

Pember Library Engaged Planning Document



Planning Summary

This project was planned in conjunction with the Engaged Planning mini-course offered by the Southern Adirondack Library System. As such, the Pember Library was asked to form an Engaged Planning Committee, brainstorm possible resources to access and contact community members for information, conduct a landscape review of the surrounding community, then interact with and survey members from the community, and combine it all into a working plan to keep the library goals aligned with those of the community.

History

Franklin and Ellen Pember gave the Pember Library & Museum of Natural History to the people of the village of Granville, in 1909. It consists of a Library on the first floor and a Museum of Natural History on the second floor. The Pember was built as a Library-Museum and was never used as a private home, although many people think so. It has beautiful woodwork and a wide staircase, as well as an extraordinary marbleized slate fireplace. The Library has a Victorian air about it. In the beginning, patrons needed to ask the librarian for the book they wanted and were never permitted behind the gate to the stacks. (You can still see where the gate was.) Today, patrons are welcome to browse the shelves to select books, videos, audio books, and kits for children, independently.

The Pember Library and Museum was chartered as a library on May 1, 1909 by New York State to serve the village of Granville but actually serves the village of Granville, the town of Granville, and many patrons from Hartford, Hampton, Whitehall, Fort Ann, Hebron, other parts of Washington county, and several local Vermont towns.

Part of the library's more recent history includes the fundraising for and the building of the elevator. Built as an addition, the elevator allows more accessible entrance to the library and museum floors. This project was conducted over 3 years and required approximately \$800,000 in building and labor costs.

As stated in the Pember Library & Museum Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries (2020), the Pember Library has 2848 registered borrowers and over 33,000 items in the collection. Within the library's operating system, there are 1,156 card holders in the Town of Granville statistical class and 841 card holders in the Village of Granville statistical class. According to the US Census (2019), there are 2543 residents in the Village of Granville. The United States Census Bureau reports that, as of 2019, the town of Granville has 7,399 people living within range of the school district, with 1,158 of those residents being the 5-17 year olds who attend the schools. Of those "relevant" ages, 193 (or 16.7%) are children ages 5-17 who belong to families living in poverty. This shows that there is a significant population in the Granville community in need of access to resources that they may not otherwise be able to afford.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Pember Library is to provide the people of its community with access to a balanced collection of books and other materials which will serve their educational, cultural and recreational needs.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Pember Library is to become the heart of the community, a place where all members of the community can come to share materials and experiences. In doing so, the library will support the whole community through cooperative food sharing, intellectual stimulation through various clubs, and finding interests through books, take & make kits, and other materials.

Values

The Pember Library values a close-knit community and the sharing of resources throughout that community.

Landscape Review

A long-range plan is something that is required for public libraries in the state of New York. But going beyond that, a long-range plan will:

- Provide information about the community and library to use in decision-making;
- Clarify for board, staff, and community the role of the library in the community;
- Evaluate the usefulness and quality of specific services and activities;
- Assist in preparing for change (dropping old services or adding new ones);
- Establish priorities for the allocation of resources;
- Document the need for sustainable funding (New York State Education Department, 2021).

The above points are why the library is completing this plan. The Pember Library wants to ensure that there is a plan for moving forward, and more importantly incorporating goals to help engage with the community so that the library can achieve its desired outcome of being the heart of the town.

To identify the resources available to the community, the Engaged Planning Committee (heretofore referred to as EPC) conducted Community Resource surveys (made by the Southern Adirondack Library System [SALS]) with various individuals. The library staff was asked to complete the survey, as were members of the EPC, and several individuals who have been in the community for a while. With this survey, participants were asked to think about individuals, associations, local institutions, local businesses, and physical spaces & places, as well as each one's skills, resources, relationship, connections, and which issues to address. With each round conducted, some answers were the same and others were similar, but all yielded resources which could be utilized in the carrying out of the Engaged Plan. In terms of individuals, participants named people who have connections to the library, who are business owners, who have connections to other businesses and organizations, and who otherwise have influence in community places. As far as associations, participants discussed the food pantry, the Boy Scouts, Rotary Club, Lions Club, the VFW, the American Legion, the Knights of Columbus, the Farm 2 Library food resource, the Modern Woodmen of America, the Slate Valley Garden Club, the Granville Chamber of Commerce, the Masonic Lodge, and the Friends of the Library. Listed as local institutions, most participants named the Granville Central School District, as well as the various churches (United Church, Truthville Baptist, St. Mary's,

