior. What we're teaching in Kindergarten now was probably middle-to-end of 1st grade ten years ago.

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Now that we've brought Spanish into the elementary schools, expectations have been adjusted in the middle and high-schools. Kids adjust faster to change than their parents do.

We provide a great opportunity for kids to grow behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. We let kids be kids during the school day. Schools struggle with is behavior. We allow kids the chance to grow in a balanced way in their six years here. As much as we're teaching them, I don't see the frustration in kids because of the balance we provide.

We have two different ecosystems: shore and forest. Kids get exposed to both. The Science in Nature program has brought a nice change over the last 3 or 4 years.

I have a staff here who is totally dedicated to doing things outside of requirements. Our PE teachers have a before-school running program (95 out of 206 kids signed up for the kids marathon program). Kids are benefitting immensely. There are a lot of programs we do here that not every school can do, because we have staff willing to do them, to go beyond requirements.

If I have 6 years with you, the relationship is stronger. I like to be able to watch kids develop and grow. Our impact doesn't stop there. We follow them as they go through middle and high school. When you're a small K-5 building, the staff all become proud parents. I have kids that come back here monthly to say hello to a staff member.

At Invention Convention, in the last 3 years, we've had 10 kids go to Nationals.

More assets: Mentorship, reading to kids, volunteers in our schools. Veteran teachers from other districts want to come here, really talented, because their is leadership within their core area.

Why do teachers love it here?

- a) They feel supported by the Board of Education.
- b) They get the tools they need to get the job done.
- c) Our kids want to learn: behavior issues are few and far between, and behavior management is not a big deal here. Outsiders comment on what a gem this place is because the kids are respectful, exhibiting good behavior when performers are here for cultural events.

6. *How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?*

- a) Libraries are information centers. Cell phones have allowed us to become lazy and complacent about seeking information. Our technology has jumped 100 years ahead of our libraries.
- b) For the most part, our elementary kids don't have cell phones. How can we get them to have a foundational habit developed in elementary school? It would be great for our kids to use the library after school.
- c) Having a book in your hands is still important. Let's talk about what we can do. When parents pick up their kids, you have to hook in the parents. That what you need to explore. Even though half our LCS population comes from Old Lyme, the town line wouldn't be an impediment.
- d) We visit the LPL a couple of times a year. We do a fifth grade art show at LPL. What's the message we want to give kids about the public library experience?
- e) We need programs where kids are walked over to spend an hour-and-a-half. I'd start by doing a survey of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, or asking a few questions of the summer reading kids about what they'd like to see in kids' programs.
- f) Maybe a community project for the library like the mural project we did – maybe there's a space that would lend itself?

7. *Other thoughts?*

I deal with 130 families at a time. I need to involve them in the PTO, and I make a big plea to the parents of kindergarteners. It's the same thing for you at LPL: how do you get new people involved?

A great opportunity would be for the library staff come to one of our school town meetings when we have 75 to 100 parents here. Our buses are half-full on those days because parents take their kids home afterwards. Those are the days when LPL should offer programs for families. [Jim will send schedule of LCS town meetings: they're held once a month, Fridays at 2:20PM, starting in October.]

Food is always a good sell. Find where the interest is with our kids.

I often tell people that this is a very special place. Over the years, it's been a big learning opportunity for staff in terms of professional development and regular, planned supervision. Today, I'd put any one of my children or grandchildren in any classroom.

Stephanie Gould,
Director, The Lymes Senior Center

June 28, 2019

1. In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

You're in the position I was in when I started, of having to get the word out. One of the very first things I found when I started here: people are very neighborly, which you don't see in a lot of communities. "People in CT live to work, not work to live" – not here. They're very welcoming and very philanthropic. They're old fashioned in their neighborliness and community-mindedness.

2. What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in Lyme's population?

There is huge growth in the senior population, which will continue, specifically in the town of Lyme, about 35% are 65 and over as of 2016. About 45% are 55 and over (a guesstimate). 31% are in the 45 – 65 age.

Changes in what they need: our 55 – 70 population wants different things than our older seniors. It's a constant effort to balance our programming. Older seniors want lunches and entertainment programming, art classes and historical lectures (more passive programs). Younger seniors like fitness and dance, computer classes, day trips, cruises, overnight trips, art programs and lectures. Stephanie is writing a grant for trampoline classes for both more and less active seniors.

Every Friday, we have a workshop where an artist comes in and brings materials for instructional watercolor and drawing classes.

3. What challenges will your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

Getting more space -- room to accommodate all the seniors and all the programming. We are already offering some of our classes before and after we

open and close the Center, because we don't have enough room during regular hours.

Paid staff is Stephanie and one 10/hr. a week assistant position (Cheryl Parsons), which Stephanie hopes to grow to more hours a week.

4. What major decisions will your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

The biggest decision For the Senior Center is planning and building the addition so that we can meet the needs of all our incoming seniors. [I'm on this building committee.]

We are constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of our seniors: more active living and healthy aging. The younger seniors want their minds to be challenged -- lifelong learning (one of the most important factors in keeping dementia at bay). People aging in place at home need additional stimulation.

5. What opportunities do you envision for your organization?

- Social media as a means of alleviating loneliness and spreading the word about programming. Also a way to learn about what's going on in the world: the hot topics.
- Increasing space available to service more seniors (the addition).
- Limitless opportunities for designing programming to meet the needs of current and future seniors.

6. How important do you think the Library is to the Lyme community?

I am an avid reader, so I think a library is essential. It provides a way to read without buying every single book.

