

Emily M. Weiss. Local Government and the Public Library: A Case Study of the Creation of the Carrboro Cybrary. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2005. 43 pages. Advisor: Claudia Gollop

Public libraries provide important services to their communities; however, many communities do not receive sufficient public library services. This case study will examine one community, Carrboro, North Carolina, which advocated for increased library services through the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary, a small branch of the Orange County library system that focuses on providing access to Internet based resources. The author interviewed participants and leaders in the effort to create the Cybrary and analyzed town, county, and library task force documents to learn how community leaders successfully advocated for the Cybrary. This paper describes the effect of town/county relationships, what conflicts arose, and what factors influenced the community's success. One of the most significant findings was that the local government was as much a driving force as the public's desire to have a library. This study will be useful to other communities that want to advocate for increased library services.

Headings:

Cybraries / Case studies

Library-community relations / Case studies

Library-community relations / North Carolina

Public libraries / Relations with local government

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY: A CASE STUDY OF THE
CREATION OF THE CARRBORO CYBRARY

by
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A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Public libraries provide important services to their communities. However, many communities do not receive sufficient public library services, either because they do not have a library or because the existing library has limited hours and resources.

I became interested in communities that advocate for increased library services when I lived in Allston, Massachusetts. For years, a committed Friends group had worked to get a branch of the Boston Public Library in Allston. The branch opened shortly before I moved there and I was able to take advantage of its wonderful collection, helpful staff, and beautiful building. When I moved to Carrboro, North Carolina I learned that residents were undertaking an effort to open a Cybrary in downtown Carrboro. When a good friend who is an avid reader moved to rural Maine and wrote to me complaining about the dearth of library services in her town, I decided to examine this topic in my master's paper.

Hence, this case study of the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary. The author interviewed leaders and participants in the effort and examined documents that pertained to the effort. This case was especially interesting because the residents chose to advocate for a cybrary, a small branch library that focuses on providing access to Internet based materials, instead of a traditional library, and because much of the advocacy came from town officials. The support from town officials is in contrast to much of what appears in

library literature. Based on the review of the literature, it seems as though most times community members and Friends groups must convince town and county officials of the need for a new or expanded library.

By conducting this case study, the author continues the documentation of library services in Carrboro, which Neva K. Robinson began in 1995 with her master's paper, "The Carrboro Public Library: A Dream of the Community, A Reality Because of the Friends". Jennifer Ann Donaldson followed up with her master's paper, "A User Survey of the Carrboro Public Library", in 1996.

It is hoped that this study will be helpful to other communities that want to advocate for increased library services. This will be a useful and beneficial addition to library literature because most articles about new libraries are informal brief pieces written by a participant in the library building process. These pieces also lack depth.

Background

Carrboro is a small town in the Piedmont of North Carolina. According to the U.S. Census, its total population in 2000 was 16,782. 72.7% of its population is white, 13.5% is black or African American, 12.3% is Hispanic or Latino, and 5.1% is Asian. 68.5% of Carrboro residents are renters, which is higher than the national average of 33.8%. This is partially due to the town's close proximity to the University of North Carolina and the large number of students, visiting scholars and others who are in the area for a limited time. 60.9% of Carrboro residents have at least a bachelor's degree, while 24.4% of United States residents have at least a bachelor's degree.¹

Carrboro has a "council/manager form of city government"² in which "members of the Board of Aldermen make decisions and set policy to insure the safety, health,

attractiveness and economic and social well-being of the community".³ The town manager implements policies adopted by the mayor and board of aldermen.

The Carrboro Branch Library is part of the Hyconeechee Library System and the Orange County Public Library. The Hyconeechee Library System is composed of the Caswell County, Orange County, and Person County public libraries. From the 1950's to the 1970's, Carrboro had a small library which was primarily run by volunteers. From the 1940's to 1995 the Orange County Library Bookmobile served Carrboro communities.

The Carrboro Branch Library opened in 1995. It is located in the McDougle Middle School. In 1996, it became a branch of the Orange County Library and the Hyconeechee Library System. The Carrboro Branch Library is the result of years of dedicated advocacy by the Friends of the Carrboro Library. This library is a combined public library and school library media center. The Carrboro Branch operates after school hours and on the weekends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Issues relative to the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary are reflected in several areas of LIS literature: relations between public libraries and local government, strategic planning for public libraries, cybraries, and articles about towns that built new libraries. While this topic does not fit neatly into one category, these four topics help put the creation of the Cybrary in context. Unfortunately, little has been written about cybraries and much of the literature about local government relationships with public libraries is a bit dated.

Alphonse Trezza and Albert Halci summarize the relationship between local, state, and federal government and public libraries. While the article focuses primarily on methods to improve library services, its summary of state and local involvement was useful. Local government has the most impact on library services of all the branches of government⁴. They explain "In general, local government fulfills three broad essential functions: (1) it creates the public library and provides for its government; (2) it provides it with a source of income from public revenues; and (3) it provides a broad framework of regulations within which the local library must function".⁵

The literature indicates that local government officials do not understand the value of public libraries and that library directors and boards of trustees need to do a better job of demonstrating libraries' value. T. D. Webb writes, "...budget makers have

the genuinely difficult task of allocating funds to a service they don't understand and one whose social value is obscure".⁶ He suggests that libraries should partner with local government agencies and provide specialized information services to local government employees in order to prove the library's value. He argues that if government officials are able to see the value of library services, they will be more willing to increase library funding.