Congregational, Calvary, etc.), banks (TD Bank, Great Meadow Federal Credit Union, and Glens Falls National), and nursing homes (Granville Center, Slate Valley Center and Holbrook's Adult Home). Also included were the town fire departments, police, and rescue squads. As for local businesses, many small businesses were named, like Edward's, Slatetown Brewery, American Hardware, the Gold Trout, the Village Yarn Shop, Chapman's General Store, various hair salons, slate companies, Telescope, MacDaddy's, On the Rocks Pub, St. Gobain, Rathbun's Maple Sugar House, Pine Grove Diner, Hick's Orchard, and Gemini Fitness, as well as some chain businesses, like Price Chopper, McDonald's, Dunkin, and Stewart's. The final item discussed was physical spaces and places available as resources, and participants listed places like Veteran's Park, the Little League Park, Mettowee Park, Fireman's Field, Church Street Park, the Rails to Trails, the Penrhyn Carnival grounds, and the school athletic fields. Brainstorming about potential resources allowed the EPC to acknowledge the plethora of resources available in our community, as well as helped to begin framing which resources might suit potential projects and plans conducted in our strategic plan.

Also conducted was the SOAR exercise from SALS, which asks participants to think about the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results of the library to help the library look at future possibilities and identify desired outcomes. The EPC again asked the library staff to complete this exercise, as well as the members of the EPC, the library's board members, the members of the Friends committee, and several community individuals. Main points to think on included "What the library does well, along with its key assets, resources, capabilities, and accomplishments." "Circumstances your library could leverage for success." "An expression of what you want the library to be and achieve in the future. A vision to build on current strengths, provide inspiration, and challenge the current situation." and "Tangible outcomes and measures that demonstrate the achievement of the stated goals and aspirations."

In terms of strengths, participants listed getting items out to patrons promptly, the community and library groups, activity offerings, a good selection of materials for all ages, teamwork, patron services, a "homey" facility, an attached museum that attracts people, the incorporation of genealogy services, and the commitment to the institution from its staff, board members, and Friends of the Library. For the next bullet point, participants were asked "what makes us proud," to which they responded with our relationships with patrons, the services offered for patrons, our food program, helping the community, our availability, the work on newspaper digitization, having a library and museum available to our community, the diversity of our resources available, and again, the commitment to the community. Then participants were asked to think about the library's greatest accomplishments, and responses included maintaining a high level of service throughout the years, staying active through the pandemic, creating community outreach programs, First Fridays, adding the elevator to make the building more accessible, and the programs offered for children and teens. As the last part of this section, participants were asked about what the preferred future for the library is and who we want to become in the community. Participants stated things like increasing our activity in the community and meets needs for many people, essentially becoming the "heart of the community," providing more support for the town and the village, and encouraging more people

to read, including children and teens, as well as continuing to be a presence in the community and securing our place within the community as ideas for a preferred future.

In thinking about best possible future opportunities for the library, participants listed community interaction, grants, more programs and materials, permanently eliminating fines so that people feel more welcome, virtual interactions, more gatherings (post-COVID), keeping the people who live in the community and getting more businesses to open, serving younger populations, getting more people and families to participate and possibly being open for longer hours. Participants cited anticipated changes in the next five years as being more technology and virtual options, increased communication and program offerings, more people and businesses coming into the community, heightened anxieties over spreadable viruses and diseases, people not using the library, increased expenditures, and increased involvement with the schools. Changes that could have a positive impact on the library were stated to be access to more virtual programs, general increased access, the ability to do more with the community, changing demographics (more people frequenting and moving to the area), more open hours, possible monthly press releases about what is happening in the library. Participants believed that the library could make a difference in the areas of literacy, tutoring, food programs, working with the schools, working with nursing homes, programs and activities for older people, eBooks, helping people use the technology and wifi at the library, helping new people settle into the community, reaching more people, and generally helping the community. Mentioned as key areas of untapped potential for the library are local history, technology, teenagers and younger adults, and “digital natives.” Participants believed that partnerships which could lead to greater success included increased collaboration with the village board, becoming part of state-wide library groups, partnering with local businesses, reaching out to the surrounding townships and their libraries, partnering with local clubs and groups outside of the library, partnering with local government, and partnering with the libraries in the school district was mentioned several times.