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- Has the library thought about making tablets available to check out with books on it?
- We've done a few programs with the OL-PGN library, where we did presentations at both places. We planned it together. I could see doing something like that with you guys as well.
- Could the Lyme Library live stream its Friends' presentations on Facebook?

7. *Other thoughts?*

It's important to share ideas among organizations. It can be on a personal level, like now. Could it be

something as simple as people getting together after work? I need things to be planned and scheduled, but it could have an informal format, just to share ideas.

Stephanie has been very wary of doing anything like book discussions or groups for fear of treading on OL-PGN and LPL territory. I said that both libraries need to get people in the doors. The Senior Center has people, and the libraries have books and technology, so there are some opportunities to develop programming collaboratively.

Interview and transcription by Mary Stone

John Pritchard, President, Lyme Land Conservation Trust

June 19, 2019

In a few words how would you describe Lyme and its values?

- Lyme residents are very conservation-minded. Threats to disrupt this are met with resistance (as evidenced by the large town gatherings over the Sunset Hill Vineyard zoning request change several years ago). More than half of the 800 households in town are members of the LLCT.
- Lyme is a mixture of local families (many with a long history in the area), and weekenders from NYC, etc. He feels there is respect and good balance in this mix.

What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in population?

- Generally, it seems like Lyme residents don't want much change. Every 10 years the LLCT conducts a town-wide questionnaire that overwhelmingly supports preservation of the town as it is - versus development. Residents continue to wish for Lyme to remain a little piece of the countryside, and feel that commerce is properly located to the south in the town of Old Lyme. Meanwhile, Old Lyme residents benefit from the pastoral landscape of Lyme close by to the North.
- LLCT will continue to add to properties under conservation management in Lyme. Currently there are 105 separate parcels of protected land, 36 of which the LLCT owns (the others are easements). The Town also wishes to preserve

land (recent Johnstone property acquisition) and has a dedicated Open Space Committee (Wendy Hill is coordinator for this, as well as being on the board of LLCT).

What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

- Making sure the LLCT will prosper into the future.
- There is a continual need for good, active board members (the 3 W's: wealth/wisdom/work). Board members must pull their weight.
- Annual budget is \$250-300K, which must be raised each year.

What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

- Be continually aware of available lands coming up for sale, and act to conserve properties that can benefit from management by LLCT.
- Work closely with the Town of Lyme to preserve as much open space as practicable.

What opportunities do you envision for your organizations?

- LLCT is pivoting to more education focus in near future, with additional programs and opportunities to bring in the next generation and educate them about conservation here in Lyme, and beyond.

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How do you see the Library's role in the Lyme community?

- Personally, I'm pleased that the old Library was replaced with the new building, as it is a great amenity for the Town. The LLCT uses part of the basement for storage, as do several other organizations. John and his wife Lee go to events/lectures at the Library, and John reads the Newsletter regularly to see what's coming

up. But busy, so can't always attend things he would like to attend.

- Opportunity for the Library to be a center for education. John expects the Library's goal should be to expand programs and usage by residents. Challenges include how to entice more use of the children's area.

Interview by Diana Fiske

Jeanne Rutigliano
Realtor, Coldwell-Banker, Old Lyme
Board member, Lyme Public Library Foundation

April 17, 2019

In a few words, how would you describe Lyme and its values?

Lyme is a unique little town, to say the least. It has been said that when a newcomer discovers Lyme and purchases a property, he wants to keep the secret so no one else discovers the town and moves here! It is a combination of locals, executives employed in towns north, east and southerly, New Yorkers, people fleeing religious and economic persecution and many others ... all making up a population of just a bit in excess of 2000!

What trends do you foresee in terms of growth and changes in population?

I see no trend to substantial growth or, at least, some growth at a minuscule rate over the next 20 years. My family moved to Lyme about 35 years ago; the population was 1,960. Today it is barely 2200. The school story gives the same message, Lyme Consolidated School/Regional District 18 are at lower levels of attendance than in years past (am not sure of exact figures here).

What challenges will Lyme or your organization face in the next 2-3 years?

My "organization" is real estate, and in the next few years, we will not see substantially rising prices, but we will see the older population of Lyme continue to either downsize or move to assisted living facilities. Prices have dropped as they have nationally and there are many affordable, smaller homes for younger families. The high end, mostly CT River properties, maintain their value more

successfully than those without waterfront or water views, but are not appreciating in value as in past years.

What major decisions will Lyme or your organization need to make in the next 2-3 years?

Cut-backs will be a way of life, in every facet of running a town. Lyme experiences all the normal issues of the state we live in and of the national travesties we all are dealing with.

What opportunities do you envision for your organizations?

Opportunities are available in all facets of our town government, both elected positions and volunteer as well as in private organizations. The present dilemma is that there are not enough concerned or interested people to fill the positions. Perhaps it is a time factor, but there is a preponderance of retired people filling these positions. An example: The Friends of the LPL were originally young mothers who spent time at the library with their children. Now the group is older men and women, having problems with membership and enough helpers to plan and cover the library events they sponsor.

How do you see the library fitting in to the community?

I think the community grows around a library. The library is the center of learning and enrichment in any town and a mainstay of activities for all age groups. Technology has changed the functions of the library as it has every aspect of all our lives. The

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challenge is to keep up with what the public requires while being faced with constantly reduced budgets. I cannot imagine our community or ANY community without a library. In addition to reading material, I consider our library a refuge. I leave my

cell phone in the car and search, ponder, converse, and just enjoy the scent of the building.

