To: Members of the Selectboard,

From: The Heath Library Trustees

May 19, 2022

Dear Selectboard,

After carefully reading and discussing the recent report from the MA Office on Disabilities, we the Trustees of the Library, have the following recommendations.

Please note that these are made with the understanding that any decision about Sawyer Hall is important to our town, and with the recognition that resolving the ADA issues will take time. They are also made with a desire for a transparent, inclusive process to move forward. We all agree there is much work to be done and it is our hope that it could be done in such a way that promotes understanding and common ground. We believe that to achieve this, the process will be as important as the outcome of any final decision.

While we have expressed a desire to move the library to the former Heath School, we are content to be patient about our permanent location, to allow for such a process to take place. We also understand the liability issues of doing nothing to address these issues in the meantime.

We respectfully propose the following approach to mitigating the issues at Sawyer Hall:

1. Recognizing the important nature of any decisions being made about Sawyer Hall, we recommend that the Selectboard appoint an Ad Hoc committee, similar to the one that was appointed to study the closing of the Heath School, to help the Town map out a plan forward relating to the ADA issues at Sawyer Hall. We assume that it would include other structural issues or limitations the building might have. We suggest that the committee be comprised of town officials, including a Library Trustee, and citizens at large including a member of the Friends of the Heath. Library.

1. We support the recommendation in the MA Office On Disability report that the library should operate out of a different location until a final plan that takes into consideration the needs of the library can be made and implemented. Until that time, we recommend that the library operate out of the former School Library. We propose that we move enough books to make the library functional; housing the remaining books in the current library. Any books remaining at the current library could be available for check out by request.
2. We strongly encourage the Select board to make the MA Office On Disability Report public and to hold a public hearing about the issues we face as a town concerning Sawyer Hall, with a plan for moving forward, giving citizens an opportunity to voice concerns and questions.
3. Finally, we request the Selectboard arrange for a similar report to be done on the space at 18 Jacobs Road by MA Office On Disability

We look forward to discussing this with you at your May 24 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Porter

Chairman