

ing does not comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). The children's room in the basement is cramped, and meeting space, staff work areas, computer stations and outdoor parking spaces are inadequate or nonexistent. The building is sited on a very small lot with little room for expansion.

The results of a 2001 Community Needs Assessment survey provided the board with a good idea about what community members

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wanted in their library. It should have a larger, quiet reading area and more shelving to expand the book, audio-visual, DVD and books-on-tape collection.

There should be ample space for programs and meetings and more computer stations with Internet access. In addition, the library should be within easy walking distance of schools and local neighborhoods, be on the Advance Transit route and provide adequate parking for patrons. How could all this happen on less than a quarter acre?

Fortunately the empty lot right across Main Street from the current library, the former home of MacNamara Motors owned by Rite Aid Pharmacy, was up for sale. The 1.24-acre site was purchased by the library with Kilton funds in January 2003. Since that time, the Kilton Library Committee, made up of dozens of interested citizens, has met to discuss in more detail what the new library should be and what it should look like.

What has emerged is a very exciting vision that accomplishes more than the specific qualities identified in the library's needs assessment study. With room for a new building, a substantial green space and a parking area, the Kilton Library has the potential to be a cultural center for the city, an anchor institution to attract new business and revitalize the West Lebanon downtown. The location happens to be just a short walk away from the site of the old Red Cross pharmacy.

With leadership from the Kilton Committee, the library board hired the architectural firms Tappe Associates Inc., of Boston, and Saucier and Flynn of Lebanon, to help shape the vision for the new building and its surroundings. Subsequently, the architects have worked closely with the board, library staff and the Kilton Committee to create several building and landscape designs.

City residents are invited to stop by the Lebanon Library (next to the post office opposite Colburn Park) to see the latest architectural renderings and discover more about the exciting possibilities for this new library and community center.

KEVIN COBURN

The writer, a resident of West Lebanon, serves on the board of trustees of the West Lebanon Library.