

## **Strategic Plan Takes Shape for the Franklin Lakes Library**

**October 24, 2011** - Since June of this year, the Board of Trustees of the Franklin Lakes Library has been completing a strategic plan for the library. This is important to the future needs of the library and is a required process under a new law governing any transfer of excess funds from a library to a town. The Board engaged a library consulting firm to help develop the plan in accordance with guidance from the NJ State Librarian.

The consultants conducted surveys, met with focus groups and held town hall meetings of diverse groups of Franklin Lakes residents. Input from each group is vital in preparing the strategic plan. Through these interactions, we heard the desire for continued investment in technology and opinions on improving the use of library space.

The library has become so much more than a warehouse for books. Young people are driving change, and their parents and grandparents desire to keep up. We need to provide not only the materials wanted by our residents, but also the new formats and the training to use them. When our plan is complete, it will be driven by this input. We assure you that a constant will be our liberal hours for access to the library, a friendly, knowledgeable staff, and a safe and beautifully maintained building.

As part of the strategic plan, our capital improvement plan, in place since 2004, is being updated, and in addition to technology and space initiatives, will include safety considerations. You will soon see a canopy in front of our handicapped parking area. As beautiful as the building is, it has not been without structural problems, and proper procedures are followed to correct potential problems. All investments are carefully considered with an in depth review process by our Board.

In 2001, when the Board approached the town council about renovating the library, the project was green lighted on condition that the library provide funds to keep a two-story 22,000 square foot building well-maintained, with an admonition not to ask for funds for future library needs. The Board is proud of its accomplishment in building a fine library through state aid, a vigorous Library Foundation and a one-time agreement with the town for capital fund monies. The Board understands the new law regarding excess funds, engaged professional advisors, met with the town council, and stands firmly on the side of the process we are following. The process is detailed, but quite clearly defined, and our timeline, given to the council months ago, is on track. We will soon be voting on our strategic plan and forwarding it to the State Librarian who is the only person able to approve any transfer of excess funds. If any step of the process is unsatisfactory to the State Librarian, a transfer cannot take place. We wish to assure our patrons that your fellow taxpayers, seven volunteers in all, are industrious and responsible stewards of your library. We are library users; we come from the finance, legal and library science worlds, and we have deep roots in our community. We thank you for being such a great library town, where two-thirds of the residents hold a library card. We look forward to sharing our plan for the future library with you.