

Stonington Free Library

Campaign to Upgrade And Fund

A Library for The 21st Century





Stonington Free Library Has A Problem

(It's The Good Kind, But A Problem Nonetheless)

For some time, the Stonington Free Library has been coping with a mounting challenge. Our services have consistently been used well beyond their intended capacity. Last year:

- We assisted more than 70,000 visitors with 3 full-time and 9 part-time staff
- We served 3,487 active cardholders
- We checked out 50,669 items
- We were able to answer 6,013 reference questions (average: 115 questions a week, 21 questions a day)
- We had almost 600 Summer Reading Program Registrants
- 9,468 people attended Library Programs: Sunday Evening Lecture Series, Drop in Story Time, Thoughtful Thursdays, SFL Book Club, SFL at The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, etc.
- We ran 6,109 public computer sessions
- With the loss of our lift in a flood, we have been unable to provide safe access to important children and teen programs for boys and girls with disabilities, as well as others for whom stairs are an obstacle

Until now, the Library staff simply stretched their efforts to meet these sorts of challenges as best they could.

Recently, the Director of the Library and the Board of Trustees resolved to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan that would guide the increasingly necessary work of expanding the Library's capabilities.

As a first step, the Board initiated a wide-ranging survey, interviewing over 600 respondents: Library patrons, staff, trustees, donors and other stakeholders. The purpose was to prioritize efforts to achieve results that conformed to what the community wanted.



The resounding response to the survey showed that what the community actually wanted was “**More**”! **More** programs, **more** accessibility, **more** hours, **more** space, **more** digital resources, **more** technical support.

The community's call for increased service from the Library's already stressed facilities and the Board's in-depth analysis guided the development of the Board's Strategic Plan. The Plan lays out several interdependent goals: expand floor space to accommodate a growing patron population; refurbish, redesign, and re-equip the interior to keep up with evolving user needs; ensure the sustainability of the Library's mission to remain a vibrant force in Stonington's future.

“The Library is the most vital and best governed institution in our community. Its effectiveness is demonstrated in its increased use by all ages.”

Susan P. Martin, Chair of the Program Committee

The Challenge

(Bringing An Historic Building Into The 21st Century)

The Board's work is focused on achieving its ambitious goals. The Building And Grounds Committee began by contacting the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation to provide advice and guidance, "...or at least talk to us, because, first and foremost, this is an historic building and we're the visual centerpiece of the community."

The Connecticut Trust *did* come to the Library and *did* make suggestions. Their experts recommended that the Library building could sustain a modest addition that would be compatible with the Library's historic architecture. They pointed out that the structure is configured in the shape of a capital "I". They concluded that the center section could be significantly expanded with an addition that could be tucked unobtrusively between the top and bottom of the "I".



Stonington Free Library Is Fully Committed to Improving Access for All

(An Elevator Between Levels Was A Must)

At the heart of the Board's Strategic Plan is the aim of providing increased access to Library services for all patrons. This means improved physical access to all areas of the Library for all patrons, regardless of their disabilities, but it also means increased opening hours as well as digital and other infrastructure upgrades that enable access to Library materials and services from wherever our cardholders may be.



The Library's deep commitment to providing access to all its activities for all its patrons made it a given that the building plan would deliver an elevator to provide access between floors to patrons for whom stairs are an obstacle. Our commitment to improved access also means creating ADA compliant restrooms as well as aisles wide enough to give access to wheelchairs.

"This cherished institution is a key part of our community and deserves the support of all of us."

David S. Purvis, Treasurer

Project Summary

(Three Interdependent Parts)

The plan to provide a Stonington Free Library for The 21st Century consists of three interdependent parts linked to three key goals from our Strategic Plan.

Increased Floor Space and Improved Accessibility

This part of the project constructed a **700sf** addition on the East side of the Library's central section, providing an accessible entrance, elevator, and bathrooms, while also freeing up **575sf** of floor space within the existing building, resulting in a total of **1,275 additional square feet** of usable space that complies with Americans with Disabilities guidelines.

Interior Refurbishment and Upgrade

The project will also renovate the interior of the Library. Comfortable, flexible seating will make the Library an attractive gathering space for the community, while fixed shelves of books will be replaced by movable shelves to yield functional meeting areas for individuals and groups. Enhanced electrical infrastructure and fiber-based broadband will give users up-to-date technology that connects the Library's past, present, and future.