Virgil Blake conducted a study of seven directors of public libraries in medium-sized communities to determine whether a library director's level of political activity affects the amount of local government funding the director's library receives. He found that four out of the seven directors are politically active. "When local government support for public libraries is measured in either reported or constant dollars, the data from the seven medium-size urban communities over the three year period of this study support the contention that political activity on the part of public library directors is important to the level of support given the local public library".⁷

Later, Blake conducted a study of library directors and boards of trustees and municipal officials in a Northeastern state to determine how often library staff and supporters interact with government officials. He found that the two groups rarely interact and that library officials do not solicit input from local community groups when drawing up their library budgets. "In short, the library and its representatives do not seem to be deeply involved with other municipal officials".⁸ Blake suggests that library officials must increase contact with municipal officials in order to build library support and increase funding.

George D'Elia and Eleanor Jo Rodgers report the results of a Gallup poll that solicited 300 community opinion leaders' views of public libraries. "The objectives of this second survey were to determine which of the library's roles the opinion leaders considered to be important for their communities and how much they thought the community should spend on library services".⁹ Community opinion leaders ranked "formal education support center", "preschooler's door to learning", and "independent learning center"¹⁰ as the library's three top roles. The poll also assessed opinion leaders' support of library funding. A majority of leaders "answered that the community should spend more than \$20 per capita"¹¹. While the results may be a bit dated and are described by the authors as only "illustrative"¹², they provide a good introduction to public officials' opinions of public libraries.

Library strategic planning literature puts Orange County Library Services Task Force's work in context. In "Public Participation in Strategic Planning of Library Services", Saxton and Greiner outline the strategic planning process at Anaheim Public Library and give advice to other librarians who want to conduct successful strategic planning processes. Anaheim utilized a "Citizens' Advisory Committee", "Community Focus Groups", "Future Libraries Visioning Forum", and "Surveys and Comment Forms"¹³ to actively solicit input from community members. During the process, the authors realized the need to balance community desires with limited resources and they recommend four methods to help strike the balance: "maximize the level of public input", "engage staff at all levels in all stages of the process", "assess all input critically", and "use the plan as a valuable tool to assist in decision-making".¹⁴

Another area of library literature that is interesting and curious as it relates to the creation of the Cybrary is articles about communities that advocated for a new library. Most of the articles are informal descriptions of the process written by participants. In 1995, Neva Robinson wrote her master's paper about the process of creating the Carrboro Public Library. A thorough search of the library literature turned up no empirical studies of communities that advocate for a new library.

Neva Robinson's master's paper, "The Carrboro Public Library: A Dream of the Community, A Reality Because of the Friends" was the most useful in this research. In 1995, she interviewed seven members of the Friends of the Carrboro Library and examined their files and newspaper articles to create a chronological history of the creation of the Carrboro Public Library, now known as the Carrboro Branch Library. She found that, "Politics played a large part in Carrboro getting a library. The town doesn't have the financial resources to have an independent municipal library" and "The community has to really want the service, and then support it".¹⁵ Interviewees saw money as the primary obstacle to the creation of the library.

Robinson examined the history of Carrboro libraries. She found that Carrboro had a small community library in 1934. The Carrboro Civic Club managed the Carrboro Civic Club Public Library from 1950 to 1974, with some assistance from town government and Hyconeechee Regional Library. In 1974, the Civic Club attempted to turn the library over to town government, but negotiations were unsuccessful and the library closed in 1977.¹⁶ From the time library closed until 1995, Carrboro was served by Hyconeechee Regional Library's bookmobile.¹⁷

In 1988, plans for a Carrboro library were first proposed and a Friends group was established. According to Robinson, the Friends group's persistence was critical to the creation of the Carrboro branch library. They demonstrated that Carrboro residents needed and wanted a library, raised funds, advocated for local government funding, worked on site selection and library planning, and overcame many obstacles to open the library. The library's location is innovative—it is co-located in an elementary and middle school media center. In 1994, Carrboro and Orange County provided funding for the Carrboro library and the library finally opened in May 1995.

The non-research based articles written by participants in library building projects were also useful. Three of the four libraries I read about worked within their library system to build the new library. With the exception of the towns of New Belvedere-Tiburon, California, which left the Marin County system and created an independent library system, building efforts were similar.¹⁸ In all of these situations, Friends groups or a library foundation raised funds through book sales, town dinners, and other fundraisers. Libraries applied for grants and LSCA funding. Friends groups and community members lobbied town and county government for funding. One effort actually involved volunteers in the building the library.

