



defiance public library system
Defiance • Sherwood • Hicksville

PRESS RELEASE

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Library annex to be built on donated land

[DEFIANCE] – Following a generous property donation, planning has begun for construction of a long-awaited library annex on Fort Street.

The lot at 315 Fort St., across from Defiance Public Library, and adjacent property at 319 Fort St., were donated by Cincinnati native Tony Sansalone, a real estate developer and investor with strong ties to Defiance.

A third adjacent property, 109 Jefferson Ave., was purchased by Defiance Public Library System (DPLS) for the project, which will be paid for by donations and fundraising, with the library to borrow the remaining funds. A fundraising campaign will kick off in late winter or early spring.

“This is so exciting, not only for the library but for the Defiance community,” said Cara Potter, director of Defiance Public Library System. “The annex will function almost like a community center, providing a large meeting space and huddle rooms not only for library programming but also for local government and nonprofit use.”

Planning is still in the beginning stages as DPLS works with Beilharz Architects, with the total project cost yet to be determined. There is an estimated 3–4-year timeline for completion of the annex, which will feature two stories plus a basement and provide approximately 13,000 square feet of space when complete.

“The annex fulfills several of the library system's strategic goals, including addressing space issues at the main library, fostering community partnerships through shared use of the large meeting space in the annex, and offering a place for collaborative programming for the Defiance community,” Potter said.

The organization's 2022-25 Strategic Plan is available to view online at defiancelibrary.org.

Homes currently on the properties at 319 Fort St. and 109 Jefferson Ave. will be offered to the community for \$1, allowing interested parties an opportunity to relocate the buildings before construction begins. The Anthony Wayne monument originally planned for the 315 Fort St. lot will instead be placed along the river in a spot with higher foot traffic, located between a pair of new city-installed swings at the end of Wayne Avenue.

As the project progresses, DPLS will solicit community input on several aspects of the annex, which also will house a Friends of the Library used bookstore and adult literacy tutoring services. Accessibility for patrons with disabilities will be a key consideration.

Sansalone himself owns the home located at 311 Fort St., and considers Defiance his favorite weekend getaway, often returning to enjoy the confluence where he launched canoes in his youth. In recognition of his donation, DPLS has agreed to allow Sansalone the right to name the library annex. He anticipates naming it after his mother, Jane Beck Sansalone, who inspired him to value reading and education.

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