

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

MARCH 12, 2009

A Regular meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library, 630 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071, convening at 11:04 a.m. on the above-written date.

PRESENT: PRESIDENT TYREE WIEDER
VICE PRESIDENT JULIE A. MENDOZA
COMMISSIONER RITA WALTERS

EXCUSED

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER ROBERT A. CHICK

ALSO PRESENT: Kris Morita, Interim City Librarian; Patricia Kiefer, Assistant City Librarian; Deputy City Attorney Basia Jankowski; Roy Stone, President, Librarian's Guild; and staff.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – 2/26/09

MOVED by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Vice President Mendoza, and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the regular meeting held February 26, 2009, be approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS
WITHIN THE BOARD'S JURISDICTION: NONE

CITY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF
FUNDRAISING PROPOSAL FOR THE
LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Kris Morita, Interim City Librarian, reported that at the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee on January 7, 2009, several General Managers reported on the status of their proposed FY 2009/2010 Budget. The Library Department was required to set forth a 9% budget reduction, which equates to \$6.4 million, a large loss that will negatively impact library services. She stated two Council Committee members proposed to establish some mechanism to request public donations for the purchase of

books and other service-oriented activities. They suggested a gold card membership where persons could make donations, and the donor would receive discount benefits and/or borrower privileges. Ms. Morita was asked to study the idea and report back.

The Interim City Librarian reported back to Committee and informed them that because the Library Department provides equitable service and access to everyone they were not supportive of a gold card because it would set different layers of service. She pointed out there is an existing mechanism for people to make donations through the Friends groups and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. The Councilmembers responded they were looking for a campaign to stimulate the public to donate and directed her to report back in April on how to implement their idea.

Ms. Morita indicated the proposed Board report would provide for an LAPL club card to raise funds through the Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA). Donors can donate any amount from \$1 to \$49 and depending on the amount donated, the donor can receive 10% discount to the Library Store and a discount to other food establishments. She stated LFLA has an existing infrastructure in place to solicit and process donations. The President of the Library Foundation was receptive but needs to bring the proposal to their Board.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Mendoza voiced support for the proposal indicating there is a need to fill the budget gap and channel the energy of public support into a campaign to support the Los Angeles Public Library.

Commissioner Walters stated she does not support the proposal because it provides for a two-tier membership. In addition, the Council Committee members seem to be asking that contributions be used for operating expenses, and the Library Foundation does not raise money for this purpose. She would be opposed to donations going through the Foundation based on current policies and distribution of money.

President Wieder commented she is concerned about having a two-tiered membership particularly because our libraries have been designated as free public institutions to service our communities and offering an option to join a club card for a fee on the library card application might be confusing to patrons. She said the library, as a free institution, does not have the opportunity to offer incentives the way some other institutions might be able to. The President also noted that if the goal was to raise money for books, it would be problematic to filter this money through the Library Foundation because the funds they raise are used to enhance programs and services not to supplant operating expenses.

Furthermore, President Wieder concurred with the Vice President's comment that it is important to let the community know of different opportunities to support LAPL during these difficult times. She believes it would make sense to enhance an infrastructure already in place such as working with Friends groups. She indicated the challenge would be the inequality in the amount of money that branches are able to raise.

Commissioner Walters underscored President Wieder's statement that libraries were founded as free educational institutions, and with the purchase of a LAPL club card, the appearance would exist that during this troubled economy even libraries are going to charge the public.

At the request of the Interim City Librarian, Peter Persic, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, spoke about the Library Foundation's "This is Your Library" campaign, which is designed to raise awareness of the library and promote its use. The campaign was developed before the current economic crisis. As a result of the economic downturn, the campaign has been retooled to incorporate and request support for the library through LFLA. Mr. Persic advised there was some discussion as to whether or not this card could somehow be incorporated into the awareness campaign that is coming up.

Vice President Mendoza stated she understands it is important where the donations go but reiterated the value of LAPL supporters being able to write a check that goes to buy books. She said a proposal for incoming donations should be aligned to the awareness campaign because of the larger audience it would reach. She said it is important to have a specific benefit for a contribution such as t-shirt or luggage tag with the library's image to promote awareness. President Wieder concurred with the Vice President in creating awareness of the library through merchandise promoting the library.

Commissioner Walters said as part of the awareness campaign the public can be given information about the bleak budget prospects and be made aware of benefits associated with existing memberships, but right now is not the time for fundraising.