The literature shows the importance of private and community fundraising for new and expanded libraries. All four libraries focused their efforts on fundraising and building community support. The residents of northeast New Hanover County, North Carolina, "an affluent area"¹⁹ formed the Northeast Library Action Committee (NELAC) to advocate for a new library in northeast Wilmington. After a couple of setbacks, NELAC convinced the New Hanover County library director and the county

commissioners to purchase a building that formerly housed a supermarket. The commissioners required library supporters to raise \$1 million in private funds. The local Friends group and NELAC held small and large fundraisers including soliciting corporate grants, raffles, and "Treasure Chest" sales, and ultimately raised more than \$1 million, without hiring an outside fundraising director. The county commissioners were initially skeptical, but were won over by the Friends' fundraising success.

The new Redwood Falls, Minnesota library was funded entirely by \$1.8 million in donations. The library created the Redwood Area Library Foundation (RALF) to spearhead fundraising efforts. Fundraising was initially very slow, but received a boost from an anonymous challenge grant. As in Wilmington, RALF choose not to hire a professional fundraiser. Funds came from a mix of sales and activities and grants from businesses.²⁰

Philomath, Oregon residents constructed their own new library building with a "barn raising approach".²¹ A library building committee created a plan for the library. Philomath received a Library Services and Construction Act grant for the new library. After some initial problems, a committee was created to direct fundraising. The town had to get a special exemption from an LSCA requirement that anyone who worked on the project be paid a minimum wage, so that volunteers could construct the library. The author lists several reasons why this effort was successful: "1. A determined community and supportive library district. 2. A core group willing to adjust to the varying needs of the project over time, and willing to fine-tune individual roles to make sure that things continue to get done. 3. Several committed individuals fulfilling the roles of project

manager, fundraising manager, and most important construction manager/project foreman, are vital to the completion of the project".²²

As I mentioned previously, the towns of New Belvedere-Tiburon, California left the Marin County system and created an independent library system.²³ The two towns originally planned to work with Marin County to open a new library, but when it became obvious that Marin County would be unable to help as quickly as the communities wanted, New Belvedere-Tiburon chose to leave the Marin County system and create an independent community library. Once the separation became final, the community began intensive fundraising, resulting in \$2.4 million for the new library. They "solicited private funds through a major appeal, applied for grants from local foundations and trusts, and campaigned for a bond issue for a parcel tax."²⁴ "The local community has total autonomy in making decisions about local library services".²⁵

Very few cybraries exist. As a result, very little has been written about opening and maintaining a cybrary. The only relevant article found described the Eastside Cybrary Connection, which is a branch of the Riverside, California Public Library. "The ultimate goal of the Eastside Cybrary project is to become a life-long learning and information center for children and their families. The strategy for achieving this goal is to create a new collaborative after-school environment with contributions from the public library, local academic institutions, and community-based organizations".²⁶ Riverside Public Library created this branch and the Cybrary heavily relies on community partnerships. It received Community Development Block Grant and Library Services and Technology Act funds and donations from local businesses, the Friends of the Library, and community foundations. Denny argues that this new and innovative type of library

redefines its librarians' roles. She describes how the librarian acts as "outreach coordinator...fund-raiser...instructor...volunteer recruiter...professional supervisor...youth services coordinator...access services coordinator".²⁷

Based on the review of the relevant literature, the Carrboro Cybrary is a unique situation. It exists because it had strong support from town and county officials, unlike libraries that had to work hard to build support. Cybrary supporters did not need to fundraise, and the planning process did not include extensive public input.

METHODOLOGY

A case study of the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary was conducted. The author utilized qualitative interviews and analysis of relevant documents to describe the events that led to the opening of the Carrboro Cybrary. Babbie describes a case study as "the in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon".²⁸

The author conducted qualitative interviews with four Orange County residents who were active in the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary. "A qualitative interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent".²⁹ Interviews took between 20 and 45 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

One participant was unable to meet in person, so she was e-mailed the list of questions which answered and sent the responses back. Although the participant did not provide the amount of detail that she would have provided in an in-person interview, the information she shared was useful.

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants. The Carrboro cybrarian and a UNC School of Information and Library Science professor who chaired the 2004 Orange County Library Services Task Force identified active participants in the Cybrary creation whom should be interviewed. Eight people were asked to participate in the

study. Four (50%) agreed to do so. In addition, one person was interviewed because a study participant suggested she would have useful information.

An interview schedule was used to guide the interviews. Interview schedules are a list of questions that the researcher wanted to ask during the interview. This method allowed the researcher to elicit much information and allow for individual variations in responses.³⁰ Because this researcher has little experience in qualitative interviewing, the interview schedule consisted of detailed questions that insured that all areas were covered.

The University of North Carolina's Institutional Review Board approved the study (approval number LIBS 05-016). Each participant signed a consent form notifying her of her rights. Interview recordings and transcripts do not identify participants by name, to maintain confidentiality.

Interview questions varied based on the participant's role. Two interview schedules were created, "Interview Schedule for Leaders", and "Interview Schedule for Participants" (see appendix A and B). Because participants' roles were not as clear cut as anticipated, both interview schedules were used. Interviews focused on how participants chose to work towards a Cybrary, the events leading up to the opening of the Cybrary, how they worked with county government officials, which activities they undertook, why they became involved, and what kept them involved.

Interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word and coded. Themes that emerged from the transcripts were identified, particularly those relating to the process that led to the Cybrary, town/county relations, reasons for their success, and conflicts and roadblocks that occurred.