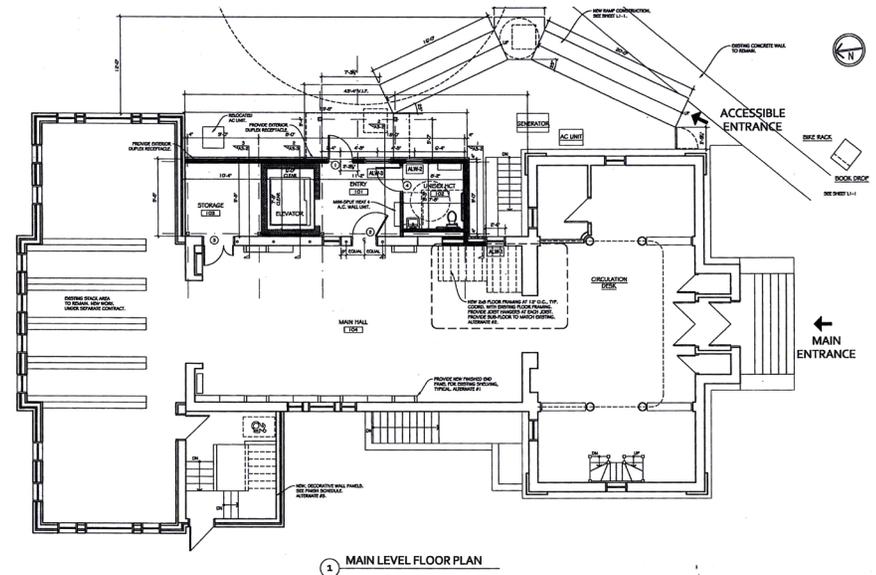
Financial Sustainability

SFL depends upon its endowment* for funds to maintain its physical plant, sustain its programs and services, and attract and retain our talented and caring staff. Successful completion of the Capital Campaign will add substantially to our endowment, safeguarding the Library's future financial stability while also generating increased current income to fund enhanced programs, services and operating hours for an ever expanding and diverse group of users.

*SFL's endowment consists of unrestricted funds which have been designated by the Board of Trustees for the primary purpose of generating income for operations through approved withdrawal policies. Additions to the endowment will be similarly unrestricted, and spending will be governed by decisions of the Board.

**“The Library is our town's Community Center for the mind,
connecting us to each other and the world.”**

Scott W. Muller, Vice President



Project Funding

(To Date)

At the end of 2018, Stonington Free Library was awarded a \$145,000 grant from the State of Connecticut to assist in the interior refurbishment of the existing space. The grant requires that matching funds be raised within 12 months of the award. This timetable provided us with the impetus and opportunity to move our capital campaign forward, and the State of Connecticut's approval of our grant request provided a huge vote of confidence.

We estimate the total cost to implement our plan at \$1.8 million. Its success will improve community access, enhance and reposition existing space for current needs and programs, and provide a stronger endowment to sustain the Library for the future. This essential funding will be realized by leveraging the longstanding and generous support of private donors from our community with a variety of governmental and foundation grants.

To date, the Capital Campaign has received a total of \$1,475,000 in pledges from more than 80 individual donors, including grants from the Town of Stonington and the State of CT. This puts the Campaign at over 80% of our \$1.8MM goal.

	Budgeted Cost	Spending to Date	Funds Pledged
Increased Floor Space	\$650,000	\$497,000	\$650,000 (private donations, municipal funding and foundation grants)
Interior Refurbishment	\$350,000	\$64,000	\$203,805 CT state and foundation grants, private donations
Financial Sustainability	\$800,000		\$620,850 (private donations)
Grand Total	\$1,800,000	\$561,000	\$1,474,655

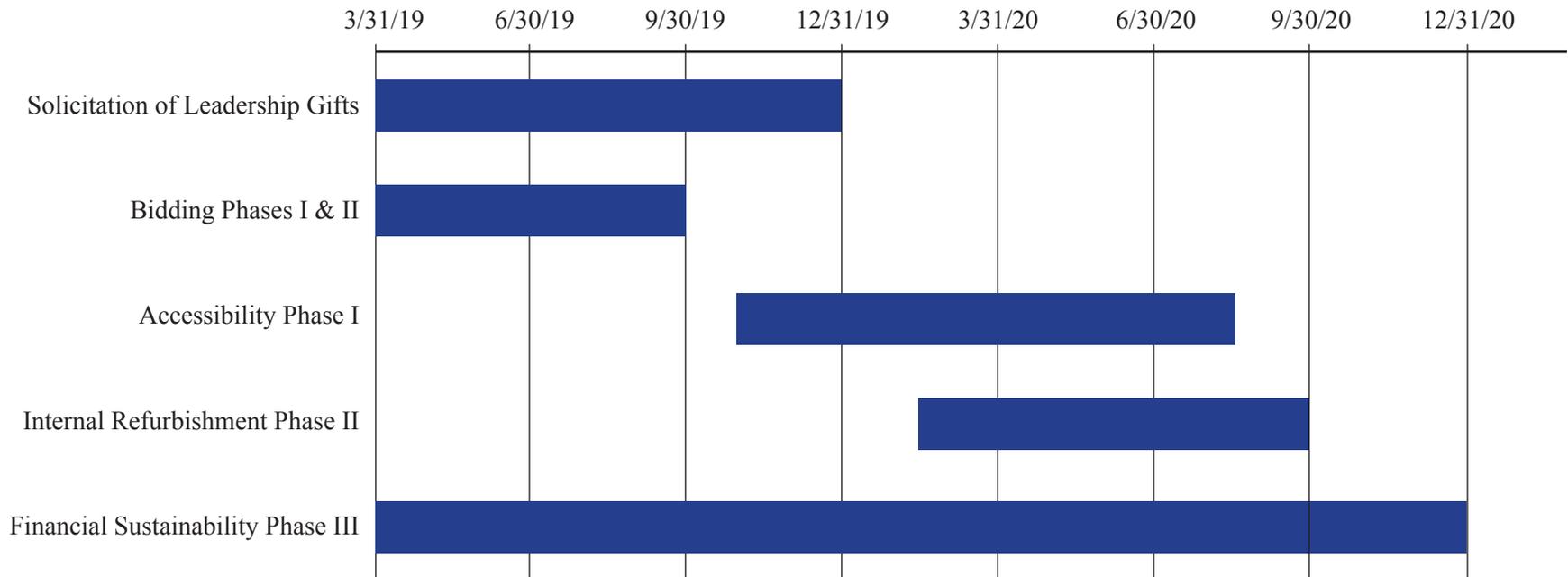
**“For my family, SFL is our go-to place. It’s the anchor of the community.
I’m committed to sustaining this treasure for all of Stonington.”**