Interview by Theresa Conley

Staff Interview Responses

1. Think back to when you first started working at LPL. What was your first impression? How has that changed?

The previous library felt like an overcrowded, outdated, little house. Now there's so much space. The new library has made a huge impact. We felt listened to when we finally got what we needed. The library serves the needs of a small town. There may be fewer people coming in since the new library opened. The new library is a spectacular building. Many people see it as a show place, but do they really see it as a gathering place?

2. If tomorrow was your first day as library director, what would be your first priority?

- Is it dependent on my budget? If not, it would be great to have a computer tech person on-site to answer questions and help with equipment problems. Currently we're allowed only one tech visit per month. If budget is not an issue, signage on the stacks would be a priority.
- I would first organize the space as best suits my approach to the job, and then review everything that's in place and go over operations.
- I would march over to the people who installed the a/v system and tell them to fix it!
- I would base my priorities on the responses from the survey. What does the community want? What would make the library a more vibrant place?
- More technical support to stay up-to-date.

3. For which services do patrons seem to most often require assistance?

The computers and their personal devices. Email and attachments.

4. What could be done to enhance the experience of patrons?

Reducing the fines has put people more at ease. How to better convey that the staff is available to answer questions? Scanning library cards from smartphones. Providing a "books on wheels" service to people who can't get to the library. Providing more programs for adults, a wider variety of experiences (craft, tech, yoga, knitting, quilting). Some groups might even create items (quilts, knitwear) that could be sold to benefit the library.

5. What positive comments do you hear most often?

Book selections/collections are excellent. Online library app is wonderful. Meeting rooms are great. People love being here. When comparing to other libraries, such as Old Saybrook, patrons say their experience is better here especially with the staff. There are always computers available (no waiting). People love the children's room and the artwork. People are proud of the building and gardens and bring their guests to see them.

6. What negative comments do you hear most often?

Signage is needed to find books in the stacks. Some patrons want to know their search history to know what they've already checked out. The staff deletes this information to keep it confidential. Some parents want to know who's attending the children's programs. The staff also keeps this information confidential. Some patrons can be very demanding and/or nosy.

7(a). What do you perceive as issues or challenges for our patrons?

Keeping up with the technology. There are so many different devices to know. A/V system is a BIG problem. Not as easy as everyone initially thought. People who don't have cable or WiFi use the library to fulfill these needs through DVDs and the library's computers. What are patrons saying about their

needs in the survey? Elderly population has mobility issues. How to distribute materials to these patrons?

7(b). What do they seem to like best about the library?

The atmosphere. “Chewing the fat” with the staff. Children’s room and programs are great. We fit the needs of the community. Love the “predictableness” and familiarity of the library and the staff. They can always find the books they want. The staff is helpful. The patrons like being recognized by the staff.

Other comments

- Will the staff be able to see these notes?
- Laminated or plastic library cards would be nice but are not necessary.

By Holly Rubino

Lyme Library Focus Group Summary
June 2019
Developed by Fio Partners

PROCESS

Fio Partners facilitated three focus groups held on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. Each focus group had 4-9 attendees. The responses to the questions are summarized below. Appendix A includes the questions and comments from participants.

CURRENT ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

The Library is primarily **viewed by participants as a community resource** which provides books and DVDs to the community, with an observed better selection than other libraries in the area. Access to technology and online resources were also noted.

Secondarily, participants viewed the Library as a **place to hold meetings and meet other community members**. Other roles included access to historical documents, activity for small children, and access to community presentations.

STRENGTHS OF THE LIBRARY

Key strengths of the Library were observed to be **meeting room spaces, relationships that patrons have with key staff, and individual unique programs that were noted as memorable or impactful** (intergenerational “Birds of Prey” event, memoir program, programming organized by the Friends).

Participants also noted the **look and feel of the interior of the Library** as well as **unique resources** available such as historical documents, borrowable technology (mobile Wi-Fi hotspot, iPads), and passes to local attractions.

Participants viewed the **wide array of DVDs and selection of books as a strength**. The ease of access of the after-school programming and proximity of the Library to the school was also noted.

CULTURE OF THE LIBRARY

The culture of the Library or experience of being in the Library was mostly described as **friendly, pleasant, and generally welcoming**. Participants noted key staff members with whom they have a closer relationship whose opinions, suggestions, and support they greatly value. That sentiment though was not universally held by all participants. Some felt that the perceived high number of volunteer staff (not sure who is working when) precluded the ability to build close relationships and that certain staff members were less engaged and/or helpful.

Participants also noted that the general culture of the Library was one of “quiet.” Participants felt as if discussions and louder conversations in open spaces were discouraged which made some feel unwelcome, as they had been asked to be quieter. They also shared that often there are not many people in the Library which contributed to the sense of quiet or **lack of energy in the space**.

Some participants shared that they had offered to deliver a program at the Library and the response was not positive or the response indicated a series of step that appeared to feel difficult or not surmountable.

COMMUNITY TRENDS TO BE MINDFUL OF

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Participants noted the aging community, the increase in second-home owners, and concerns about a decreasing number of community members who are interested in helping with community groups and community service. One participant described the town as a “no growth community”.

One key strength of the community though reiterated throughout the focus groups was the **rich array of diverse skills and experiences of town residents**. This is viewed a key unique strength of the community. Participants noted expertise across disciplines with a specific focus in the arts and interest in environmentalism.

There was also an observation shared that although there is a perception of many community groups (formal and informal) in town, it was noted that **not all community groups are open to new members** or welcoming of new members.

COMMUNITY SPACES

There was general consensus that there are **no spaces in the Lyme community for spontaneous meet-ups with other residents**. It was noted that the loss of Ashlawn Farm coffee shop has created a community void that the Library could fill, even considering bringing a coffee vendor to create a café-feel within the Library.

