

Capitola leaders need 'updating on library needs'

Certain Capitola City fathers may need a bit of updating on the proposed midcounty library needs, according to Santa Cruz City-County library directors Robin Brooks and Winnie Warner. The directors attended a City Council meeting Jan. 17 with library system director Anne Turner to ask for a 10,000 square-foot-increase in the originally-planned 7,000 square-foot building. A site has not been located.

Brooks told board members at their monthly meeting on Monday that "individual City Council members raised objections — questions" when Turner made her presentation. Capitola officials are being asked to finance the building of a Midcounty library branch for

Midcounty use. They have had a commitment of 7,000 square feet for some time, but library officials feel the population growth in the areas the branch would serve (Twin Lakes, Live Oak, Soquel and Capitola) would require a much larger building — about 17,000 square feet, or more than twice the size of Aptos and Branciforte branches.

"They had not been thinking in those terms," said Brooks.

Brooks added that Mayor Michael Routh said there is a vacant house in Capitola that could be used as an interim library. But Brooks said there are inherent problems — poor parking, bad access from outlying areas plus the danger that

Capitola would soon think such an arrangement would be sufficient.

"They might say, 'Fine, what do we need a library for?'" said Brooks. "A little house in downtown Capitola wouldn't serve the rest of Midcounty. We would like to go for a large library."

Brooks said he explained to the City Council that "the tail couldn't wag the dog" when they asked what kind of control they would have over library operation.

Warner agreed. "The thing I felt the most was the negative feeling — Were they going to have any control over this (new library) if they got into it (financially)," she said.

Capitola City Manager Steve Burrell and City Councilman Bob Bucher have been appointed to serve with library

trustees on a site selection group. Brooks told trustees he felt both men were very agreeable to a new library that would fit the needs of Midcounty. He added that maybe Supervisors Robley Levy, now supervisor liaison to the library board, and Dan Forbus, or their representatives, could also serve on the committee, since their supervisory areas include Midcounty.

Levy, who attended Monday's meeting, answered by reminding trustees that the City Council's reaction should not be seen as one side against the other.

"This is the beginning of a process," she said. "I hope the focus would shift from a discussion of attitudes to proposals and how we can move forward — to shift to that middle ground."