

# APPROVED

## MINUTES

### Library Advisory Commission (LAC)

September 27, 2007

Council Conference Room

250 Hamilton Avenue

7:00 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Sanford Forte, Sandra Hirsh (Chair), Lenore Jones, Valerie Stinger, Susan Thom, John Stucky

**Commissioners Absent:** Robert Redfern-West

**Staff Present:** Diane Jennings, Cornelia van Aken, Evelyn Cheng

**Council Liaison:** John Barton

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Hirsh called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS – None

### LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Jennings introduced Cornelia van Aken, new Assistant Library Director, who started on September 4, and described briefly her job responsibilities. Van Aken talked about her extensive work experience in the San Jose Public Library system and expressed her commitment to the Palo Alto City Library (PACL).
2. The major donor party and sneak preview hosted by the Palo Alto Library Foundation (PALF) and the Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) on September 23rd to celebrate the grand re-opening of the Children's Library was very well attended; it was packed with children and adults who were thrilled with the renovated and expanded facility. Jennings expressed appreciation to staff at the Children's Library, Public Works, and Facilities Management, who worked diligently to complete the project. All-day festivities on September 29 - the grand opening day – will start at 10 a.m.
3. Jennings reported on the following developments from the State Library:
  - Due to the current State budget situation, the 2007/2008 Public Library Fund allocation was cut - the estimated payment for Palo Alto is \$24,000. Last year, the Library received \$35,700.

- Palo Alto's application was accepted to participate in the 2007/08 *Transforming Life after 50: Public Libraries and Boomers* Institute, developed to inspire libraries to create new and innovative programs and services to meet the needs of the Baby Boomer population. A three-day event will be scheduled in Pasadena, CA from November 27-29. Dave Irving (Mitchell Park Library staff) and Cornelia van Aken will attend for PACL.
4. The Library will host a talk on library technology, free to the general public, with guest speaker, Michael Porter on November 8 in Council Chambers, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Porter is Community Associate for WebJunction, an organization funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that assists libraries and cultural organizations in meeting their objectives through the effective use of web-based technologies. Jennings invited members of the LAC to attend this program.
  5. With the City Council's approval of the development of a library technology plan as part of the 2007-08 capital budget, the Library will be forming a Citizen Advisory Group whose role will be to provide input from the community's perspective on how the Library can better serve the community through the use of technology. LAC participation is requested to help review applications from community members interested to serve in serving in this capacity. The planning process will begin after November and last three to four months, with the advisory group working with the LAC, City staff, and a consultant. Forte, Jones and Stucky will participate in the interview process.

## BUSINESS

1. Approval of draft minutes of Special Meeting on August 27, 2007.
  - With corrections, Thom moved to approve minutes of Special Meeting on August 27, 2007. Jones seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.
2. Public outreach efforts for Library, Community Center, and Public Safety Building projects
  - Kelly Morariu from the City Manager's Office introduced Jessica Reynolds, principal consultant from The Lew Edwards Group, the firm hired by the City to facilitate public outreach efforts about needed improvements to some community facilities.
  - Reynolds said she would like a brief overview of the LAC's *Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations* report and the Commissioners' personal thoughts on the entire process.
  - Hirsh provided a summary of the two-year planning process and an overview of the report presented to City Council on December 2006, which included recommendations for improvements to Library in the areas of: Facilities, Collections, Program and Services, Hours of Service, Technology and Staffing.

- Hirsh added that the LAC approach is to look at the whole library system and recommend improvements system-wide, but recognize that the Mitchell Park Library has the greatest need for improvement.
- Members of the LAC shared their personal observations and concerns throughout the process which included community survey and meetings, interfacing with Library stakeholders, staff and the public, as well as comparisons with neighboring libraries.
- Reynolds asked questions to clarify some of the LAC's observations and concerns and noted a wide range in the community's perception of what kind of improvements are needed.
- The Commissioners agreed that there is great need to educate people about what the possibilities are with libraries.
- Hirsh said while there is a vocal and mobilized group of supporters, there also exists a complacent segment of community.
- Hirsh expressed the LAC's pleasure to have Reynolds on board and offer to help in any way if needed.
- Reynolds thanked the LAC for their feedback and helpful discussion/suggestions.
- Hirsh recognized Bob Moss, 4010 Orme St., from the audience. Moss spoke about his suggestion to target specific library needs and services that will appeal to the community.