Additionally, documents pertaining to the creation of the Carrboro Cybrary were analyzed, specifically meeting minutes and related documents of the 2004 Orange County Library Services Task Force (provided by the chair of the task force), recommendations of the 2001 Library Services Task Force and the Carrboro Library Work Group, newspaper articles, and town and county documents and meeting minutes. Documents were coded using the same categories used to code the interviews.

Coded interviews and documents were analyzed to create a detailed description of the process of creating the library and the reasons for success, town/county relations, and roadblocks and conflicts that occurred.

There are several advantages to this method. Qualitative interviews allowed for a better understanding of an event that already happened. By interviewing several participants, the researcher heard several perspectives on what happened. Analyzing related documents supplemented and clarified the information obtained from interviews.

Conducting interviews did have a few disadvantages. Each participant had a different perspective on the event and it was difficult to figure out which depiction is most accurate. Participants may not have been completely truthful with the researcher. Their recollections of events may not have been completely accurate because of the passage of time.

RESULTS

Study Participants

Initially the researcher requested interviews from eight people who were involved in the creation of the Cybrary, four of whom agreed to be interviewed. An additional person was interviewed because a participant suggested that she should be interviewed. Of these five people, two were members of the Friends of the Carrboro Library. One was an alderman in Carrboro, one was a staff person for the Orange County Library administration, and one was a member of the Chapel Hill Carrboro School Board. All were female.

The Inspiration for the Carrboro Cybrary

The story of the Cybrary begins with the Carrboro Branch Library, which opened in 1995 as the Carrboro Public Library. In 1996 it became a branch of the Hyconeechee Regional Library System and the Orange County Library System after years of work by the Friends of the Carrboro Library. The library is co-located with the McDougle School's media center, which serves elementary and middle school students. According to one participant in that effort who was also involved in the Cybrary, "What we [Friends of the Carrboro Library] were for other parts of the county, were an inspiration".

The school/library combination has limited what services the library may provide.

Because the library is located in a school, it cannot provide services to the public during school hours. A member of the Friends noted, "So this library has basically struggled, because of image, perception, being in the middle of a school. We have always tried to differentiate from the school".

Because of the limits on library services at McDougle, the Friends of the Carrboro Library expressed interest in expanding services in a downtown location. On March 21, 1998, the Friends of the Carrboro Library wrote to the Town of Carrboro's Space Planning Committee to request that the Space Planning Committee consider "that the Library's initial presence be a staffed service point offering two services: access to the public library catalog and to the Internet [and] site for Friends of the Library's ongoing Book Sale" in the Carrboro Baptist Church/Community Center.³¹ This request was not approved at the time.

The idea for the Cybrary came from town officials and was not the result of a grassroots effort. One participant noted that efforts were "Not driven by the people".

The proposed placement of the Cybrary in Carrboro's Century Center came from a member of Carrboro's Board of Aldermen. She knew that Carrboro residents desired a downtown library, but that it would be difficult to get a freestanding library built downtown. She was inspired by a cybrary branch of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg county library system.

"And they were talking about creating a library that was really computers instead of a print collection...So I thought this would be a good way to kind of get a foot in the door to get some library service extended to downtown Carrboro, by saying that Orange County doesn't have to commit right away to a building and a full scale collection, but they could put a computer based collection in downtown Carrboro that would connect to NCLIVE and could connect to Orange County libraries and provide that place in downtown Carrboro".

She felt that model could be a way to "also find some real opportunities for partnerships that would make it possible for the county to provide library services in a fairly large county where the population is a little spread out in the northern part particularly, so you may not have the density that justifies putting branch libraries all over the place".

From Idea to Reality: The Process of Creating the Cybrary

The Cybrary idea first gained support in the 2001 Orange County Library Services Task Force. A task force member succinctly described the Cybrary creation: "It came strictly out of the first task force and it was implemented out of the second Carrboro Library Work Group".

The 2001 Library Services Task Force discussed putting a cybrary in the Carrboro Century Center. A member of the 2001 Library Services Task Force mentioned that when the task force was meeting, the Century Center was being renovated and "we [the task force] discussed that that would be a good way to provide extended services to those people who were walking through Carrboro and so forth". The 2001 Library Services Task Force Report included the following recommendation:

"The Carrboro Public Library, a branch of the Orange County Library, proposes to offer services in the Carrboro Century Center. This service will be called the Carrboro Public Library – Cybrary. The Cybrary will offer primarily Internet access to NCLIVE resources and other World Wide Web based resources. It is not anticipated that this site will house a collection but instead will provide quick access to collections held at the McDougle and Hillsborough libraries".³²

The task force further proposed that the McDougle librarian would oversee the Cybrary and that the Carrboro Board of Aldermen would provide space for the cybrary rent-free as well as the computers and everything needed to connect the computers to the Internet. The task force also recommended that the county open branches in the northern and

southern parts of the county simultaneously to equalize access and "offering Saturday hours, as well as uniformity of evening service hours" at Carrboro Branch Library.³³

The town alderman and the mayor reserved a room in the Century Center for the Cybrary and made sure that room had extra outlets, network connections, and the infrastructure needed to install computers. The alderman noted "...I think it was [the mayor of Carrboro] and I both had to argue strongly and guard that space for the future Cybrary because we were getting requests to rent it and use it for other things".