During the ensuing deliberations, Ms. Morita articulated that staff does not have the manpower to solicit or implement fundraising. Library staff is doing everything they can just to provide the highest quality of services to the public. It is a different role and skillset to raise money and that is why they have depended on Friends support groups and the Library Foundation.

Discussion on the floor continued on a proposed motion relative to the LAPL book card and direction to staff on exploring alternative ideas resulting in Deputy City Attorney Basia Jankowski suggesting the Board separate the question.

MOTION 1

It was Moved by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Vice President Mendoza and unanimously carried that the Board of Library Commissioners does not find the LAPL Book Club viable for the Los Angeles Public Library and directed that staff report back to the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee on reasons discussed. **Motion Carried.**

MOTION 2

It was Moved by Vice President Mendoza, seconded by President Wieder that staff continue to explore viable funding opportunities to support operational expenses. The President and Vice President voted Aye, Commissioner Walters voted No. The Deputy City Attorney advised the motion needed all three votes, therefore, she announced the **Motion Did Not Carry**

President Wieder and Commissioner Walters expressed their appreciation to the Councilmembers for understanding the financial situation the library is facing.

RECOMMENDED RECEIVE AND FILE LANDSCAPE
MAINTENANCE REPORT AT BRANCH LIBRARIES

(At its meeting of November 6, 2008, Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager for the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP), spoke before the Board on the landscape maintenance at branch libraries.)

Kyle Millager, Business Manager, reported that as a result of the landscape survey and presentation by Jon Mukri, Recreation and Parks General Manager, library staff met with Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, and Ramon Barajas, Principal Ground Maintenance Superintendent, on February 10, 2009, to discuss setting landscape maintenance standards. She indicated, because of current fiscal problems, DRP can only provide landscaping services to city agencies based on the amount of resources made available through the budget process. During the recent meeting, DRP advised they expended \$300,000 last year, more than they were budgeted for in maintenance of library landscaping. They also received no funding to replace plant materials at any of the municipal facilities they serve.

Further, Ms. Millager said during the meeting it was agreed that park maintenance supervisors would contact branch managers to initiate quarterly visits at each branch library which will help facilitate a real working relationship. Recreation and Parks has also agreed to conduct a branch assessment survey to determine if there are any

low or no cost improvements that can be made at branches. Ms. Millager advised while DRP can't always replace dead or diseased plant material due to lack of funds, they can mulch areas that are barren or replace existing plants with drought tolerant ones. Library staff feels that this improved working relationship in communication between the two departments will result in improvements to the landscape of branch facilities.

President Wieder inquired about the timeline for park maintenance supervisors to contact branch managers and the status of prestaging brooms or rakes at libraries, an issue previously mentioned at a board meeting.

Ms. Millager responded the park maintenance supervisors had indicated it would be the end of April before they were able to contact all the branch managers since each supervisor in his region has a number of libraries to which he is assigned. In addition, DRP has responded that they do not have sufficient funds to purchase materials for prestaging libraries.

Lastly, the President spoke about the importance of forming relationships with neighborhood councils, such as what occurred with the staff at the Echo Park Branch and the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council. She said perhaps neighborhood councils might be able to assist in this effort.

Commissioner Walters thanked Ms. Millager and the staff of the Department of Recreation and Parks, specifically Mr. Mukri for taking a closer look at what is happening with the maintenance of libraries. She asked that a thank you letter be sent from the Interim City Librarian to Mr. Mukri.

BOARD ACTION:

MOVED by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Vice President Mendoza and unanimously carried that the report on Branch Maintenance Facilities be received and filed.

ORAL PRESENTATION: ART, MUSIC
AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

BOARD DIRECTIVE

Continued to the next meeting

VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS:

Noted and filed letter from the Mayor's Office advising of Ms. Ana E. Cubas' request to withdraw as nominee to the Board of Library Commissioners.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:

The Interim City Librarian announced that on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at 12:00 noon the Los Angeles Public Library would host another Student Smart Motivational Seminar for middle school students. Students will be bused from the San Fernando Valley where they will hear dynamic speakers that will hopefully stimulate them to attend to college.

Item Pending

The report on conducting evacuation drills more than once a year at different times at all branch libraries will be presented at a future meeting

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

ATTEST: _____

Tyree Wieder
President

Gladys L. Senac
Board Executive Assistant

Date to be approved:

March 26, 2009