Next was the discussion about aspirations, and to frame this discussion, participants were asked to think about what the library is passionate about, which seems to be the community, books, information, children’s programs and reading programs, communication, helping patrons, increasing community interaction, and offering services for patrons. Participants were then asked about what kind of community we want and the important attributes that accompany that type of community. Responses included interactive, hometown feel, supportive, “one that gets along,” literate (both in terms of reading and using technology), caring, friendly, cooperative, involved, and “has positive energy.” Similarly, participants were asked about what they would change if they could magically transform the community, to which participants responded with having a more involved partnership with the various groups in the community, general access, more support and more donations to the library and other nonprofit groups, more families, more successful businesses, more kids and teens using the library, more employment opportunities, more open minds, appreciation for what the community has, and more people using the library programs. Then participants were asked to think about a global change that gives them hope and how the community might respond to it. Some responses included seeing that “virtual can work,” increased exposure to other libraries, more people coming together/unity, and a move toward inclusivity. In thinking about how the library can make a difference, participants responded with being open to new ideas, caring more about the little things, continuing to provide resources, being aware of and anticipating the needs of

patrons/the community, continuing to be a source of information, and reaching out to the community. Participants were then asked to think of strategies and actions to help support the perfect future library, and their answers included more interaction between the staff and the board, and growing with the school, creating more exposure around the library- more widespread information (newspaper articles about library happenings) and more events, strategic book purchasing, grant writing, and growing more local support.

Finally, participants were asked to think about tangible outcomes and ways to measure them to demonstrate the efficacy of the strategies. Some measurable results included growth in the number of [active] patrons, increased circulation numbers, and increased traffic to the library and museum. For the participants, translating success into measurable outcomes meant meeting together, having more people in the library, increasing circulation numbers, and working hard to support ideas that work. The last point asked participants to think about how we will know when we've achieved our goals, to which they responded with increased patronage, numbers and statistics, and having to make new goals.

Community Aspirations

The information was gathered by talking to both individuals and groups from the community. The individuals will remain anonymous, but the Engaged Planning Committee was able to speak with members of the Granville Garden Club (around 20 members) and the Granville Rotary (around 10 members).

The groups that spoke with the Committee also have been present in the community for some time, and are active in the goings-on around the community. With these groups, the Committee utilized the *Libraries Transforming Communities* Aspirations Exercise. The topics that we asked the members of each group to consider were, "My aspirations for the community are:" "The challenges we face in reaching these aspirations are:" "The changes needed in my community to reach our aspirations are:" and "What groups or individuals do you trust to take action on these issues?" After the members finished jotting down their thoughts, the Committee asked them to share with the whole group and responses were written down on a board so that all could see the collective responses.

Garden Club:

There were several common topics that circulated in the discussion with the Garden Club. Mentioned as aspirations, members of the Garden Club want to see more people coming into the community, both to live and to shop. They want to see community groups working together and communicating, rather than existing in separate spheres. The group also wanted to see increased community involvement from members who aren't already involved in groups, particularly those of the younger generations, as well as more cultural and educational opportunities for all members of the community. This group noted the need for a park or other community space for people to gather, preferably close to Main Street where it would be in the center of town. The Garden Club also discussed a need for better infrastructure, noting things such as the cracked sidewalks in the village and the poor water system in North Granville. In keeping with improving the community itself, they also wanted to see a community clean-up organized, so as to remove the "eyesore" of the "junk" around the village and the overall

community. This group wanted to make sure that any improvements would include meeting the needs of everyday people, such as providing employment opportunities and food for those who can't afford it. They also thought that it might be a good idea to talk with the committees who helped to revitalize other communities, such as that of Brandon, Vermont.