According to two study participants, in 2003 the Friends of the Carrboro Library successfully held up county funding for the Cybrary. The Friends wanted funding for more hours at McDougle and were concerned that the Cybrary would take funding away from McDougle. Cybrary proponents were upset by the Friends' actions.

The Orange County Board of Commissioners' "Resolution to Establish a Carrboro Library Work Group" describes the situation this way:

"Whereas, upon hearing and receiving input from community stakeholders regarding the 'Cybrary' proposal and its possible impact on the Carrboro Branch during budget deliberations, the Board decided to reserve the funding (estimated at \$39,406) associated with the start up of a 'Cybrary', and given the degree of public interest, to consider appointment of a representative work group that could explore issues and opportunities connected with a library presence in Carrboro".³⁴

As described in the above resolution, The Carrboro Library Work Group was created by the Orange County Board of Commissioners in response to these concerns in September 2003 "to examine issues and opportunities relative to the current Carrboro Branch Library (at McDougle) as well as the creation of a 'Cybrary' at the Carrboro Century Center".³⁵ The group met monthly from November, 2003 to March, 2004. One of the work group participants had this to say about the work group's purpose: "...mainly what the task force was doing was seeing how the Cybrary fit in with the Carrboro

Library at McDougale and potentially a freestanding library. But a lot of the details had already been worked out. We were kind of developing a vision—would we continue to have a library at McDougale? What are we going to do about it for the time being?"

Members of the Carrboro Library Work Group were recruited. "It wasn't out for volunteers, because by the time we had pretty much put together the group based on the past participation...we were trying to accomplish something in a shorter period of time. So this worked out to be in our best interests".

One member participated in the work group because "I wanted to understand how the Cybrary tied in with the town and the county's long vision for creating a freestanding library, to be sure the needs of the existing library were not being neglected and the funds weren't decreased as the result of adding a new library space".

The group worked well together. Participants who were interviewed spoke positively about the work group. They said it worked "quickly, efficiently". One said, "we didn't mess around". Another noted, "And it was a quick six month work group so it worked fast. So there was no time for slacking". Another participant explained, "It was a fascinating process to see different groups and their needs and desires mesh together into a single recommendation".

The Work Group recommended

"that the Cybrary in the Carrboro Century Center should be put into operation as soon as possible. The agreements to implement this service that the Orange County Commissioners and Carrboro Board of Aldermen approved in the current year's budgets should be followed".³⁶

The Work Group also recommended a \$17,000 increase in funds for the Carrboro Branch Library for extended hours and \$46,000 for the Cybrary (this money was already approved by the Orange County Board of Commissioners).

After county and town funding was approved, much had to be done to prepare the Cybrary for opening day. The Orange County Public Library staff person explained, "We then followed up by providing the Cybrary. And basically we did all of it prior to the actual hiring of the Cybrary librarian, so [the Orange County library director] and I took on the major role of actually purchasing, establishing, setting up, creating that area. So we had a big role in that".

Six years after the Friends first proposed expanding the Carrboro Public Library's services, the Cybrary opened on August 30, 2004. While the Cybrary has a small lending collection, a book swap, and magazines and newspapers, its focus is on computers. Its five computers give visitors access to a wealth of databases through NCLIVE, the Orange County Library catalog, other Internet resources, as well as programs such as Microsoft Office.

Still, the process was not over. In 2004, the Orange County Board of Commissioners realized that the county needed to continue the work of the 2001 Library Task Force to develop a strategic plan for providing library services in Orange County. On January 26, 2004 the Board of County Commissioners charged the 2004 Library Task Force

"To review the Library Services Task Force Report submitted to the BOCC in November 2001 and to subsequently make recommendations to improve library services/facilities in Orange County specifically related to the expansion of the Central Library in Hillsborough and the branch library in Carrboro".³⁷

One of the areas suggested for study was "possibly combine the Carrboro Library operation of a cybrary and the McDougle Branch Library".³⁸

The task force took up issues that the Carrboro Library Work Group discussed. On June 7, the Task Force endorsed two of the Carrboro Library Work Group's

recommendations for "1) extended hours and associated costs [at McDougale], and 2) implementation of the Cybrary in Carrboro Century Center".³⁹

The Future of Public Libraries in Carrboro

The Cybrary is not the final goal, instead, it is a step toward building a freestanding Orange County branch library in downtown Carrboro. In 2003, Carrboro citizens expressed a desire for a downtown library at a charrette held by Weaver Street Market, the local food co-op. "They wanted an accessible library with proper library hours in the middle of Carrboro, and anything else was secondary to that...I suppose having the Cybrary there just puts the foot in the door for a dialogue".

All the participants interviewed agreed that the Cybrary is a "stepping stone". Said one participant, "My hope is that it doesn't change too much more and that we open the stand alone library within a reasonable amount of time, and that we don't spend too much time trying to work within this small eight, nine hundred square foot facility". Another said "... what I really want to see is there to be a move as quickly as possible, so that the moneys in the Cybrary are put to good use to developing a down town library, so we can merge with it and be down there. We all want to be downtown".

