

# Survey: Former library should be community center

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A task force with a mission of determining a new use for the city's library at Ocean and Hughes streets is recommending the building become a community recreation center, based on a survey of residents

and visitors, once a new library opens in the rehabilitated Franklin Street School.

The current library building is a converted Bell Telephone switching center in a neighborhood with homes and inns.

The task force was formed to gather information on how to repurpose

the existing library including Mary Notch, Ronnie Cohen, Daniel Magariel, Christine DiDonato and Rick Lundholm.

Chairing the task force was Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin. She said the task force met about six times in the past year.

Cohen said a survey was created from over 500 re-

sponses from residents, second home owners and visitors. She said 45.4% of respondents were year-round residents while 43% were second home owners.

"Definitely, the females were much more interested in responding at a rate of 69.2% as opposed to 28.2% male and again those of us who are up there in years, 61 plus, 58.2% responded and the next largest group is the 41- to 60-year-old response," Cohen said.

She thanked Cape May MAC (Museums + Arts + Culture) for helping distribute the library survey and Cape May's Director of Civic Affairs and Recreation Kacie Rattigan for compiling the information.

The number one response was using the former library for fitness classes followed by using the space for historical and musical programs, children, family, and senior programs.

Respondents also suggested using the building for author/lecture series, adult, and children's art



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The former Cape May branch of the Cape May County Library System will be vacant once the materials are moved to the new location at the renovated Franklin Street School.

classes, demolishing the building to create a parking lot, as a new location for the police station, selling the building, as a location to hold a film festival and for teen activities and game nights.

Cohen said discussions were held with Jody Alesandrine Jr., MAC's director and chief executive officer, and county Library

Director Andrea Orsini, who did not see any conflicts or redundancies using the former library for community programs and as an events space.

"There is a palpable need and I'd even say a demand for a community recreation center in Cape May for all ages and for all resident statuses," Magariel said.

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