



Athol Public Library

May 5th & 6th 2016

Adult Focus Groups

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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 use the Library?

What do you use?

- Books
- Interlibrary loans
- Kids-youth activities
- Homeschooling
- Programs

After

- Relaxing
- More programs
- Positive attitude
- Separate space for children and adults
- Books clubs encourage you to read what you might not otherwise
- Benefit to homeschoolers
- More browsing possibilities
- Multi-generational space
- Knitting group

What has the Library contributed to the community of Athol?



Benefit to the Community

- Community commitment
- Market Basket saw library support as a commitment by community for improvement
- Draws people from surrounding communities
- Improvements on Main Street
- New Library creates pride in Athol
- Riverfront Park an important element
- Library card now recognized at other libraries
- Discount passes is a value added benefit

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

C/W MARS Card

- C/W MARS access = “we can get anything”
 - Get books
 - Get other media
 - Saves money
 - Saves time
 - Passes for museums
 - State park passes

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?



Annual Costs for Media/Media Delivery

\$550 to \$5700

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 would you use the library to reach personal goals?

- New challenges
- Meet new people
- Learn new things
- Use library databases for reliable sources for health, consumer reports, etc.
- How to do special things
 - How to publish a book
- Seek staff help for those who need it

What's most important to you about library service?



What would you change?

What's important?

- Hours: Consistent, Saturdays, evenings
- Intro to libraries should be offered in school
- Workshops on library services are needed
 - C/W MARS
 - Catalog
 - What to do with a library card
- Love the art shows
- More educational programs
- Most are short term/overview
- Willingness to pay small fee for extended classes
- Home schooling for adults!
- Library is a meeting place for clubs & groups

Share Your Love of Library

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

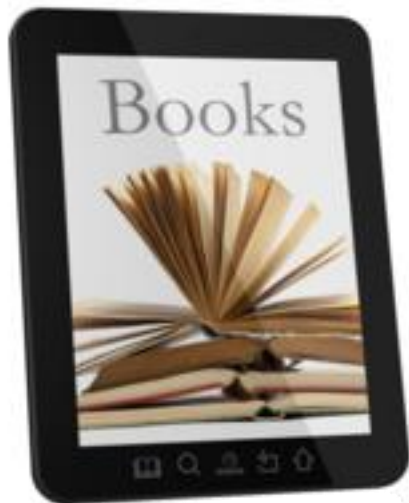


Everyone should love the Library because:

- Do you know all the things that are available through the library?
- Why don't you go?
- Explore local history (digital commonwealth)
- You'll enjoy new programs if you come

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?



How should info be shared?

- Library website
- Staff instructional workshops
- Dedicated computer:
 - YouTube type videos

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?

How do you get to know about library programs, events and services?

- Does anyone read flyers?
- Mailed postcards – This is the “new” way to get attention!
- Word-of-mouth – How do we get more people to invite their friends
- Radio ads
- Information through elementary school (flyers are effective until middle school, then they never come home)
- Library to library connections
- Field trips for kids at all levels
- Expand volunteer role to include those who can help and/or teach how to use library info.

Do you want to be reached?

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



How do you want to be reached electronically?

- How do we get on email list?
- Is there a place to opt-in on the website?
- Multi-faceted approach – Automatic text messaging beyond the C/W MARS auto messages generated by the network
- Are emails in C/W MARS private or can they be tapped to reach patrons for purposes beyond circulation functions?
- And use Facebook, Google lists, etc.

Thank you for participating

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



Further Comments

- Something has to be done about teens swearing, skating, smoking at the entrance. (Suggestion: Tell them they absolutely cannot use the library. Teenage contrariness will then have the insisting they need to use the library)
- Surprisingly, teens who use the library drop some of their teen rudeness and show respect when in the library.
- Staff are amazing = great customer service
- More STEAM programming
- Consider exploring MAKERSPACE
- Hands on activities are always great