In 2004, the Carrboro Library Work Group recommended

" to the Orange County Commissioners that planning go forward for a free-standing branch of the Orange County Library System in downtown Carrboro and that both the county and the town of Carrboro incorporate this concept into their long-range planning".⁴⁰

The 2004 Library Services Task Force supported the Work Group's recommendation.

The appendix to the Task Force's final report states:

"That the Orange County Public Library combine the collections, staff, and services presently located at McDougale Middle School and the Century Center, and establish one branch library facility to serve the Town of Carrboro, western unincorporated areas of the Chapel Hill Township, and the southern area of Bingham Township. It is estimated that given the current 20-year population projections, a newly constructed facility of 25,000 square feet would be needed".

The commentary accompanying the recommendation provides a rationale for it.

"Although the present facilities are innovative approaches to addressing critical needs for library services, access and resources are limited".⁴¹

One study participant expressed interest in expanding outreach and services at the Cybrary. "I had visions, that the Cybrary, while it doesn't have a collection of its own could be like a direct link to Orange County library so people might be able to request something from the Orange County library and it be picked up at the Cybrary very quickly, which was another idea I saw in Charlotte". She also said "... I think it exceeds the vision in terms of what it can do in the hours that it is open. I can imagine that a whole lot more could be done as we can expand the staffing, the hours that it's open and we could reach new constituencies".

In spite of public support for a freestanding Carrboro library, funding will be a major issue. "During his review of the April 2004 Carrboro Library Workgroup recommendations, [an Orange County Commissioner] emphasized the fact that the Commissioners are not able to make any financial commitments to a free-standing Carrboro Branch Library at this point. This includes siting a location or retrofitting buildings or any other financial obligations."⁴² A work group participant observed that "There are a lot of roadblocks for the free standing library, the most significant of which is who is going to pay for it... how to fund a library in Carrboro, was not resolved and is

a pretty major issue ". Another participant noted, "What we are really hoping now, and the second committee...came out saying the county needs to put a library on its next bond issue for downtown Carrboro. And that's where we all come together and that's what I hope we can all focus on". The Friends of the Carrboro Library is also interested in getting "some kind of capital campaign going".

Town and County Government Relationships

Successful relationships between town and county government were crucial to this endeavor. As mentioned before, the Cybrary was the idea of one Carrboro alderman, and town and county officials were very supportive. "Because the county commissioners and the board of aldermen both put their support behind this and worked hard on it and then that the community as a whole was supportive of it too."

One study participant commented, "I also think that is like the first partnership between a town and the county, at least that I've heard about. Especially in library services. I think that was a real win-win as well. I think that the people who were on board in the town make it work". She also said, "... the town board members and staff members and the county staff and commissioners believed in it".

Another participant described the positive town/county relationship. "The county commissioners themselves, [the Orange County library director], and some of the friends were supportive too". "[One Orange County commissioner] particularly was there from the start, and after our first county wide task force the county commissioners committed to funding this, so we had support from them as a group in the beginning".

One study participant has a more critical view of the situation. She said, "It's their duty to really find us land and build the library or it's the duty of the town and county

together. The town doesn't see it as its duty. It's doing its duty, it's got its facility down there, basically, it provides the computers, but the personnel is always the most expensive". She feels that county's branch libraries have been forced to compete against each other for resources because the county has not provided enough funding. This competition "has marred sharing and marred proper relations between the various support groups".

Orange County's unique library funding situation complicates funding requests. Orange County has a county library system and participates in a regional library system, but Chapel Hill, which is part of Orange County, has its own municipal library. According to one participant, this causes confusion among library supporters because "there was a lot of confusion in Carrboro about who funds libraries and where the funding should come from".

Conflicts and Roadblocks

As described above, the creation of the Cybrary was, for the most part, non-controversial and supported by town and county leaders. The major conflict occurred because of concerns about equitable distribution of resources between the Carrboro Branch Library and the proposed Cybrary. The Friends of the Carrboro Library were concerned that the Cybrary was receiving funds from the town, when the Carrboro Branch Library had difficulty securing town funds in the past.

One Friends member describes the Friends' feelings toward the Cybrary as "there has always been ambivalence here, because we always wanted to increase our hours here, and so the Cybrary was always seen as something with competing elements here". The Friends member was also concerned that "ground rules for the future of how the Carrboro

Public Library would proceed" had not been adequately addressed. She also said, "...we want to work with the Cybrary, that's not an issue".

One Cybrary supporter commented on the funding dispute: "It was an unusual situation that the roadblocks were coming mostly from the Friends of the Carrboro Library. To have the both of the governmental agencies ready to put up the money and get it started and to have it delayed by the Friends group was a major roadblock. Other roadblocks, no I can't think of any". When asked if there was anything she would have done differently, she replied "I would have tried to strategize more about how to bring the Friends group over to being supporters".

The 2004 Library Services Task Force discussed competition for funding. At the June 7 meeting, a Friends member requested that the task force recommend increased funding for the Carrboro Branch Library. According to the meeting minutes, the Orange County Library director, "reminded the group that the Cybrary is opening to compliment the services at McDougle, not compete in services. The Friends member said she, too, thought they could be mutually supportive, especially if they were open at the same time"⁴³.

