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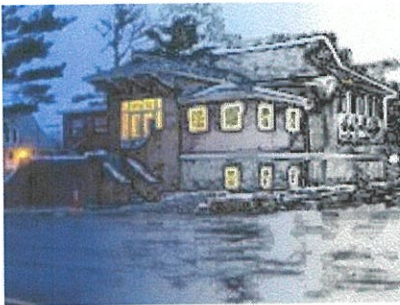
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Jan 18 2008
Pace Asks Town to Stop Funding Library
Dan Veaner

Lansing resident Dan Pace was at Wednesday's Town Board meeting to pursue his crusade against the Lansing Community Library and the tax implications of the library being funded in a controversial December 11th vote. The vote authorized a new library board of directors to collect 15 cents on the thousand dollars of assessed property value to raise \$105,000 per year to fund the library.



Pace has been a vocal opponent of the library, sending a challenge to the vote to the State Commissioner of Education and contacting elected officials ranging from the Town of Lansing to New York Governor Elliot Spitzer. "They're going to be on the tax role now," Pace said. "They're getting money from the Town at least for this year. They're going to get money from the County, money from the State, money from the federal government. So I'm going to get taxes five ways for a library that we really don't need in this town."

"My understanding was that if they won the vote that they were eligible for all these grants that they were going to get, so they would get immediate funding," Pace said. "That was the reason they had the vote in December instead of waiting until May. They said they were going to be out all of this grant money that they were entitled to. So since the vote has gone through it seems to me that

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Pace Asks Town to Stop Funding Library

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starting January 1 they should have to pay a fair market value in rent for that building, because they've got all this money."

"That would certainly be a good idea," Supervisor Scott Pinney said.

But the library is not eligible for grants for operating funds, and will not receive any tax money until next October, after the next school district tax collection in September. A \$20,000 grant from the Triad foundation was awarded to the library to install the Polaris library management computer system, and a smaller grant from the John Ben Snow Foundation will pay for security equipment. But Friends of the Library Chairwoman Donna Scott says that grants like these are not available for day to day operating costs.

Library Board Vice President Marlane Darfler said that there is a ten month gap between the time the library is officially a taxing authority and the time they will receive actual tax money. She says the board is trying to raise funds to operate between now and October, and is even considering a bridge loan. But a bridge loan brings an offset in future funding as well, so Darfler says she hopes that will be minimal.

The last town administration was supportive of the library in both moral support and funding. They allowed the then volunteer library board to occupy the building, which was the Town Hall before that, and a school house before it was used by the Town. They rented the library building for a dollar per year, and provided funding for operating expenses, mostly heating and electric costs, since 2001. That figure was \$8,000 until 2004, 10,000 in 2005 and 2006, and \$12,000 last year and this year.

Volunteers raised quite a bit more than that for operating expenses, programs, and to grow the collection. They raised about a half million dollars to fund two capital improvement projects to increase the size and functionality of the library. The group has operated in the black since they first formed the library, and the building is free of loans or a mortgage.

Pace says that the building was condemned and slated for demolition, then saved at the last moment when town officials agreed to let it be used for a library. "We built a new town hall because that was a condemned building," he says. "Now the library has sunk a half million dollars into a condemned building. As a business owner and someone who has a degree in business I don't know how anybody can pump that money into a condemned building, but they did."

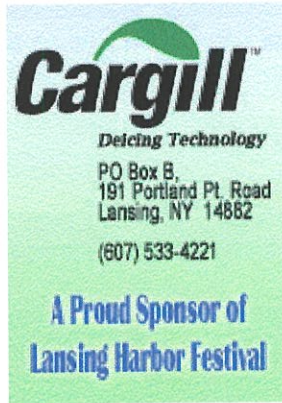
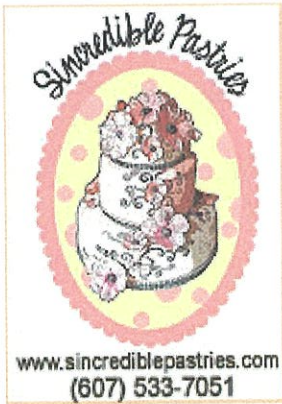
Pace asked if the board plans to rescind the \$12,000 allocated for the library this year. "At this point in time the Town Board hasn't discussed what we're going to do with this in the future," said Supervisor Scott Pinney. "I personally feel that now that they're an independent library that we won't be giving them any more money in the future now that they're collecting taxes on their own. However, \$12,000 was promised for this year. That money is going to be given to them next week. I don't feel at this point that we can rescind that money, because they are anticipating getting it."



Dan Pace

"I don't believe they have collected any money," noted Town Councilman Matt Besemer in defense of the grant. "It was just approved a month ago."

Pinney said that he hoped the Town Board would discuss the funding issues quickly, possibly



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before next month's board meeting. He promised to call Pace with answers when he has them.

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