Participants noted **proximity of the Library to the school** and the opportunity to connect experiences between the two. Parents shared the limitations of using the playground at the school as it is not available during school hours, limiting use by younger children.

ENVISIONING A FUTURE FOR THE LIBRARY

Participants responded to a series of questions which have been themed together for the purposes of the summary. The questions included opportunities for improvement, future vision for the Library, and suggestions for programming and evolving the physical space.

BECOMING A COMMUNITY CENTER

Participants deeply expressed **the need for a community center**: a place where new relationships could be created, innovative learning and entertainment resources and experiences for all ages could be accessed, and where there were places for quiet and places for conversation. Participants suggested renaming the Library (even holding a town-wide competition). One participant suggested, “It should be a community center that happens to be a Library – not just a Library.”

CREATE INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES AND OFFER UNIQUE RESOURCES AND SERVICES

INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES

Participants continued to stress interest in **innovative programming** including programming for teens, like an Open Mic night, poetry slam, etc. as well as author talks, talks from college professors, book clubs for children and intergenerational programming. There was also the suggestion to offer **a wider array of early-childhood experiences** – such as art, yoga, gardening, and other educational experiences in a series or workshop form.

Participants suggested a wide range of additional programming options to draw the community into the Library. Topic suggestions included:

- Skill based training with a focus on technology and accessing electronic resources
- Training on genealogy and historical research and creating a possible support group
- Increase in STEM programming for children, suggestions included Lego Robotics and coding classes
- Request for more recurring programming – a series of four sessions (for adults and children)
- Music programming in the evenings – combining performance with educational component
- Writing educational programs
- More continuing education experiences that are interactive and experiential
- A movie club, interactive game night for teens
- Pop-up movies in the parking lot in the summer
- Programming that leverages Lyme’s unique attributes – artists, environmentalism
- Seasonal programming for children throughout the year
- “Touch-A-Truck” event for children

One participant suggested that the Library host a series of **Lyme TED Talks**, leveraging the deep experiences of residents and creating not-to-be-missed experiences. Participants encouraged the Library to more deeply partner with the range of community groups within the Town to both create programming options for consideration.

Participants also suggested **recording events** and sharing them on the Library website and/or live-streaming events using Facebook Live.

UNIQUE RESOURCES AND SERVICES

One of the bolder suggestions from the group was to create an opportunity for residents to actually **borrow “people”**. The suggestion was based in the rich, diverse, talented array of town residents from artists to technologists to researchers who may be interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise with others. The Library could act as the repository for volunteers who were interested in sharing the expertise (in hour blocks of time) and could actually be “borrowed” from the Library.

Participants noted given that geography of Lyme and how the homes are distributed across the town, that it is difficult for newcomers (of all ages) to build relationships with others. Newer residents talked about how long it can take to build and create relationships. Suggestions including **hosting a newcomer’s group at the Library**, coordinating an orientation to town groups and volunteer opportunities, and acting as a resource for services and opportunities available in Lyme and the surrounding towns.

ENHANCING THE PHYSICAL SPACE

The participants noted an opportunity to re-envision how the space within the Library is utilized. A number of improvements to the current space were suggested including:

- **Space for conversation** Creating a place within the Library for conversation – a Library café was suggested.
- **Technology center:** A clear media center or technology center within the Library was also suggested.
- **Young adult space:** The lack of a dedicated Young Adult/Teen space was noted as an opportunity for improvement. Other local libraries such as Old Lyme and Clinton have separate spaces (or are in the process of creating separate dedicated spaces) for Young Adults.
- **Outdoor space:** Parents noted the need for additional outdoor space for children, such as a small garden behind the Library or small play structure, given limitations of playground use. A small community garden was also suggested, with plots for community members.
- Additional observations:
 - Participants also noted that upkeep (fixing repairs) is viewed as difficult and hard to address due lack of responsiveness by the Town
 - More clear signage within the stacks (noting range of Dewey decimal books included on those shelves)
 - Adding chairs or seating among the stacks
 - Continue to ensure children’s area is colorful and inviting

INCREASING AWARENESS OF EFFORTS

Participants generally felt as if that there was not broad community knowledge of events, programs, and services available at the Library. The website was noted as not sufficient with suggestions as well for improving the Library printed newsletter and increasing the Library's social media presence. There as lack of knowledge if the Library maintained an email distribution list or had a digital newsletter. Participants also suggested using other local social media groups to cross-post events.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Participants shared additional recommendations and advice with the Library for further consideration in the planning process:

- **Clarify the roles of the institutions:** Participants were unclear as to the relationship between the Library, the Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and the Town. Participants were also interested in understanding the role of the Board of the Library and its responsibilities.
- **Committee meeting timing:** Participants stressed the need for committee meetings to be held in non-work hours to allow for participation by younger individuals who may have full-time employment.
- **Look to other libraries across the state for inspiration:** Parents stressed that other library children's programming was more robust – even driving to Clinton, Essex, Ivoryton, Deep River and Old Lyme to attend programming. In addition, others noted Old Lyme is undertaking renovations to add a Young Adult area and Wallingford created a dedicated maker-space.
- **Community coordination:** One additional suggestion was to create a centralized town-calendar to increase awareness of events across the community.
- **Additional volunteer support:** Many of the participants in the focus groups were encouraged by the deep listening effort including the online survey as part of the planning process. They offered encouragement to find ways to continue to seek feedback, but more importantly to create ways for community members to offer assistance. Participants expressed interest in participating on committees that may envision or coordinate future programming and/or offered to be a part of delivering programming.

