

FAQ

Cheltenham Township Library System Citizens Committee CTLS CC

Q: What is the purpose of the committee?

A: The Citizen's Committee is charged with assessing the current four-branch system, investigating alternatives, and making recommendations to the Library Board based upon its data collection and analysis.

Q: How was the committee formed?

A: In October 2006, the Library Board announced the formation of a Citizen's Committee to assess the library system's current and future configuration based on recommendations included in the recently adopted Strategic Plan for 2006-2010. In November 2006, an application and selection process was announced through all township media and posted on the CTLS web site.

Q: How did the Library Board select committee members?

A: Citizen's Committee applicants were reviewed and candidates were subsequently interviewed by a liaison committee of three members the Library Board and the Director of the Library System. Committee candidates were selected by consensus of the liaison committee and were approved by the Library Board in March 2007.

Additionally, a "Request for Proposals" was issued on March 21, 2007 seeking a library consultant to assist the committee. Applicants were reviewed by the liaison committee of the Library Board and the final candidate, Richard Bowra was hired in May 2007.

Q: Who are the committee members?

A: The Citizen's Committee includes Kathleen Campbell, Emily Greenberg – Co-Chair, Katie Maher – Co-Chair, Steve McCarter, Daniel Norris, Natalie Simon.

The committee is supported by Ex-Officio Members Barbara Kotzin – President CTLS Library Board of Directors, Carrie Turner – Director, CTLS, Beverly Szalwinski – Recording Secretary and Richard Bowra – Library Strategic Planning and Building Consultant, who provide resources and information to the committee but do not participate in the deliberations or decisions of the committee.

Q: When does the committee meet?

A: The Citizen's Committee meets at least monthly with additional sub-committee meetings held in the interim as needed. The Committee schedule (as of November 2007) is as follows:

- April 19, 2007
- May 22, 2007
- June 13, 2007

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- July 16, 2007
- August 14, 2007
- September 19, 2007
- October 16, 2007
- November 14, 2007
- December 11, 2007
- January 9, 2008
- January 30, 2008
- February 20, 2008
- March 4, 2008

Q: Are the meetings open to the public?

A: The Citizen's Committee meetings are not open to the public. These meetings are not the same as board meetings. This is a separate entity that is doing research and gathering information on the issues of CTLS configuration. It reports to the CTLS Board, which is the public entity.

The Citizen's Committee is engaging the public in the process through surveying the public via a web and intercept instrument. The committee will be presenting its report to the CTLS Board of Directors at one of their regular meetings which the public is (as always) welcome to attend.

Q: How is the committee evaluating the current four-library system model?

A: The Citizen's Committee has been gathering information in various ways including tours of the CTLS facilities, tours of other public library facilities in PA and NJ, Friends and staff focus groups, review of library literature and journal articles, review of previous CTLS library planning and surveys, conducting a citizen survey and tapping the expertise of the library consultant regarding similar situations and planning projects.

Q: How was citizen feedback obtained?

A: The Citizen's Committee conducted focus group meetings with volunteer members of the Friends of the Library Boards of Directors and staff from all four libraries and conducted a citizen survey in October and November 2007.

Q: Can I participate on the focus groups?

A: The Citizen's Committee conducted focus group meetings with members of the Friends of the Library Board of Directors from all four libraries on Tuesday, August 14th at the Elkins Park Library from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Additionally, there were three focus groups held with CTLS library staff on Monday, July 16th throughout the day at several libraries.

At present, the committee has no plans for additional focus groups.

Q: Can I participate in the survey?

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A: The Citizen's Committee conducted a citizen survey in October and November 2007. Citizens interested in participating can use the link on the CTLS web site through 11/30/07. A print version of the survey can be reviewed on the CTLS web site and citizens are encouraged to provide comments and feedback to the committee using the "Contact Us" system on the CTLS web site.

Q: What alternatives are being considered?

A: The Citizen's Committee is evaluating the full range of configuration options available to CTLS including a continuation of the current four-library configuration with little or no change, undergoing significant upgrades and improvements to the current infrastructure, restructuring to two main libraries, consolidating to one central library with annexes and finally, creating one central library to serve the entire township.

Evaluation of these alternatives includes an assessment of the materials, programs and services provided by the library system that make it a vital part of the community. Consideration must also be given to innovations and opportunities and how we can be prepared to take advantage of all that a library can offer to its citizens today and in the future.

Q: When will the committee make its recommendation to the Library Board?

A: The Citizen's Committee anticipates making its final report and recommendation to the Library Board in March/April 2008.