Kate Randolph, Former Vice President

Project Calendar

(Proposed)

Construction of the new, accessible addition broke ground on November 3, 2019. Considering global supply chain challenges and new work protocols, we are delighted that this phase of construction is on target for completion by early August, and on budget. Installation of the fiber broadband took place in February 2020, and work on the internal refurbishment, including removal of the old non-functional lift, is scheduled to start mid-August as originally planned.



**“The Library has enriched the lives of five generations of Kepples:
my grandmother, my mother who served as Librarian,
me, my four children and now my grandson!”**

Nicholas Kepple, Former President

Ways to Give

We invite you to leave a legacy for the generations to come by helping to make this vision for Stonington Free Library a reality. Please advise us if your gift is in honor or memory of friends or loved ones so that appropriate acknowledgment can be made.



Cash Donations: checks made payable to the Stonington Free Library may be sent to PO Box 232, 20 High Street, Stonington, CT 06378. Please specify “Capital Campaign 2020 in the memo line. Donations by credit card may be made online at <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/StoningtonFreeLibrary/CC2020.html>

Gifts via Donor Advised Funds: may be made payable to the Stonington Free Library, PO Box 232, 20 High Street, Stonington, CT 06378. Tax ID# 06-0665194.

Gifts of Appreciated Securities: contact the Library for account information your agent will need to initiate the transfer and ensure the proper receipt and acknowledgment of your gift. For tax purposes, the gift amount will be based on the market value of the securities on the date received by the Library.

Donation of Required Minimum IRA Distributions: Anyone over 70 ½ years old may be eligible to make a gift while reducing taxable income at the same time. Please contact the Library for a sample IRA Rollover Letter to be given to your financial institution.

Corporate Matching Gifts: can potentially up to double your gift if your company or organization has a matching program.

Planned Giving through Estate Planning and Bequests: Contact Trustee Elizabeth Leamon at (860) 817-2791 or eleamon@comcast.net to discuss bequests, gifts of life insurance or other forms of planned giving.



“There is no other building in town where everyone feels welcome and part of something special the moment they walk through the front door.”

Sage D. Williams, Trustee

Capital Campaign Steering Committee

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Beth Walker

Campaign Co-Chairs

Marc Ginsberg
Allegra Griffiths

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Archie Leslie
Susan Martin
Caroline and Scott Muller
David Purvis
David Rathbun
Clare Sheridan



**“This is the first Library Capital Campaign since 2006.
This is an extremely conservative Board of Trustees,
and it runs a Campaign only when it absolutely has to.”**

Beth Walker

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Stonington Free Library - Key Contacts

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Stephanie Calhoun - Development Coordinator development@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Stonington Free Library

132 Years of Generous Support From The Stonington Community

The roots of The Stonington Free Library reach back to 1887. That year, the Ladies' Book Club gathered 330 dimes from 330 donors to purchase 38 books and set the foundation for the institution we know today. Records, which are a bit sketchy, show that since its modest beginning, the Library has been led by 18 Presidents (likely more—there's quite a gap between Reverend Palmer and Henry Palmer in 1964). We thought you would be interested in their names since several were early members of families still associated with the town. The list illustrates the many generations through which the Library has served, and been supported by, “young and old river to river.”

Past Presidents

First President: Stiles T. Stanton

Succeeded by: Rev. Albert Gallatin Palmer

1964 Henry R. Palmer

1970 Mrs. David Knox

1974 John (Jack) Sindall

1985 Frank R. Hoadley

1986 Rose York

1995 Colin Revill

1999 Billie Ward

2001 Penny Jones

2004 Beth Harding

2006 Wendy Eck

2008 Joyce Pandolfi

2011 Scott Bates

2014 George Sylvestre

2016 Nicholas Kepple

2018 Allegra Griffiths and Denise Easton



Samuel Denison Babcock

It was Samuel Denison Babcock of New York and Erskine M. Phelps of Chicago who each pledged \$8,000 if Stonington residents would raise \$4,000, which they did. On September 15th, 1898, Wadawanuck Park was then given as a gift to the Borough with a stipulation in the deed that the Library be built on the land.

Questions, contact

Stonington Free Library
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860-535-0658
Tax ID# 06-0665194