

## KEY LEADER INTERVIEWS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four community leaders, identified by the library administration/Board of Trustees, were interviewed individually via telephone. Three of the individuals live in the city of Petoskey; one lives in Resort Township.

- Three identified themselves as library users; one is not.
- They were **evenly divided on the issue of awareness of the library and its services**. As one commented, “I don’t know how they could not be aware of it... the library is a presence and a force in the community.”
- Three agree the Library has a good reputation in the community (the fourth “has not heard anything” and could not respond); the **cut back in hours** and the **issues with support by the townships** were identified as **negatives**.
- Things that would make them **want to visit the library more often** or **stay longer** **include**: comfortable seating; the fireplace; friendly staff.
- When asked what services of the Library come to mind first, three of the four responded with **services for children**. **Books were also identified**.
- They were in agreement that they would **place a priority on services for children** and for **senior citizens**.
- All of them had attended Library events – the **film series** was mentioned by three – at the Carnegie Building.
- Things they like include: **free parking and easy availability of parking**; the **architecture** of the facility; **the location**.
- One commented, “To me the library **is not a friendly building**. It looks very institutional, very brick, very columned and I don’t find the building appealing.”
- Only one of the four was “vaguely” aware of the availability of e-books.
- Three of the four **do not** believe the Library is adequately funded.
- They anticipate changes in the Petoskey area to include: population growth, most likely in the senior/retired population; the division between the “haves” and have-nots” may grow more pronounced; and saving/revitalizing the downtown area will be challenging.

In regard to the **relationship with the townships, library services for township residents**, and how the **townships should support the Library**, comments included:

- “If the library can prove the value, it can ask for the money.”

- “The message might need to go out to the residents directly to encourage them to ask their township officials to place the issue on the ballot. The voters should have a chance to decide.”
- “But to allow those who are able to pay (yet are not paying) to enjoy the same services as those who are paying the bills, that is not fair. Residents in all the townships should be asked to support the library as was done in Resort Township. Those who decide not to pay should not get the services the library provides.”
- “Outline the benefits if everyone participates. But if people don’t pay, they should not have the privilege of getting materials from the library.”
- “I see nothing wrong with luring people in with a smaller millage at the 4/10 mill level. The library is in Petoskey, so for those further out from the city it seems a fair request at this lower level.”
- “Yes, it is not reasonable for some to get a free ride. And Petoskey residents are being generous in offering a much lower tax levy than city residents pay.”
- “If people do not approve taxes to support the library they should have to pay a fee for service. The library needs to be very proactive and needs to get around to the various communities and really explain to them. There is a need for a marketing campaign.”
- “I think people in the townships need to know that if they don’t participate in supporting a modest tax for the library, they lose the right to use it.”