

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Library in Brighton (Part 3-4 — Conclusion)

Pursuant the report of 1991 long-range planning committee and the conclusion that a new structure was obviously needed for the library, a 20-member citizens’ committee was formed to hopefully locate the ideal site. One of several possible sites was a vacant parcel west of the Post Office off Charles Orndorf Drive. The architectural firm hired to design the new building also reviewed several other sites and added its recommendation for that site.

Among concerns to be considered by the committee were sufficient parking, traffic flow and funding.

Millage for a new library was passed (after two attempts) in May, 1994. Construction of the 23,700 square foot building, located at 100 Library Drive began May 2, 1995, at a cost of \$43M. It was dedicated May 18, 1996 and was now open 56 hours a week.

Besides the 24,000 books moved from the site in the Municipal Building, the new library could now accommodate 10,000 new books and house infrastructure to support computer networking and automation services; an expanded audio-visual collection and community meeting rooms. The Brighton Room is devoted exclusively to local history and genealogy, including maps, family histories, local history publications, microfilm of local history and other ephemera. This room also served as headquarters and archival filing of the Brighton Area Historical Society until its move to a former one-room rural school (Lyon School); deeded to the Society, August 2001, by the Brighton Township Board after the Township built new offices.

A number of directors served the library during the 1990s. Charlene Huget was director from October 1997, retiring June 2007. Nancy B. Johnson then served as director through 2015.

A national economic downturn and a statewide recession in 2008 significantly reduced property values, on which library millage was based, in addition to a drastic decrease in state funding. With support from the Friends of the Library, service continued to improve. New millage in 2015 provides funding through 2035. Before retiring, Johnson oversaw the successful millage campaign.

Some obvious improvements have continued among which are the replacement of the original 13 lights lining the circular drive with new LED lights. Not to be overlooked is the repair of the driveway and parking lot.

Many of these changes are a result of generous donations from local groups and individuals. This continues the decades of support of Brighton area residents in their dedication to improved educational opportunities.

Cindy Mack is the library’s current director hired in 2016. She continues the long-time model of previous directors, fulfilling the precedents begun so many years ago.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Newspaper clippings, Society Archives and material compiled by Mark Mullinax, Genealogy and Local History Librarian, Brighton District Library. Additions/corrections requested: 810-229-6402.)