CONCLUSION

The Lyme Public Library has a strong set of assets and strengths that can be built upon to continue to evolve the organization to serve the needs of the community. The feedback of participants can be used to inform the creation of an updated vision of the Library and a set of high-level goals and strategies to move the Library towards that shared community vision.

APPENDIX 1: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND DETAILED PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

What do you view as the role of the Library in the community?

Focus Group #1:

- Teaching and learning resource
- Networking
- Great resource
- Storage facility, meeting space – very important to us in terms of the space
- Books, two books a week
- Videos
- Librarians are an amazing resource, recommend books, fabulous resource to find books, excellent
- Librarians know your name, know your interests, look to them as resources
- Pleasant experience, feel welcomed, nice to be
- Don't want to rush out, feels nice
- Most of the librarians are wonderful, one doesn't seem to like children.

Focus Group #2:

- Using it for access to technology, Hoopla and RbDigital; happy with Hoopla (good enough)
- Very helpful to get Hoopla working
- Meeting place for groups in the community room
- Use it for meetings, really useful
- Love the new books, better selection
- One of the only meeting places
- Use it as a patron, access to the history archives, feeder population of people who come to the Library to browse and look for information
- Some people come for archives, exposed to the Library; win-win
- Used to use it for technology, homework, quiet and peaceful place to read, meeting friends here
- Use it for DVDs and Books

Focus Group #3:

- Come for books, movies, see someone I know, social aspect
- Used to do more children's activities, books, movies, and audio books
- No one is here, don't come from children's programs, drive to Chester, Essex (is the best!), and Deep River
 - Essex – it is the best, Ms. Jessica (is amazing!)
 - Elaine in Deep River is wonderful, diversity, bubble machine, books, toys
- This is a traditional books library, it is an older library.
- Come here to play 10-20 times; like on bad weather days, change of scenery from home; opportunity for more attractive toys, more beautiful toys, and spaces; OK play space
 - We do borrow books
- Will send a babysitter to borrow books;

- Nice tag-a-long playground; double dose and use of the bathroom (very helpful)
- Nature presentations

What do you see as the strengths of the Library?

Focus Group #1:

- Availability of the meeting space is huge, there is not a lot of it in town
- Programs
- It's a very nice size, room for comfortable seating, computers, art historians
- Generally a good source for people who don't have computers
- After school programs were fantastic (not sure if they don't do them)
- Librarians
- A meeting place, garden club using it frequently
- Local history archives are in the Library (within the last years)
- Friends do a good job to create programming, would like to see expanded
- Passes to museums, the Seaport (do we still have these?); that was wonderful
- People are resourceful in getting answers to questions
- The memoir class is a partnership with author and the Friends.
- Better selection of current books, many more options
- Came here as I was raising kids

Focus Group #2:

- New book selection
- Space is welcoming and comfortable
- Garden is beautiful
- Especially Kathy, extremely friendly, joyful, helpful, glad to see who is she is talking to, principal who exudes that
- Other volunteers, but are here sporadically; hard to build rapport
- Barbara and Linn-Ann have good rapport with them too
- Children attended reading programs, and on-going science program and open studio

Focus Group #3:

- I love that they have a mobile hotspot to play a game – you can borrow it! You can borrow technology devices. It's wi-fi to go. They received a grant.
- Appearance of the Library is fresh, happy and bright. The architecture is lovely.
- Some of the sections are displayed at a nice reachable height with covers facing out.
- I love Kathy. She is wonderful.
- Location is good – close to school and playground.
- The Library is not out of the way – town hall, school, playground. They walk over for the after-school program – is there a school coordinator?
- Could do the Library conduct programs at the gym?

- Nature presentation was about nocturnal animals, “Birds of Prey” ...more intergenerational, half and half. Tough for the presenter, but she did a great job. Kids were into it, visuals were good.
- Opportunity for multi-generational programming.
- Very friendly, people know who I am, know that I like Outlanders, called me and said that it was in. Right here waiting at desk for you. Very friendly.
- Kathy is so helpful – bought materials for the Library. Will offer to purchase books and materials.

What do you view as the weaknesses/opportunities for improvement?

Focus Group #1

- Opportunity for new art programming, after-school program (was spectacular with Kendall, but she moved away)
- I want libraries to keep books but move into information teaching, resources; not as **much skill-based programming (using computers, doing research)**
- Better job in explaining what is available to access electronic resources, there are posters...but not helpful; there are opportunities for a pamphlet to get acquainted with the online resources (drop-in sessions) (Holly Rabnio?)
- I would love to see **ancestry coaching/genealogy research**; there has been a lot on NY Times podcast – interested in genealogy; hard thing is to determine what sources are real, it would be wonderful to have coaching or someone who knows what you can use
 - Does the Library subscribe to ancestry?
 - Possibility of a group to support each other in this type of research
- There is not a kind of missing spirit; it's elusive, many of times I have been the only person here, it feels odd and awkward; feels like being watched
- Is the Library being underutilized? A gathering of people, a club – it represents what would have been built in the 1980s; the original plan; no place to meet – you go to Wrassling Cats...or the market. There is no place to go. You have to research the space, the porch is nice;
 - Whole reading area could be enclosed
 - Look at **creating a Library Café**, small coffee operation here in the Library
 - Town-wide naming contest
 - **Encourage people to come here and have a conversation and use the other services**
- Have been looked at for being too loud;
- There is a tradition of Libraries of being QUIET; it's **not okay to be loud in the Library**
- It would bring people here; research;
- Ashlawn Farm Coffee shop on the deck – Roger Clement said, “This is wonderful. It has become the Town Green in the summer.” Eventually they had music, nothing replaced it. After the coffee part was removed, it lost its heart. It wasn't the same.
- At the high school, it is called a media center – it's not a library anymore.

