



Library Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Gail Cornell

Tell us about yourself.

I moved to Hopkinton three years ago when I married a long-time Hopkinton resident, Thomas Harritt, a retired airline pilot who raised six children here. His affection and enthusiasm for the town and the area was and is infectious. The natural beauty of New Hampshire and the small-town way of life were things I had read about but whose reality far exceeded my expectations.

I was born and raised in the Cincinnati, Ohio area but had been living in New York City for many years until my move to Hopkinton in 2018.

I am an art and architectural historian, currently working on a lecture series about early New Hampshire architecture. For the last 25 years, I have been a lecturer on art, architecture, and design. For the first eight of those years, I operated my own lecture/study tour business, working with individuals, museums, and arts organizations. Since then, I have been a lecturer for The Smithsonian Institute, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Institute of Architecture NY, and other organizations. I was also an adjunct faculty at New York University and Hunter College in New York. For the last seven years, I was a lecturer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

My hobbies are gardening, baking, and restoring our dear old house here in Hopkinton.

Please explain why you want to be a Library Trustee.

Hopkinton's library is one of its special treasures and I view the role of Library Trustee as integral to its continued success. Libraries, especially community libraries, need advocates, supporters, and knowledgeable protectors.

The function and services the Hopkinton library provides under the guidance of its trained and qualified staff are vital to the educational and intellectual life of Hopkinton. As a lifelong library user and as a professional researcher, I have personally benefited from the resources our library offers. I would like to join the Board of Trustees to be part of the policy-making team that

assists in the smooth running of the library and helps provide a foundation to ensure the library's future.

What skills and/or experiences do you bring to this role?

I bring both an understanding of how libraries function and significant management skills to the role of Library Trustee. Libraries have long been a big part of my life and have been an essential component in all my educational and professional endeavors. I have been a frequent user of libraries wherever I have lived. I earned part of my college tuition by working in libraries.

As previously mentioned, I owned and operated my own study tour business for several years and as result understand the wide range of issues that must be dealt with in any organization, from finances to staff development to safety, etc.

I also have considerable business experience having worked for a major international pharmaceutical company early in my career in a variety of management positions, the last being Corporate Vice President of Administration, Facilities and Human Resources.

I have served on the Board of Trustees at Thomas More University where I earned my bachelor's degree in English. I have an MBA from Xavier University and a master's degree from Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

What do you see as the biggest issue and opportunity facing the library trustees and how would you respond?

The biggest issue I see facing the library trustees is the uncertain economic time we are experiencing because of the pandemic. The challenge is to maintain the policies that will sustain the already high quality of services and programs the library provides to the community, as well as provide for the maintenance of the beautiful facility and its infrastructure.

With every challenge comes an opportunity. The library has already seen an uptick in usage during the pandemic so there are opportunities to develop an even better understanding of our library users' needs and preferences. Continued focus on the community's needs in changing circumstances will enhance the ability to develop and improve policies, programs, and services around them.

Thankfully, our community seems to have weathered the pandemic, but challenges and uncertainties remain. I would support the continuation of sound practices and policies already in place, i.e., vigilance regarding the management of the library budget, beneficial collaborations with other organizations, and an active volunteer program.

Do you have a photograph/head shot you would like to include?