### 3. Audit of Library operations

- Sharon Erickson, City Auditor, provided an overview of the Auditor's report on Library operations which was presented to City Council last September. The purpose of the audit was to identify potential operating efficiencies, if any.
- The report, which includes recommendations to improve library operations, was accepted by City Council. Library staff is working to implement these recommendations.
- Erickson and Senior Auditor Renata Khoshroo, gave a brief background of the process, discussed their findings and provided the reasoning behind their recommendations.
- Jennings acknowledged the detailed work by the Auditor's Office and expressed appreciation for the ideas generated by the audit. Staff agrees with the majority of the recommendations. She added that the Library has implemented several of these recommendations already and in the process of evaluating all within the proposed time frames.

- Members of the LAC commended Erickson and her staff for their work and agreed that the report is a useful documentation of library operations.
4. Action item: LAC recommendation for Option A or Option B of conceptual design for Mitchell Park Library and Community Center
- Following Group 4's conceptual designs progress presentation and discussion on the Mitchell Park, Main and Downtown Libraries at the August 27 LAC meeting, Jennings suggested that the LAC take a vote on their preferred option for the two major options for Mitchell Park:
    - Option A, a two-phase approach to building a new library and community center; and
    - Option B, a one-phase approach to building a new library and community center together in one facility.
  - Jennings added that City Council would be interested in knowing the LAC's preference for the Mitchell Park options when Group 4 reports on the conceptual designs to City Council on October 1.
  - Members of the LAC asked questions and provided feedback on the options. The LAC agreed there are significant advantages for going with a single phase option even though both plans are excellent.
  - Hirsh recognized Moss from the audience. Moss spoke about his preference for Option B.
  - Forte moved  
 "The LAC strongly recommends that City Council go with the one phase Option B for the conceptual design for Mitchell Park Library and the Community Center."  
 Stinger seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.
  - Forte and Thom will attend the Council meeting on October 1, and Thom will speak on the LAC's vote.
  - Copies of the City Manager's Report (CMR 372:07) on the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center project, including an amendment to Group 4's contract and update on outreach efforts, were distributed to the LAC.
5. Review of revised 2007-08 LAC Work Plan
- The LAC approved their 2007-08 Work Plan, dated September 18, 2007.
  - Stinger confirmed that she will attend the project team meetings for Mitchell Park/Main/Downtown scheduled on November 8 and 29. Hirsh will not be able to attend the next meeting on October 18; Jones will not be able to attend the November 8 meeting.

## REPORTS

### Commissioner reports and questions:

- Thom attended the FOPAL Board Meeting held on September 12. The annual meeting is scheduled on October 18, 7:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium, with special guest speaker Nancy Cassidy and the yearly election of their board members and officers.
- The Library Foundation is holding a forum on library issues for City Council candidates on October 23, 7:00 p.m. at the Mitchell Park Community Center.
- Thom followed up on a discussion to have a representative from the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) come speak at the LAC meeting. Jennings said PAHA did not feel that a discussion was needed at this time due to Group 4's recent changes to design plans for the Main Library.

Council Liaison Report: None

## COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Members of the LAC agreed that staff should consult with Group 4 about their work and timing of their presentations to the LAC in order to recommend when the LAC will meet over the next few months, since the scheduled October 25 and November 15 meetings are only a couple of weeks apart. Jennings will check with Group 4 and advise the LAC.

## AGENDA for meeting on October 25, 2007:

The items suggested for the meeting are:

- Debriefing of October 1 Council Meeting
- Results of focus group discussions by outreach consultant
- Report from Group 4 on final conceptual designs for Mitchell Park, Main and Downtown Libraries
- Citizen Tech Advisory Group

Stinger moved to adjourn.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:30 p.m.