

## Library Laxness



photo/Matt Cooper

Lansing Community Library Center volunteer Kathy Sluty shelving books in the library's children's section. As a retired teacher, she said she appreciates the library and is happy it passed the second, now contested, vote.

# Library Voting Procedures Lax

Some residents claim non-resident voters affected outcome

BY MATT COOPER

Several Lansing residents are protesting the Lansing Community Library Center's designation as a "library of the school district," citing what they believe to be several errors in the electoral process.

Dan Pace presented a petition with over 125 signatures to the Lansing school board at its last regular meeting, protesting the library's new designation. He said that loose voting procedures allowed people who were not in the

Lansing school district to vote.

"To vote at an election in the school district, you don't have to be a registered voter," he said. "How do we know if these people voting were U.S. citizens or residents within the school district?"

He compared the process to town elections, where voters must sign their name next to a printed copy of their signature and voter registration and that only those appearing within that book were allowed to vote. He said that there is not a similar procedure at the Lansing school district elections: instead, voters simply fill out their name and address on

a register.

Charlie Purcell accompanied him to the meeting, claiming he had personal knowledge that several of the people listed on the voting register did not live

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Marlaine Darflur  
Library volunteer

within the school district.

Marlaine Darflur, who said she had a copy of the certified election results, said

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# LIBRARY

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that seven people listed on the register were not in fact Lansing residents. She also noted that, because the ballot is secret, there is no way to know how they voted.

"This is how every election has been held at the school district," she said. "I agree that the system might not be perfect, but I wouldn't want to see the library as the sacrificial lamb."

Interim Superintendent Thomas Helmer confirmed that the election was not run any differently than prior elections. When Pace presented his petition to the board, Helmer advised them not to act until consulting with the district's attorney.

The attorney said that, since the library has passed the vote, only the library's new board of directors could elect to disband the library.

"That's different than what [Pace] is asking for, which is another election," Helmer said. "As far as his other options, I don't know. I do know that the board of education does not have much say in the matter any more."

He did stress that the school board has taken a serious look at the school district's election procedures and wishes to make improvements as well.

Darflur said they followed every protocol required for holding an election within the school district, including hiring election staff and posting notice about voting requirements.

"We did everything we're supposed to do," she said.

Pace said that he received a letter from school board President Thomas Keane, advising him to pursue the matter under Section 310 of the New York education law, which spells out the requirements to petition the New York State commissioner of education.

Library Voting Procedures Tax  
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He also mentioned that Lansing residents were promised the library would never become a taxing entity.

"It was a condemned building that was about to be destroyed," he said. "But instead, the town supervisor decided not to and gave it over to the library with the promise that it would be put on the tax rolls. Now seven years later it's here, and there are many residents in Lansing that are very upset about it."

He said that so many residents were upset about it that he had no problem gathering the 67 signatures required for a petition to protest the vote.

"You only needed 5 percent of the vote," he said. "I could have gotten a lot more."

He added that the library was already voted down once, when it was first put on the ballot with the Lansing School District's budget early in 2007. He said a second vote should not have happened at all.

"The people of this town already spoke once about it," he said. "And they

said no."

Darflur has stressed in the past that she thought a second vote was justified because of misconceptions about the library's actual role within the school district.

"Some people thought it was a school library and voted it down because we already have one," she said. "Well, it's not."

She said that she suspected the most recent vote would be hard to overturn, and that library's board of directors would still proceed with the tasks and paperwork to set it up as a library of the school district.

"I don't know how this will turn out right now," she said. "We'll see."

Pace said he would not be able to begin serious proceedings until after Jan. 1.