



Athol Public Library

May 5, 2016

Adult Focus Group

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Why Do Libraries Do Focus Groups?

- To help serve the community
- To listen to stakeholders
- To communicate needs with trustees and town officials
- To develop long-range strategic plans
- To satisfy requirement for state funding by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Ground Rules for Participants

- This is an opportunity to participate in a forum for positive change. Use it, and have fun with it!
- There are no right or wrong answers. It is not necessary to reach a consensus.
- Participate in the discussion; express your opinions, examples, and ideas freely yet briefly.
- Give others your attention. Limit side conversations and interruptions.
- Be open-minded and respectful of your colleagues.
- Engage in discussion, not argument. Stay positive!
- Allow others to voice their opinions and ideas.
- Stay focused and on topic.

Why do YOU
come or **not** come to the library?

Why before renovation?

Why after renovation?



Why do you come to the Library

Why?

- Get a DVD for Y kids
- Collaborate for family events (storytimes, free play for families)
- Town related meetings
- Research, public meetings
- Group activities
- Kids-reading materials, homeschooling materials, books, C/W MARS!
- For pre-K & childcare business utilize story time and activities for children
- School age group programs
 - Reading materials
 - Books for children at public schools
- Children's programs

Why Not?

- “I have interest.”
- Lack of time to attend programs
- Personally don't have time to use otherwise
- Lack of time at this point
- On weekdays, just doesn't work for me.
- Not open during time I could personally use.

Did not use former library because it was small and dark!

What has the Library contributed to the community of Athol?



What has it done for community

- (Helped) marketing (Athol) – putting up signs
- Millers River Park
- Welcoming to all
- Has begun to attract other businesses
- Sense of pride (in community) and a positive to Main Street area
- Encourages people to consider living here
- Working with schools to encourage reading & use of the library
- Civic pride; investment in community; great programming, “cultcha”
- (offered) programs
- Place where kids can socialize

What does this card do for you?



ATHOL PUBLIC LIBRARY

568 Main Street, Athol, Mass. 01331

978-249-9515 • www.athollibrary.org

A member of the Central Mass. Regional Library System

What does your library card mean to you!

- Museum passes/state park passes
- All libraries have access to many books
- Computer access
- Pride for children
- Go to new libraries/checkout books & (return in Athol)
- Order books online
- Online checkout (renewal); museum passes

Some non-users were surprised that it was patrons could use any library with the same card. Some discussion about what a “right of passage” getting a library card is for children.

How much do you pay for media?

Of the “things” (DVDs, CDs, Books, Magazines, Wifi, Computers, etc.) that you use from the Library, which of those “things” do you buy?



How much do you spend on media annually?

How much do you spend in \$

- 250
- 278
- 725
- 700
- 770
- 1458
- 2340
- 2400
- 2515
- 4200

Range on what?

From \$250 to \$4200

- Wifi
- Computer
- CDs
- Books
- Magazines
- Netflix
- Kindle
- Cable television
- Ebooks
- Newspapers & online newspapers
- Redbox

“I would pay for internet if I didn’t get it free from my neighbor (he knows about it.)”

Compare last slide to annual value of
Library

How do you plan to use the library to help reach your personal goals?

Planning for retirement?
Starting a family?
Dealing with an illness?
Helping children succeed?
Buying a house?
Anticipating divorce?
Saving money?
Furthering education?
Getting a new job?
Preparing your “end game”?
Connecting with your community?
Personal growth?



How do you use the library to reach your personal goals?

- using it for (my personal) quiet zone
- Saving \$
- Helping kids succeed (2)
- Connecting with community (2)
- Getting books to further education
- Personal growth
- New knowledge through programming (attending library programs)

What's most important to you about library service?



What would you change?

What would you change?

- Hours – possible Saturday
- Children's room materials - more learning items (manipulative)
- Community needs/shares – For example sharing seeds, snowshoes, community garden, educational programs in math & science
- Leap Pad to borrow & games for checkout
- Loan tools, board games
- Hours – a weekend day (6) & some evenings
although a weekend more important than evenings

Share Your Love of Library

What would you say to a person who hasn't discovered the new library?



Share the love!

My message to non-users:

Enjoy the beautiful space and quiet

Meeting new people

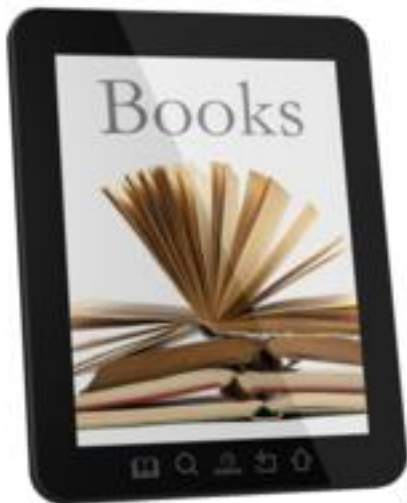
Great indoor/outdoor space

Great programs

Something for everyone

Do you share information?

If your friend did not know how to reserve a book from the Library or did not know how to get an ebook, stream movies, or download an audiobook from the library, how would you explain to them how to do that?



Downloads

One participant explained how she used her Amazon account to download free books through Overdrive using her C/W MARS card.

The other participants were unaware of any of these services through C/W MARS or the Boston Public Library

One participant said, “so you can actually use the library without ever going to the library!”

What do you Want to know?

What do you think are the most effective methods for telling the community what the library offers?

What do people truly look at/pay attention to?

Do you want to be reached?

How do you find out about programs offered at the Library?



What do you want to know & how can we reach you?

- Via Town website to Library website
- Newspaper
- Via school website to Library website
- School newsletter
- Flyers (Concerts, grocery stores, YMCA, Senior Center, Parks, etc.)
- Web/Email push for those who “opt-in”

Thank you for participating

Thank you for your past and present volunteer efforts
and your financial support of the Athol Public Library



Parting Comments

(What more do you want to add?)

- Anything that builds community is huge!
- WHOLE family activities (magic, plants)
- Board game nights / Chess club for adults
- Lego nights for adults
- Disc golf equipment for loan (costs about \$25)
- Coloring for adults
- Look ahead of the curve for trends

Parting comments continued

- Diversity of programming brings people together
- Lyceum concept- Sees the library returning to lyceum - an institution for popular education providing discussions, lectures, concerts, etc.
- In cooperation with others - Performances extended to Town Hall – If larger space was renovated could offer larger venue events & bring popular performers speakers in cooperation with other town agencies or businesses.