



SIMON WHEELER / Journal Staff

Volunteer Judy Scott gets ready to close the Lansing Community Library Center at noon on Wednesday. The Library is looking to change its status so it can levy a local tax, have a full time librarian and have more regular hours.

Lansing library continues to evolve

Proposition would create a new charter

By Jason Gabak

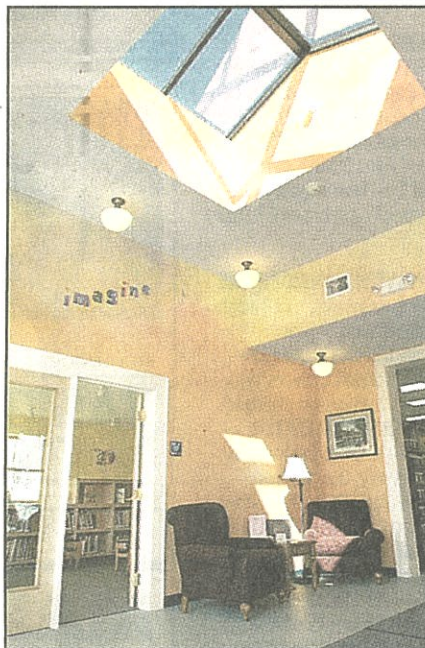
Special to The Journal

LANSING — Since the idea to create the Lansing Community Library Center first surfaced in 1999, a dedicated group of volunteers, have strived to make the library a center for reading, learning and culture within the community.

Now, the library and its volunteers are asking Lansing voters to help them take the next step in their evolution. Voting on a proposition to establish a new library charter will take place May 15. If adopted, the charter would permanently establish the library as a school district library.

Currently, the library is classified as a reading room of the Tompkins County Public Library.

"We have over 13,500 books, videos, DVD, talking books," said Marlaine Darfler, chairperson for the Friends of the Lansing Community Library Center. "We have tried to create a place that allows equal access to all of this to everybody and make the library a place where people can meet and talk. You can go in and see a younger person talking to an older person about the book they are reading."



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The lobby of the redesigned Lansing Community Library Center was added in when the building was enlarged in 2006.

Throughout its years of operation, the library has functioned through fundraising and the dedicated work of volunteers.

"We have 50 or 60 volunteers," Darfler said. "Through fundraisers we have been able to raise enough money for operating costs and to pay for our recent renovations, which include a research room and community meeting room. One of our goals has been to make the library like a town square, a place where people can meet and talk. We want this to be a place that can serve many purposes."

In addition to the charter, the library is asking for the foundation of a nine-person board of trustees, who will be empowered to annually raise \$108,310 for the support and operating costs of the library. An assessment of 17 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value, or \$17 on a \$100,000 assessment, would be added to tax bills. That comes to \$25.50 on a \$150,000 assessment, \$38.25 on \$225,000, and \$63.75 on \$375,000, according to a brochure by the Friends of the Lansing Community Library Center.

The vote, which would establish the Lansing Library as an independent rural library, also calls for the hiring of a fulltime librarian to oversee library operations and growth.

"Right now we are all volunteers," Darfler said. "We would like to get someone to work fulltime to help oversee all the volunteers and help us keep the library growing, writing grants and things of that nature and also help us keep longer hours and be open more."

Support Lansing library

Soon Lansing voters will decide whether to put the Lansing library on the tax rolls. As one of several volunteers who started the library six years ago, I want to address the misconception that we "promised we would always be all-volunteer." Certainly we started the library as an all-volunteer group. We steadily raised funds, gathered and organized books and operated the library as volunteers. We also raised \$385,000 to renovate the library because the need for services kept growing. However, we never promised "all-volunteer" indefinitely.

It has become apparent that we can no longer operate or fund the library on an all-volunteer basis. Operations have gotten more complex, and we cannot get enough volunteers to provide reliable service or raise funds. We cannot expand the hours the library is open — something our public wants. We need to hire one librarian to oversee operations, organize the still-necessary volunteers and provide more hours when the library is open. Putting the library on the tax rolls and then getting a New York state charter will allow a small, stable source of annual income for the library. In addition, we'll be eligible for grant money and county and state income we cannot get now. We have been extremely responsible fiscally. The library is debt free. We continue this conservatism by requesting only enough taxpayer money to run the building and pay one employee. Certainly, our wonderful, debt-free Lansing library with all it provides is worth this small expense. Please vote "Yes" May 15.

DONNA SCOTT
LANSING

Support Lansing library

I am writing in support of the proposition to make Lansing Library an independent library. Making the library independent will permit the hiring of a trained professional librarian.

While maintaining the local, friendly nature of the library and continuing to use many volunteers, having a librarian will enable the library to expand its open hours, making it more convenient for more people. Further, a librarian will be able to offer professional advice to those needing appropriate books and other materials, including online information.