- This town does not like change. Having spaces called something else. The meeting room could be used for other things.
- The **website is not serving us well**. I don't even think to look there. Newsletter is pretty drab.
- It's all about marketing.
- What if we renamed the Library? Get people to buy-in and get a prize.
- **Offered to do a program – but there were many obstacles to doing so.**
- Using internet.

Focus Group #2:

- Opened on Mondays
- The lighting and shelving could be more improved, very difficult
- Using Dewey decimal system, notice on ends of the aisles, more signage would be helpful
- Meeting room is too small – every group; more often not, the cap is 70 people standing room only
- We had hoped to use the meeting room, pick and choose; program and slides, guest coming, try to set up a food table, feels crowded
- Hot chocolate in the Keurig, mocha, not the same
- Trying to **access to university research**, subscriptions to database and sources
- Used it for the DVDs, more than the books
- Looking for something that is new....in that separate section
- Looking for season of shows, not all the seasons (may be possible through Inter-Library loan)
- May take a while for interlibrary Loan
- Would be great to have **someone who can help with technology**.
- Door handle in the ladies' room was not repaired.
- Hard to get handyman to fix things. Had to rely on good will to fix things.
- Powerpoint thing is difficult to use. Don't go to Library – hard to set up PPT, flicks out. Firehouse one is better.

Focus Group #3

- **STEM programming**/Lego Robotics (they have Toying with Science but not efficient) – but if it was more related to elementary school; Lego robotics starts at 4th grade; have that here and available for kids. My husband is involved with Lego-robotics at the high school. Includes presentation skills.
- Could have a Lego Robotics team – would require a adult coordinator.
- Strengthen the alignment with schools – what is the current status of coordination?
- **Zero communication from the Library** – what is the communication list? An email list that is appropriate for you? What are local events?
- There was an ANNUAL meeting before the Tic talk. She got a babysitter. Couldn't stay to see the actual talk. Cannot believe it was held at the same time. I thought I was learning about ticks.

- Happened at the animal talk too. I came for the animals.
- Ideas for programming – **more technology in generally**. More tech classes, more technology (like coding). Programs feel like a one-time thing. What is **the recurring programming**? There is a lot of that at other ideas.
- No one comes to the toddler time. People will drive – if you build it, they will come. People drive to Essex. Plenty of room in their space.
- You can't use the playground during the weekdays. There are no public playgrounds. They could have a children's garden in the back of the Library. Create a community garden.
- **Marketing is really lacking.**

What is your vision for the future of the Library?

Focus Group #1

- Kids read books online. Read books from school – may be online. Looking at next generation – must be thinking of ways – the language of the next generation. Not our language.
- **Opportunity to be more of a community center**
- Maybe rename the whole building.
- My son will not come talk to you – what do kids want in the Library?
- Interested in **maker space idea**.
- **One Library actually rented – PEOPLE**. One of the reasons why people are in the hills, you have to find them. A space to get more connections, networking. There are fantastic people here. People volunteered to give advice, expert advice, research your grandmother, with specific skill sets. Give time who might want your skills.
- Could take a major role in **welcoming new people** – it is so hard to meet people. The Library could host a welcome club – like a newcomer's club. There is one cocktail party option – hard to sustain that. The Joshuatown Association does something like this. Help understand volunteer opportunities, education opportunities. Make people feel more welcome.
- There is a neighborhood group, **"Next Door Neighbors" – online website**. There is a Facebook group – **Women of Lyme & Old Lyme**. The Library could have that forum – or host that forum. [Links to them on the website? Place of resources?]
- **Music in the evenings** – there is a place in Nightingale's in Old Lyme. It is a community place where people play music. [Could actually be in the Library, coffee, water, comfy chair, fireplace works.]
- **A community center that happens to be a Library – not a Library**. To look at it as a community center. It is just one of those resources.

Focus Group #2:

- **Develop more programs**. They used to have more in the past. I still get the bulletin but I don't see things that excite me.
- **Be more of a community center**. Hard to get from here to there.

- It would be great to have **more teen-based programming**. Some concerts or open-mic nights. That would be great. Beat poetry night.
- I came once for Friends event with a **professor from CONN College** it was great – definitely would like more that. I loved the speaker – it was wonderful.
- The Friends are doing a good job. Having speakers.
- **Author talks** – I’m always looking at RJ Julia’s. Brilliant coming that you want to see speak.
 - Friends have had authors in the past.
- Don’t give up the books. I don’t want to read a kindle, or audio. Keep the books.
- The physical feeling of the Library is important. Sense of being in a quiet place, to think or talk is really important.
- More **intergenerational programming**.

Focus Group #3:

- It’s why we chose to live in Lyme. **Precursor to making friends before school.**
- **Early childhood program is known state-wide for its innovation** -- it has art, yoga, reading, technology, and things that are unique to Lyme.
- Feel comfortable.
- Don’t want it to feel fussy. The stressed-out mom can come and experience respite.
- Nice to see the children’s library **to be more inviting**, more carefully curated, games. Board games, puzzles.
- Example – Clinton has a dedicated **YA space**, that has video games, welcoming, safe space. YA section is pitiful – so few current books. Old Lyme has amazing YA librarian – TBR Book Club.
- No communication between the two libraries – two different systems for Interlibrary Loan. Very difficult.
 - **Old Lyme are getting a YA section away from Children’s section.** Kids walk over from high school to the Library.
- A series of events that are connected – five different events, different clubs with standing meetings, 10 meetings about X.
- **Kids Book Club** for different age groups.