Challenges to the above aspirations include lack of places to work and to shop, which means that members of the community find places outside the community to work and shop. They also cited inconvenient locations and high prices in the stores that we do have as a driving factor to find other places to purchase goods. Some members also believed that there are mental health and addiction crises happening in the community, which are affecting the social dynamics as well as the work and business spheres. Another big factor is the lack of funding that exists in a small, rural community, as well as the general lack of wanting to change the community. One member noted that there is not any public transportation for the members of the community who do not have access to vehicles. Another member noted the discrepancies that can arise when some members of the community get their news from the local newspapers (*The Granville Sentinel*, *The Post-Star*) and others get their news from social media such as Facebook. Also discussed were the changes all communities are facing in a post-pandemic world, where people still may need to follow restrictions and perhaps still feel unsafe leaving their homes.

In terms of the conditions that would be needed to make the desired changes, some members noted providing incentives for people to move to the community, as well as beautifying the general area and emphasizing the uniqueness of it. Business owners and homeowners have come in and fixed up quite a few properties, but other buildings in disrepair and homes with "junk" outside should be included in a movement to clean up the town and improve its aesthetic. Bringing in bigger businesses might also help to improve the community, as they will not only provide places for convenient "one-stop" shopping and new jobs, but they will also draw in people from other nearby, underserved communities. The same could be said for more restaurants in town, as there are several diners and fast food places, but there are few restaurants in the surrounding area. Another way to achieve these aspirations is to provide organizations that have benefits for its members or have some other way of enticing younger people to join them. The community as a whole might also need to change its mindset, as "this is the way we've always done it" is a frequent response when people do try to change things. If community members and leaders can adopt a more open-minded mindset, community groups and organizations might be able to make more progress with the changes that could improve the community. They also believed that the community organizations should host more events where members of the community can interact with the clubs and groups, as well as just interact with other members of the community.

The Garden Club wrote several individuals and organizations that they believe capable of handling the improvements necessary to the plan. These include the Town Supervisor, the Village Mayor, the Lions Club, the Town and Village Boards, as well as community leaders and even teachers. Also in attendance at this meeting was a member of the new Granville Community Foundation, who stated that they also share a lot of these goals and would be able to help if and when the Committee acted on the plan.

Rotary Club:

In the discussion with the Rotary Club, several people mentioned that they wanted more businesses in town, as expanding the number of businesses would also bring more employment opportunities into the community. Some of these might also be shops that could entice summer visitors, which would then bring more revenue into the community. Other people also wanted to see more life on Main Street, which could be achieved by bringing more businesses onto the main thoroughfare of the town. As such, one member mentioned the importance of having more places for people to park their cars, as there is a limited number of parking spots along the road and only two lots toward the end and middle of Main Street. An individual mentioned that a community center would be important to providing a place for people to gather and hold meetings, as there is not a designated space for that right now. Other members noted how they would like to see the school improve and meet the state requirements, as well as offer more trade programs to students. Several members thought that the community's aesthetic could be improved, that "junk" around town and in yards could be cleaned up and landscaping could be done in public places. All members seemed to agree that they wanted more members of the community involved in the community groups, as it seems to be the "usual faces" in multiple groups.

However, obstacles in the way of these aspirations appeared to center around lack of funding and lack of interest from young people. Also noted as challenges were the fact that a lot of traffic goes through Granville on State Route 22, but does not go through the Village of Granville where a lot of the businesses are located, as well as the fact that people are moving further away from Granville and toward more populous areas. Someone in the group made mention of how the community itself has remained the same, even though its members have less time to give to it. Because the dynamics of the community don't reflect the changes in society, the community and its groups are relying more on support from the leaders of the community.