A librarian can even make the

entire search for information more efficient.

As the information age continues to expand and daily schedules stay ever more crowded, having this kind of expert advice for those seeking information will become increasingly necessary.

Lansing residents need and deserve to have such advice available locally.

SUZANNE HINDERLITER
LANSING

May 12, 2007
Ithaca Journal

Vote for Lansing library

On May 15, residents living in the Lansing School District have an opportunity to participate in continuing a very positive effort in Lansing. They can vote "Yes" to make the Lansing Community Library Center an independent library. This will mean that the Lansing Library can apply for a charter. A char-

ter will make the Library an autonomous entity that can receive yearly income from Tompkins County and New York. It can also be provided with a stable source of income through the yearly vote.

Over the past six years, the LCLC has grown from the dream of a core of committed citizens to a lively community institution. For me, it is an addition to the community that I have long desired. I believe that a public library is one of the cornerstones of a civil society. It is important that every community have a public place where they can get information and literature. I like the heft of a book in my hand and being able to read from the printed page. But for those who are more comfortable with the electronic age, LCLC, like most libraries, has complete access to free, wireless Internet and electronic networks. And a small community library contributes to that intangible and often immeasurable quality, a sense of community many people crave.

I urge all Lansing School District residents to vote "Yes" to an independent Lansing library on May 15. A vote for the library is a vote for our community.

BARBARA BARRY
GROTON

Support Lansing library

Please vote "Yes" on Tuesday for the Lansing Community Library Center charter. The vote is taking place at the same time as the vote for the Lansing school budget, not because LCLC will be part of the school system or run by the school board but because state reg-

ulations require it.

To date, the library has had incredible support from our community, business and state grants and donations over the past six years. Unfortunately, we cannot go back to these same sources of funding in many cases, and we are not eligible to apply to many others unless we make this change in status. We do a wonderful job as a community in supporting our schools, our recreational programs and our senior citizen program. Please help continue this wonderful resource for our town. Let your neighbors know how much you value LCLC and how important it is that it remain a growing part of our great community.

SUSAN G. MILLER
LANSING

Support Lansing library

We support the vote to make the Lansing Community Library Center an independent library.

Over 20 percent of the Tompkins county tax base comes from Lansing town residents. Some of that money is given to Groton, Dryden, Newfield and Trumansburg, other independent libraries in Tompkins county. LCLC receives none of this money because it is not an independent library but a reading room of The Tompkins County Public Library.

As an independent library LCLC can ask for a charter and become eligible for county and state funding.

It is time for Lansing tax dollars to return to Lansing for the benefit of all town residents.

Vote yes for an independent Lansing library on May 15.

BOBBI AND JOHN WASENKO
LANSING

Approve Lansing library

I will vote yes to make the Lansing Community Library Center (LCLC) a "school district library." Having a strong community library is extremely important to me. As a parent new to Lansing, one of the first places I visited with my son was LCLC. I met many wonderful people who helped me settle my family here. This library is at the heart of Lansing, geographically and socially. Considering the small tax we'll pay, for the cost of one good book, my family can attend programs and borrow books and other materials from LCLC for an entire year. The quality and convenience of LCLC is well worth the small tax.

As a volunteer at LCLC, I enjoy providing library resources to Lansing people. I have also been privileged to work with many of the dedicated individuals who have made LCLC what it is today and who want to ensure its future success. The prospect of having a certified librarian at LCLC is exciting to me as a volunteer, and I look

forward to many positive changes that will help me to provide improved service to our patrons. As a citizen, educating our society is a top priority, and the library is a cornerstone of education. Access to information provides knowledge. Knowledge provides for informed choices and thereby, power — the power to achieve one's personal goals, as well as contribute to a strong democracy. On May 15 please vote yes to make LCLC an independent library.

MICHELLE CALUPCA
ITHACA

No Lansing library

I cannot express in words how defeated I feel every time I open up the paper and read about a new project in Lansing that is going to increase my taxes. It seems that every group that can print a yard sign or get a non-profit designation feels that they have the right to attack my income with yet another tax.

I appreciate the Lansing Community Library Center's efforts and all the donated time and money, but keep out of my wallet. I like my money; it represents reimbursement for the years and years of my life that I have invested at work. I like spending it on myself and my family, and I don't want to give it to yet another taxpayer-funded bureaucracy.

A vote for this library means that it is guaranteed to get its money every year, and the taxpayers will have no say in that fact. The only exceptions to that are if the library wants to grow its budget or if the community gets enough petition signatures and votes to decouple the library from the school taxes.

Every couple of years the library will come back to us and say "only \$25 more a year... the cost of a single book." This

will continue until your annual tax bill for the library amounts to several books per year. With about 40 libraries in Tompkins County, we don't need one in Lansing that competes with the schools for our education dollar.

HUGH BAHAR
LANSING