How would you describe the culture of the Library and your experience interacting with Library staff?

Focus Group #1:

- Pleasant.
- **Friendly, helpful.**
- Not all the Librarians are as friendly as others.
- Union, town employees – what is that relationship?
- What is the current status of the head of the Library?
- The staff has many part-time people – may not see them again the future.
- There are also volunteers who help.
- The staff do not have **name tags**.

- Roles
- Expertise
- Would be helpful, for new people to know who to talk with.

Focus Group #2:

- The atmosphere feel is welcoming, but could be more so.
- It **doesn't seem busy** – why aren't people here?
- It is very quiet – which is good. But I'm in the only one.
- Longer hours would be good – more options, low traffic be the trend.
- It's positive that it is quiet.
- Could you have two areas?
- A meeting place, a place to form new relationships.

Focus Group #3:

- I love Kathy.
- People will **say hello at front desk** – unless you seek out additional contact.
- Nothing negative, but **radio silence**.
- You should look at other children's libraries for some ideas
 - There is a Lego table, playhouse. Super simple stuff – train table, all the time in Essex.
 - Nice approaches for storage bins in Essex.
 - Should bring more in the open area.
- I don't want it to be loud in Children's area. You can still hear everything.

What additional suggestions do you have for future programming?

Focus Group #1:

- **Something happening here, something interesting**
- So many things going on, classes, community programs, writing groups
- Tables with puzzles on them, work on one puzzle together
- Technology programs
- Book groups
- Many speakers
- Movies on Friday nights
- People are bumping into each other
- **Interesting evenings, compelling experiences, activity.**
- I would love to see more **experiential learning and programming (interactive art class, book clubs, writing classes) and self-help topics, like continuing education.**
- Continuing education would draw me here.
- The Land Trust has collaborated with the Friends for programming – but I sought them out.
- The Library could seek out **other nonprofit collaborations for programming options. They should reach out and be collaborative.**

- Example: Phoebe Griffin Library about a monthly musician, discussion about a composer and explain a piece and the history – historical/interactive music event. **Bringing in music will bring a whole group of people.**
- Try something new.
- There is **traveling planetarium**.
- Many people have skills – repository of skills – who could give an interesting talk. **Lyme TedTalks** – that would get people energized and come out to the Library.

Focus Group #2:

- A **Movie Club** – I was told it wasn't possible. Would like to get together with friends and watch movies. Were told that we couldn't do that. **Board game night. Interactive games.** (Teens usually go to Old Lyme.)
- **Mahjong Group is shutting down in Old Lyme is looking for a new place.**
- Talks and clubs – more books clubs. There are 2 of them. I've never joined.
- A **low-key writing workshop**.
- Programs that continue with multiple sessions.
- The Old Lyme Library – you can't get a space for a meeting. I like it to do it here.
- **Technology – I actually like helping people with technology. Learn more to do email, texting – happy to help with that.**

Focus group #3:

- **Spanish language offerings, Spanish music class**
- Pop-up movies
- First Friday nights at the movie – if it was fun
- Outdoor movies as possible
- Local mom created a Art Club (check's out a book about an artist, all did flowers)
 - Art Series for Kids
 - Need a better science program
 - Still is an open studio – for grade 6 – 12
 - Every week there is a art installation
- **Our artists are what makes Lyme unique**
- Enrollment made have 4 kids for this free program; she is great artist and working with the kids
 - I don't think people know about it – **lack of awareness of current programs**
- Are the program open to others? Non-residents? Must clarify?
- Requested a series, but were told it can not be purchased by children's librarian.
- Author in Old Lyme, who is a local celebrity. Local authors Michael Bell, middle-school author. Beatrice Williams.
- There is a **strong environmental thread, trails, hiking**. Environmentalism. Nature walks are really popular (animal tracking, zero wasting, turtle rehab). Animals in Lyme. How the landscape formed. Birding is huge – bird calling, identifying birds.

Or adjustments to the physical space?

Focus Group #1:

- Would love to see a redesign of books themselves – they are like case. Less inviting. To have **chairs among the stacks**. Not look in a cave.
- Hard to **read books at bottom of the shelves**.
- There are **no subject or author markers on the ends of the aisles**. That seems fixable.
- **Availability of space** – closed on Sunday and Monday. If this is a community space, can't be closed on Sundays. Others can have access to the space on non-Library days. Don't have to follow the rules of the Library on certain days – access that on the Sunday. That room is accessible.

Focus Group #2:

- The **old library had a window** seat – sit on the floor in the corner in the stacks.
- Small YA shelf.
- It would be great if there was an elevator – and there's a basement?
 - Was originally included in the plan.
- Make sure there is enough room for the older books. I like to read the older books.
- What are the rules for discarding books?

Focus Group #3:

- Engage local organizations that are farming, for an outdoor space;
- Usable playable outdoor space, like a playground.
- Children's space is not inviting, not colorful enough.
- An **actual space for teenagers**, more than one shelf.

Are there any community trends the Library should be aware of as they plan for its future?

Focus Group #1

- There are **other community halls, public events occur there**.
- Lyme has a finite number of people, of different age groups.
- Evenings shift are really different, than during the day.
- Pockets based on age cohorts.
- Structure is confusing. How do you know how to donate your funds?
 - The Foundation does have a call for donations.
 - Ex. Friends donated furniture.
- Library events that are fundraiser for the Foundation.
- The Book Sale is the Friends.
- Reduction in school age children. Valuable real estate in the Library – school has a very big resource for kids in the school itself – does the Children section need to be so large?
 - It is a better location for the café.
- There are increasing second home buyers, who do not want to get involved in the community. How do you bring them in the fold? A newcomer program.
- **Two groups emerging – one who lives here and participates – others who are here on the weekend.**

- This is a **no growth community**. Second home people. We are losing the manpower of young people.
- We are next to the elementary school – I have trying to figure out how to create links with the school. The school culture is hard to break into to – opportunities to offer staff space for staff meetings to get more of a flow.

