

Plans for Georgetown library fine-tuned

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer



An artist's rendering shows how the Georgetown branch of the Halton Hills Library should look when completed in the fall 2012.

While Halton Hills Public Library broke ground on a new Acton branch library last month, preparations have not stopped on the renovation and expansion to the Georgetown branch.

Halton Hills Public Library Director Jane Diamanti says the architects continue to refine the designs, with tendering to begin in the fall.

"I'm confident we will begin construction by the spring of 2011 with completion by the fall of 2012," said Diamanti in a recent interview with *The Independent & Free Press*. "We know we'll be ready in October for the tendering."

Following a number of suggestions by residents at a fall open house on the project, architects John Knox and Stephen Blood, of Chamberlain Architect Services Ltd., have changed the window shape on the Market St. side to a more broad and gentle arch similar to the ones on the old church portion of the library, but with a more modern look and feel. The windows are large, allowing lots of natural light to enter both the upper and lower floors.

The roofline, too, has been changed to reflect a series of small homes, a bid to be respectful of the single-fam-

ily homes across the street. Landscaping will also help soften the building's exterior.

The windows on the Church St.'s ground level entrance have been enlarged so that people can see inside—and "we hope, be enticed by what they see," said Diamanti.

There will also be a vestibule at this entrance where people can wait for pickup or be sheltered in bad weather.

Overall the goal is to make the "renewed" library universally accessible, said Diamanti, making movement easy for anyone with strollers, wheelchairs or walking aids.

The latest designs, which can be seen on the library's website, www.hhpl.on.ca, have received very positive comments so far, said Diamanti.

The architects are now focusing on refining the interior designs.

A lease has been signed with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton to rent the Holy Cross Church on Maple Ave. for a temporary home for the Georgetown library.

The rental rate will be \$5 per square foot—about \$118,000 in total—with the lease beginning March 31, 2011. The library will need the church space for 18 months.

Diamanti says about \$115,000 will

be spent to make the basement hall suitable for a public library—such as new carpeting, painting, lighting, and a wheelchair/stroller lift.

After the lease is completed, the library board/Town reserves the option to remove and re-use the wheelchair lift, theft detection system and wireless Internet service reducing the one-time costs for alterations to \$80,000.

Late last year, testing of the Georgetown library site for a geothermal heating and cooling system proved positive—the geology below ground appears to be able to conduct sufficient heat to support a geothermal system for the library and Cultural Centre.

At the March 22 council meeting, Halton Hills council gave the go-ahead to apply for a combined \$4 million Green Municipal Fund low-cost loan/grant to pay for the additional cost of the geothermal system.

Council also directed that other loans/grants for the geothermal system be sourced from other agencies including Halton Hills own hydro company.

For more information about the Georgetown library expansion project, residents can go to the library website, www.hhpl.on.ca, follow Diamanti's ongoing blog, or talk to the director when visiting the library.

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