The task force's consultant commented on "competitive tension" in Carrboro in her OCPL long range library facility planning through 2025 document.

"The progress made in the last several years to extend and improve services to the Town of Carrboro has been the result of approaches from Carrboro residents directly to the Board of Commissioners. Although the resulting services are under the auspices of the Orange County Library administration, a competitive tension appears to have developed that could interfere with library progress overall if the County does not assume a more comprehensive approach to library service and facility development".⁴⁴

With the exception of the funding dispute, roadblocks were minor. One participant in the Carrboro Library Work Group mentioned that the location of the Cybrary and the location of the book drop were the only real issues that came up "I don't remember anything being major. Just the room and where to put the book drop".

"Having the joint group and partnership in that meeting all of the different members, it was really easy to work through barriers".

Why the Cybrary Supporters were Successful

The participants interviewed indicated that the Cybrary's success was due to the partnerships they established among local government officials and the town's and county's commitment to the project.

"The most important thing I think was the interest on the part of [one Orange County commissioner] and [the mayor of Carrboro] and the fact that, the Friends group was helpful in bringing this focus on a desire for library services in downtown Carrboro...A number of people turned out [at the charrettes], indicated that there was a lot of interest in having a library, so I think that gave us a base of public support...Looking at how library services were provided throughout the county, gave us some justification for a need for the county to help provide library services in Carrboro, that it was a fairly underserved area and then it was just a kind of combination of my interest and expertise coming together with [the Orange County commissioner's] interest and expertise and [the mayor of Carrboro's vision for what downtown Carrboro should be like".

One reason for their success may have been that the Cybrary was not the supporters' ultimate goal. "And I think because not only did we say this is the vision of the Cybrary, this is how we are going to do it, this is how much money we are going to provide, but there is also that impending vision of the future, that it will be a stand alone library in Carrboro, all of this will be combined in one. So I guess the thought that this will not be the stopping point."

It also helped that one of the town leaders is a librarian. She said,

"I think it was right constellation of things. Since I am an elected official but I am a librarian, I knew the language, I knew how to talk about, I knew what it meant to start a library and what would be involved and I knew something about where the funding for public libraries comes from...I think it was a fortunate time that I was in a position as an elected official with library science expertise that could help push it through, but that's probably an unusual situation. I think it takes community leadership and community support."

Additionally, the task forces and work group worked well together. One participant in the work group felt the group was successful because "We were successful in coming together with one unified recommendation".

DISCUSSION

The Carrboro Cybrary endeavor is different from other library building projects in several ways. Carrboro residents supported the idea of a downtown library. The Friends of the Carrboro Library started the conversation about library services in Carrboro when they opened the Carrboro Branch Library and started the discussion about library services downtown after the branch opened in the McDougale School. A town alderman, who is also a librarian, came up with the idea of the Cybrary and was strongly committed to opening it. County officials came on board pretty quickly. Because town and county leaders supported the idea there was no need for a grassroots campaign to build support. The town was fortunate to have space available in their community center for the Cybrary. Their contribution of rent-free space, computers, and everything necessary to connect the computers to the Internet was important to the opening of the Cybrary. This straightforward process stands in contrast to library building projects in other towns where library supporters must work to convince town and county officials of the necessity of library services.

It is also very different from the events that led to the opening of the Carrboro Branch Library. The Branch Library is the result of a grassroots campaign and fundraising by the Friends of the Carrboro Library, while the Cybrary efforts were led by

town officials. No private fundraising was required to open the Cybrary. It took eight years to open the Carrboro Branch Library, while the Cybrary opened six years after the Friends of the Library requested that the town provide space for library services in the future Century Center.

Carrboro is also unique because the town chose to open a Cybrary, which mainly provides access to Internet resources, instead of a traditional library. As one participant said, this may be a model for other county library systems that need to provide services to a population that is scattered geographically and only has limited resources available. The Cybrary is not the final goal, instead it is a step toward a freestanding library in downtown Carrboro.

Each participant interviewed had a unique perspective on the creation of the Cybrary. The author has attempted to present everyone's views fairly. In the past, there have been misunderstandings between library supporters in Carrboro, but the supporters seem committed to working together toward the common goal of a freestanding library in downtown Carrboro.

This research has a couple of shortcomings. Because of time constraints, only five people were interviewed and not every document relating to the creation of the Cybrary was analyzed. While all participants were involved in the Cybrary, three were supportive and two were more ambivalent. Because the majority was supportive, the results may be biased toward their point of view. The author's understanding of the creation of the Cybrary may have been different if information was obtained from more participants.