The conditions needed to make the aspirations happen are getting more people to volunteer and become leaders, creating more places to meet, and having a fundraising campaign for something everyone can use, perhaps for something like a community clean-up. Also noted was more positive publicity and creating a sense of confidence or pride in the town.

The ideas for taking action included better advertising for what we have, as well as showcasing the uniqueness of the places and organizations in town. This is in addition to making what is happening in the community match the social dynamics of the community, for instance planning meetings and events at times when working parents can attend.

Strategic Priorities

Community Issue 1: Lack of new people in groups and clubs.

Goal: The Pember Library will aid in raising awareness of the community's groups and clubs.

To help raise awareness, the Pember Library can post flyers about each group on the non-profit section of our bulletin board. We can also begin planning a bazaar so that each club can set up a table with members and information. Not only will it act as a membership drive, but it will help more people in the community learn about what these groups do. Resources necessary for this

might be folding tables and chairs that could be set up on the lawn (if the event was to be held outside), as well as volunteers from each group to monitor their respective tables and provide information.

Outcome: Increased memberships for the groups in the community, with an emphasis on an increased number of young adults joining the groups.

Community Issue 2: Lack of community gatherings.

Goal: The Pember Library will host several gatherings throughout the year.

To increase the number of community gatherings, the Pember Library will host several gatherings open to the community throughout the year. Given that the world is still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EPC wants to acknowledge the fact that this part of the plan may not be possible until the worst is over and people can gather without social distancing and/or wearing masks indoors. As it is, the Pember Library has begun reinstituting Friends meetings, board meetings, book club, and sudoku club meetings in the library, but wants to grow these programs so that more people from the community are involved. In the future, the Pember Library could bring back the First Fridays that were so popular in the community. This would allow the library to host musicians, artists, school projects, and speakers so that not only would the community have a regular gathering to attend, but so that they may learn, see, or hear something new each time. The Pember Library may also introduce other forms of gatherings or bring back others, like the Murder in the Museum Mystery.

Outcome: Increased number of events, both regular and special, held throughout the year to increase visitor traffic and stake in the library.

Community Issue 3: Lack of interest from younger generations.

Goal: Create more opportunities and provide more resources to engage with younger generations.

In order to increase the interest levels from younger generations, the Pember Library and its community need to find ways to appeal to what the younger generations are interested in. As an individual in the Rotary Club noted, the community dynamics haven't changed, but the demographics of the community have. The Pember Library and its community need to adapt to such changes, and not only continue to provide the products and services the regular patrons are accustomed to, but expand to include newer modes to reach different demographics. The Pember Library already has a Facebook/Instagram page and eBooks through both Libby and Overdrive. In addition, the library could create a page of online tutorials that help people to utilize features on its website, as well as learn how to request books online or borrow eBooks. This way, people who may not want to come in and ask for help (i.e. people who usually Google the answer rather than talking to a person) still have access to the information necessary to use what the library has to offer. The Pember Library currently puts out weekly take-and-make kits

for preschool-age and elementary-age children, but once the library can have more indoor gatherings, the library could have after-school gatherings for teens or clubs geared toward younger adults. There is not currently a space dedicated for teen use, but there is the possibility of repurposing the book room area as a teen space when it is not being used for the Friends of the Library book sale. Going one step beyond, the library might choose to dedicate one of its staff to becoming the young adult expert and reading new YA books to be able to put out book talks and design more programs for teens.

Outcome: Increased traffic from teens and young adults, both virtually and in the library, which would foster a lifelong love of learning and trips to the library. This would be reflected in circulation statistics, as well as digital interaction (seen in website visit count).

Library Specific Issue: Lack of sustainable funding.

Goal: Create a pathway that allows for the library to be consistently funded.

