

# **How can our Library best serve the residents and visitors of Madison? A community conversation on the future of the Madison Library**

**Hosted by  
Madison Library**



**August 19, 2014**

With support from New Hampshire Listens  
[www.nhlistens.org](http://www.nhlistens.org)

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### **Welcome and thank you for joining today's conversation ~**

We look forward to your questions, concerns, ideas, and hopes regarding the future of the Madison Library. Today is one part of a process to get input from the residents of Madison that can help to inform the Trustees of the Library and the Strategic Planning Committee that has been working over the past several months.

### **Here is the general outline of our time:**

<b>5:30</b>	<b>Sign-in and refreshments</b>
<b>5:45</b>	<b>Welcome and purpose</b>
<b>6:00</b>	<b>Small group conversations</b>
<b>7:45</b>	<b>Small group summary reports</b>
<b>8:00</b>	<b>Closing</b>

**This guide is the same for all participants and facilitators. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive. Thank you!**

### ***What is New Hampshire Listens?***

New Hampshire Listens is a civic engagement initiative of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. NH Listens works to strengthen New Hampshire communities by helping citizens participate directly in discussions about policies that affect their daily lives. Established in 2011, we engage state residents in local, regional, and statewide conversations on a broad range of topics to bring about informed, innovative solutions to complex issues. At the core of our work, we organize fair, nonpartisan discussions throughout the state, help communities establish their own local Listens organizations, and train facilitators for public engagement. If you are interested in more information, we look forward to you being in touch with us. We are always looking for thoughtful facilitators and local contacts in NH communities. Find us at: [www.NHListens.org](http://www.NHListens.org) .

## Detailed Outline

### **5:45    Registration and Welcome**

- Welcome and sign in at registration table
- Welcome from Mary Cronin and John Filson
- NH Listens Moderator: Bruce Mallory

***The goal of this conversation is to hear from Madison residents and visitors about their priorities for the future of the Madison Library. A summary report will be written that captures the main themes and recommendations that come from this discussion. The report will assist the Library Trustees and Strategic Planning Committee as they decide how the Library can best serve the needs of the community.***

- About the process: This conversation is...
  - Designed to focus on what is important to *you* related to the Madison Library.
  - Designed for participants to be here the whole time (please do what you need to do to be most present: Feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
  - About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
  - Intended to increase input and information on decisions that will be made by the Library staff and Trustees.
  - Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.
  
- Group agreements for a productive conversation...
  - Share “air time”
  - If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point
  - It’s OK to disagree, but don’t personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you
  - Speak up if the process doesn’t seem fair
  - Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use “I” statements)
  - Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group
  - We all share responsibility for making the group productive
  - Be respectful and use respectful language
  - Respect the facilitator’s role
  - Listen first...

*Please note: We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant's ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) ask permission to tape, photograph, identify, or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.*

**6:00**

### **Introductions in small groups**

- Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:
  - Help with the process and keeping time
  - Serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful
  - Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
  - Record key information for the Summary Report
  
- Reminder: Your group will need someone to **report out** to the large group at the end.
  
- Introductions: Please share your...
  - Name
  - A hat or two you wear in the Madison community
  - A brief thought about how you are connected to the Madison Library

**6:15**

### **Community Values**

- What do you value most about this community?
- What role should the Library play in helping to make Madison a great place to live and learn?

**6:45**

### **How do people view the Library?**

- How would you describe the Madison Library to a friend?
- Take the time to look over the survey results at the back of this discussion guide. For our purposes, we will be asking you "*what do you notice?*" or "*what is most important to you about this information?*"

Take a few minutes to read and allow for clarifying questions.

**Brainstorm:** To get started, spend time getting the most important issues on the table. Don't worry about the details at this point, just make sure the **primary issues have been named**. Again, *what do you notice* and *what is important to you regarding the Madison Library?*

**7:00**

### **Key Questions and Priorities**

Consider the framing question: *How can the Madison Library best serve the needs of residents and visitors?*

Spend some time discussing the key issues and their importance to you. Keep in mind the values and information you have just been discussing.

It might be useful for **each person to speak briefly about their perspective and key questions**. The following questions may be helpful to prompt your thinking (but you will likely not have time to address each one individually):

- What kinds of information or literature do you need easy, understandable access to?
- What are some ways the Library could engage children and youth in its holdings and its programs? What about older patrons?
- What kinds of community cultural/artistic/educational resources would you like to see the Library offer?
- If you had to select one Library activity, program, or resource that was most important to you, what would it be?
- Think ten years ahead—what would be similar about the Library then compared to now, and what would be different? What would be the one most important service or program that the Library should offer in 2024?

Spend time here exploring differences and commonalities in your group. What questions remain? Has anyone gained insights or new understandings? Any new ideas to note?

**7:30**

### **Final Priorities**

Based on your group conversation, *“Are there any common-ground thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?”*

A single consensus is not required, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your **key recommendations or findings**.

Your group will need to prioritize their top insights, etc. to report out to the large group and *select someone to speak*. The reporting out should include no more than **two or three** specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for *both the unique ideas and those that seemed to recur*. Group ideas together that seem to be related, but don't lose track of the unique ones.

The **written** small group report will convey a more complete view of your group's ideas for the report (this will be taken directly from the flip chart notes and will be included

directly in the report as finalized by your group). You will likely not have time to represent **all** of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

**7:45**

**Reporting Out**

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their most important findings, concerns or recommendations. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled *by your group*, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

**8:00**

**Wrap up comments**

- Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!
- Next steps

**Thank you for participating!**