NOTES

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "American Fact Finder Fact Sheet for Carrboro town, North Carolina."
- ² Town of Carrboro. "Mayor and Board of Aldermen." Town of Carrboro.
- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ Trezza, Alphonse F. and Albert Halci. "The Role of State and Local Governments.", 229.
- ⁵ Ibid, 230-1
- ⁶ Webb, T.D. "Cooperation in the Public Service Institution: The Public Library and the Local Governmental Structure.", 13.
- ⁷ Blake, Virgil L.P. "Joining City Hall: Political Activism and Library Budgets.", 26.
- ⁸ Blake, Virgil L.P. "Library and Municipal Officials: The Great Divide.", 30.
- ⁹ D'Elia, George and Eleanor Jo Rodger. "The Roles of the Public Library in the Community: The Results of a Gallup Poll of Community Opinion Leaders.", 94.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 95.
- ¹¹ Ibid, 97.
- ¹² Ibid, 94.
- ¹³ Saxton, Matthew L. and Ruth D. Greiner. "Public Participation in Strategic Planning of Library Services: Soliciting, Assessing, and Balancing Community and Staff Input.", 127.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 131.
- ¹⁵ Robinson, Neva K. "The Carrboro Public Library: A Dream of the Community, A Reality Because of the Friends.", 5.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 10-11.

¹⁷ Ibid, 15.

¹⁸ Mazzolini, Deborah. "A Patron-Owned Library: How Residents of Two Communities in California Built Their Own Independent Library.", 360.

¹⁹ Paynter, David M. "Building Libraries, Building Community: The Wilmington Experience.", 38.

²⁰ Fuhr, Sandra. "Small-Town Dreamers Build \$1.8-Million Community Library.", 36.

²¹ Johnston, Ray. "Helping Hands: Volunteers Build a New Library.", 26.

²² Ibid, 28.

²³ Mazzolini, Deborah. "A Patron-Owned Library: How Residents of Two Communities in California Built Their Own Independent Library." , 360.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Denny, Carolyn A. K. "Redefining Librarianship: The Case of the Eastside Cybrary Connection." , 208.

²⁷ Ibid, 209.

²⁸ Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research* 10th ed. , 293.

²⁹ Ibid, 300.

³⁰ Berry, Dr. Rita S. Y. "Collecting Data by In-Depth Interviewing"

³¹ Daniel, Evelyn, Karen Long, and Jake Jehrer. Letter to Chair, Space Planning Committee, Town of Carrboro. March 21, 1998.

³² Library Services Task Force. 2001 Library Services Task Report. November 2001,7

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Orange County Board of Commissioners. *Orange County Board of Commissioners Resolution To Establish a Carrboro Library Workgroup.*

³⁵ Orange County Board of Commissioners. *Orange County Board of Commissioners Action Agenda Item.* April 20, 2004

³⁶ McDuffee, Diana. Memo to Orange County Commissioners. Subject: Report of Carrboro Library Work Group. April 6, 2004.

³⁷ Orange County Board of Commissioners. *Orange County Board of Commissioners Action Agenda Item*. January 26, 2004.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Orange County Library Services Task Force Reconvened 2004. Minutes. June 7, 2004, 3.

⁴⁰ Carrboro Library Work Group. Vision for a Orange County Branch Library in Downtown Carrboro.

⁴¹ Gaddis, Dale. Orange County Public Library Long-Range Library Facility Planning Through 2025. September 2004., 17.

⁴² Orange County Library Services Task Force Reconvened 2004. Minutes. May 18, 2004, 1.

⁴³ Orange County Library Services Task Force Reconvened 2004. Minutes., June 7, 2004, 3.

⁴⁴ Gaddis, Dale. Orange County Public Library Long-Range Library Facility Planning Through 2025. September 2004, 8.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule for Leaders

Interview Number: _____

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

End Time: _____

Location: _____

1. Why did you decide to push for a "Cybrary"?

a. Was the "Cybrary" always a goal?

b. When did you select that goal?

c. How did you select that goal?

2. Tell me about the events that led up to the creation of the Cybrary.

3. Tell me about your role in the Cybrary efforts.

a. What kept you involved?

4. What activities did the Cybrary advocates carry out?

a. What was the most important activity?

b. Did you fundraise? If yes, What type of fundraising did you do?

5. What activities did you take part in? What tasks did you complete?

a. How much time per month did you spend on Cybrary activities?

7. Did you actively recruit supporters and volunteers?

8. Did Carrboro residents always support the Cybrary?

9. Did you use the press to build support?

a. How?

10. What roadblocks came up?

a. How did you overcome them?

11. Did you get advice from anyone outside the group of Cybrary advocates?

a. Who?

b. What did they suggest?

12. What did you do to gain support from local/county officials?

13. What was your relationship with local/county government officials like?

14. When did you get backing from county government?

15. Does the new Cybrary match your vision?

16. Why do you think you were ultimately successful?

a. What contributed to your success?

b. What was the most important thing?

17. What would you do differently?

18. Is the Cybrary your ultimate goal?

a. Why or why not?

19. Who else should I speak with?

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule for Participants

Interview Number: _____

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

End Time: _____

Location: _____

1. When did you become involved in the efforts for a new library?

a. How did you find out about it?

b. How did you become involved?

c. Why did you become involved?

2. Tell me about your role in the Cybrary efforts.

3. What activities did you take part in? What tasks did you complete?

a. How much time per month did you spend on Cybrary activities?

4. How were the Cybrary advocates organized?

a. Who were the leaders?

5. What kept you involved?

6. Why do you think you were ultimately successful?

a. What activities were especially successful?

7. Is the Cybrary your ultimate goal?

a. Why or why not?

8. Who else should I speak with?