The Pember Library currently relies on funding from the Village and the Town of Granville, as well as from rental income from the four apartments in the Pember Carriage House. All other funding is received from community donations and grants that are applied for by the library director or trustees. This means that the Library is continually looking for opportunities to apply for grants that coincide with our vision and mission. And because grants typically do not cover funding for staff, which generally takes up two-thirds of a public library's budget, it is essential for the functioning of the Pember Library that it finds a way to sustainably fund itself. The Library would like to set up some sort of pathway that would allow for sustainable funding. This may be something like a school district library, wherein the Library uses the taxable area encompassing the same boundaries of the school district. This is money collected by the school at tax time but is separate and given to the Library. However, the reason that this has not yet happened is because the Pember Library's deed states that Mr. Pember only wanted appointed members for the Library's board so that politics would not become a factor. School district libraries necessitate that the board of the library is elected, so this is a conflict that may not be reconcilable. There are other ideas out there for sustainable funding, one of which is utilizing the Independent Library District Model, which entails becoming a self-governed library district and setting the tax rate so as to increase public funding (Goldman, 2017, p.3). However, this study was conducted in towns with hundreds of thousands of residents, so this may be beyond the scope of what the Pember Library can do for its patrons. Because the Library does serve so many patrons, whether in-person or through Inter-Library Loan, it is crucial that the Library is able to obtain funding that is consistent for a long period of time.

Outcome: Finding and obtaining a pathway for sustainable funding that will allow for suitable staffing (and therefore functioning) of the Pember Library.

Resource Identification/Action Plan

The Engaged Planning Committee went through the resource identification process at the beginning of the strategic planning journey. This was conducted with several groups affiliated with the Pember Library, all of whom contributed the names of local individuals, groups, businesses, institutions, etc. that would be beneficial in aiding the library's project. While the library will not be utilizing all of these groups and individuals, some are necessary to enact the plan. In following through with Community Issue #1, the library would need to coordinate with at least three of the community groups and clubs to make the club fair worth attending. However, this would be done on the basis of asking all community groups and only the interested parties would need to coordinate.

As for the goal of Community Issue #2, the library would be relying on its resources, both in terms of staff and capital, unless otherwise stated in a more thorough plan for each specific event. However, the library would also need to tap into the Village Board and/or Chamber of Commerce calendar to ensure that there isn't another big event planned for the date of each event, as this would allow the library's event to have more draw within the community.

And in terms of Community Issue #3, this would again rely on the library's resources, both in terms of staff to help set up the space, design the programs, and order the books, as well as capital to purchase any new furniture or shelving units that might be needed.

Goals	Completion Time Frame	Individual(s) Responsible	Evaluating Success
Community Issue 1: Raise awareness for community clubs and organizations by hosting a club expo.	Meet to discuss the logistics and possible dates by March 2022. Expo will have been held by the end of 2023.	Library staff Friends members	At least three clubs/organizations sign up to participate. Clubs/organizations get at least 5 new members.
Community Issue 2: Combat lack of interest by hosting several gatherings.	Two gatherings will be hosted in 2022, more if COVID circumstances improve.	Library staff Library Board	At least two events hosted. At least 50 guests come to the events.
Community Issue 3: Get more young people involved in the library and community.	Meet to discuss possible ideas by end of May 2022.	Library staff Library Board Friends members	See increased usage by young people in the library.
Library Specific Issue: Obtain sustainable funding.	Meet to discuss ways to obtain funding by the end of the fiscal year in 2022.	Library Board	Have a plan to write a grant/proposal to obtain long-term funding.

Reviewing the Long-Range Plan

The document will be reviewed annually and revised every three years minimum.

References

Goldman, M. (2017). Strategies for sustainable funding: A metadata review of the independent library district model. *University of Washington Information School*. Retrieved from <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/41653>

New York State Education Department. (2021). Helpful information for meeting the minimum public library standards. Retrieved from <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/helpful/standard02.htm>

United States Census Bureau. (2019). 2019 population estimates: Granville village, New York. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/search-results.html?searchType=web&cssp=SERP&q=Granville%20village,%20NY>

United States Census Bureau. (2019). Small area income and poverty estimates. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saie/#/?map_geoSelector=sa_eusd&s_state=36&s_county=36115&s_year=2019&s_measures=sa_sd&s_district=3612450