

05/07/2008

Saugerties voters OK library expansion

By Ariel Zangla , Freeman staff

SAUGERTIES - The adoption of a \$7 million referendum to expand the Saugerties Public Library was met with loud cheers and clapping Wednesday night even before the final vote tally was announced.

The referendum was approved, 1,272-812, clearing the way for the library to move forward with plans to expand its facilities and make them handicapped-accessible.

Through the project, 8,365 square feet will be added to the library building at 91 Washington Ave. in the village, bringing its total space to 13,162 square feet.

The library, built in 1915, already has purchased the properties at 93 Washington Ave. and 3 Division St. to make the expansion of the existing two-story building possible. The library board also is working with the Village Board to turn Division Street into a one-way street as a way to provide additional parking for the library.

The expanded facility will offer a new street-level entrance on the main floor, a public meeting space that can seat 90 people, an expanded media collection and a teen area with collection space and computer stations, among other amenities.

"We're just overwhelmed and so appreciative that the community has come out in support of this wonderful project," library board President Elizabeth Hernandez said Wednesday night. She said construction of the expansion would begin next spring and take approximately a year to complete.

Hernandez said the library planned to have construction of its new wing completed first so operations could move there while the existing building is renovated. There also is a contingency plan in place should the library have to move its collection and operations temporarily, she said.

Library Director Jessica Serrano said she was pleased the referendum passed because it means more people will be able to use the library and the facility will be able to offer more programs and services.

"I'm ecstatic," Serrano said. "It's been a long time coming."

The project will be financed with a 25-year bond through the town, costing the average library district property owner approximately \$67 per year on a home assessed at \$200,000.