Focus Group #2:

- **Community is aging. Average age is one of the highest.**
- People get together in small groups in people's homes.
- People do activities together – like hiking, boating, trails.
- Used to be a coffee shop at Ashlawn Farm – that was last gathering place. Huge loss to the community.
- **No place to meet-up spontaneously.**
- The Farmers Market is now at a new location, will not be the same – will be Tiffany Farms.
- **A coffee shop should be added to the Library.**
- Most important thing we could add the community – for open mic night.
- Huge **interest in land trust events** – trail walks, talks, bonding experience for town residents.
- A range of adult education programming – there is a wealth expertise in the community, topics, capacity to build up a calendar.
- Dominic Doon was an author who had standing room only.
- The Lyme Public Hall goes up to 100 – they have programming every month – Lyme Public Hall Association. Generally well attended.
- Town Hall space can be used by others.
- Room at the Hamburg Firehouse.
- Hadlyme Public Hall is small and parking is tough.
- Old Lyme Country Club, Church, School – 70 – 100 attendees. Elementary school auditorium? (That's complicated.) Easy to use Old Lyme Middle and High School.

EXAMPLES of AMAZING EXPERIENCES

- iPhone Photography Class
- Salem Library – Turtle Rehab – “Saving Turtles Lives”
- Owls Experience (Intergenerational) – Birds of Prey
- Irish Folksong Presentation
- Friends offering – India experience firm, long involved film, wouldn't have been exposed to that otherwise; she spoke about the movie, exercise the brain
- Most of things are out of town – Old Lyme, Essex, Saybrook has many venues.

Future #3:

- **People love to “FALL” stuff, seasonal stuff, cookie decorating, recipe swaps, teaching traditions**

- Make your own Halloween costumes, Earth Day (would be huge!!!), nutrition is something that people are really into and interested in
 - Health eating, cooking classes
 - **Farming**
- Outdoor leadership courses, leadership schools, trust falls (Bushy Hill, Camp Hazen)
- We also have Lyme Parks and Rec – they consolidate programs
 - They have free swimming program – no one signed up
 - So little advertisement, in Town Hall?
 - Hard to find
 - Facebook page – run by Emily Reynolds
 - People don't know about who can use things, they don't know
- Also a Moms Club of Old Lyme/Saybrook/Chester

Any additional advice for the Board?

Focus Group #1

- Are they talking to other Libraries that are similarly rural to draw people in?
- How are they re-inventing themselves?
- Be sure to talk to key staff at the school.
- What happens next?
- I often hear about things after the fact. There are **emails from some many people, nothing from the Library**. Same for social media. There is nothing about programming on Facebook. Could look at the website.
- Lyme Land Trust – has over 1,000 followers and Instagram.
- Collapse the structure of the Friends and the Foundation?
- If money is the issue, if you build it, will they will come? If people are coming, that they want to participate in – more likely to give money. Staff person programming.
 - Friends of the Library – Volunteer programming.
- There are a couple of people I have been **recruiting to committees** – people said that the meetings are during the day – that is a huge obstacle to recruit younger people who are working.

Focus Group #2

- Foundation events held elsewhere have been successful.
- **Psychographics of Lyme might not be “joiners” or “people who want to come to a community center”**. We talk about Old Lyme, Old Saybrook – more population mass that creates its own energy. Consider the target audience as residents.
- For other programs, may choose to stay home.
- Maybe people live in Lyme.
- **Multi-use facility** is really critical then – get energized.
- Increase in second home ownership – but they often retire and stay here. Works both ways. (Example – I've never my neighbor who is a second home.)

- Lyme had more to offer than Vermont – actually sold Vermont house. Happy to be here all the time now.
- There are **visual artists in the community** – for all age groups. There is a big divide in the town, demonstrations. There is a deep divide. There is a generational divide – people have social circles, and people who have young kids. Art may be a great bridge. Art shows have been well-attended. Wouldn't be cool to have a show?
- There may be many many artists in the community. I just learned some one was a weaver.
- Example: Students have to do TedTalks – Lyme Student Showcase.
- **Huge opportunity to take and stream them live** – or record and share them. There is a program on the names of the signs – record other people's programs here.
- **Community initiative to link community programming together – and use the same community calendar. How do get that synergy?**
 - Example: Old Lyme Library
 - Lots of knitters in town. Now go to Old Saybrook.
 - Some of them are exclusive. Not open to anyone.
 - Garden Club who had to invited with occasional events.
- Many of us have friends across the region. Each of the different communities have programs – but **we go because there is no where to go here.**
- Responsiveness to different kinds of programs.
- Strong social groups – dinners, friends, social cohesion.
- **Need for an ambiance.** May not be totally appropriate – unless an adjunct.

Focus Group #3

- **Keep up the communication,** with the school, with the community.
- **People want to help. Keep asking people for input.**
- **There are community members that will run community programs.**
 - Someone needs to recruit people and maintain these programs.
 - Need community service to graduate – to teach younger kids.
 - Other people could be recruited to people to support programming.
- **Touch-A-Truck program.** Through the community.
- New Social Media.
- Storytime outside? Patio is not used outside.