

# RT discusses library preservation options

by **STACY SOBOTKA**  
Observer Special Writer

Planned improvements to the Ray Township Library were mentioned in correspondence to the Ray Township Board of Trustees at their meeting Tuesday, June 16.

Township Clerk Paula Artman read two letters presented to the board from Ray Township Historical Society President Terry Goike.

"After receiving an e-mail from Supervisor (Charlie) Bohm on May 4, 2015 stating Terry, Board opinion seems to be vinyl side the library. How does this affect its historical standing?" I sent an e-mail . . . to (Mary) Patrick of the Michigan Historical Marker Program for clarification," she said in the letter.

Goike received a reply from Patrick on June 3 with a review letter from American Institute of Architects (AIA) architect Bryan Lijewski of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Lijewski explained in his letter that sites with a state historic marker are subject to provisions in the Michigan Historical Markers Act. Exterior alterations must follow the

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guide for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

"(SHPO) has determined that the installation of vinyl siding on this building cannot be approved as compliant with the standards," he said in the letter.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation states in Standard 6 that "deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced."

Lijewski explained that the library's wood siding is a dominant, character defining feature to the building.

"Losing or concealing this feature will hinder the historic integrity of the building," he said.

Vinyl has plenty of drawbacks, including creating high moisture levels within wall cavities.

"Vinyl materials have their own set of concerns and may cause more damage to the historic materials than desired," said Lijewski.

Goike felt that the library should remain as is and simply be repaired.

"The Society agrees with Mr.

Lijewski that the best course for action . . . is to repaint and maintain the existing siding to ensure the historic integrity of this historic structure," she said.

A recent repainting of the exterior walls using Sherwin Williams paint did not go according to plan.

"We have a five year warranty, (and) we want to get an opinion (from Sherwin Williams) as to why the paint is failing. We'll continue to work on that," said Bohm.

Bohm also said that the township's new emergency siren will be installed on the west side of Indian Trail south of 29 Mile Road. He also said a robocall to alert residents would not work in Ray Township.

"That is not feasible for a public body like ours because it's up to the individuals to keep themselves current," he said.

The board also heard a brief presentation from Ray Township Library Director Christy DeMeulenaere on the state of the library. She gave a summary of events that took place over the year, including hiring a library designer to improve the layout.

"At the end of August we started to look for a library design team, and in September we hired Chris DeBear from Library Design Associates, Inc.," she said.

A floor plan was presented to the library board, minor changes were made, and the board approved the plans in March. The board now has to wait for a budget, colors, and the next planning stage.

"Once we receive this information, we will decide on how to proceed with the tin ceiling," said DeMeulenaere.

Bohm commended DeMeulenaere for her work with the library.

"She's done a marvelous job of communication between me, the board, and the library which has made our jobs so much easier," he said.

In other business, the Board of Trustees:

- Approved a 2016 fiscal year contract with SMART.
- Approved a contract with Richmond Lenox EMS Ambulance Authority.
- Approved the payment of membership dues to the Michigan Township Association.