

APPROVED

MINUTES

Library Advisory Commission (LAC)

September 17, 2009

Downtown Library

270 Forest Avenue

7:15 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Leonardo Hochberg, Marc Marchiel,
Vibhu Mittal, Theivanai Palaniappan,
Valerie Stinger

Commissioners Absent: Raj Mashruwala

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

CALL TO ORDER – Stinger called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Dena Mossar, 1024 Emerson St., spoke of her recollection as a former member of the Palo Alto City Council, and listening to the reiteration of issues about the Downtown Library by a particular group in the community over the years. She encouraged the LAC to move forward with the plan supported by voters.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS –

Stinger suggested deferring the other Agenda items (#2 thru #6) to the LAC meeting in October due to priority of discussion for Agenda item #1, following the Council's directive to the LAC on September 14.

BUSINESS – The LAC met in Retreat Format.

1. Response to Council's Direction to the LAC regarding Downtown Library

- Jennings provided a brief background of the September 14 City Council meeting during the update on Library building projects, which resulted in Council's direction to the LAC regarding the Downtown Library.
- Jennings said on a 5-4 vote, the Council "directed staff and the LAC to (1) review additional space for collections in the Downtown Library, (2) reconsider relocation of Administrative Staff to Mitchell Park Library or Main Library or City Hall, and (3) evaluate space for additional computers at the Downtown Library."
- The LAC's review will be presented as an information item to Council.

- Group 4's Dawn Merkes provided some options to increase collection capacity in Downtown Library's current proposed floor plan with shelving strategies, i.e., increase shelving height from 66" to 84" and/or add more shelves. More aggressive options would decrease the number of tables, seats and/or computers as well as eliminate the program room.
- For relocating Library Administration, the following options were considered:
 - moving Library Administration to the new Mitchell Park Library which would result in a 6-month delay for that project and cost approximately \$900,000 to add the needed square footage;
 - moving Library Administration to Main Library which would cost up to \$500,000 to make the change but not impact the design schedule for the library;
 - moving the office to City Hall: this option was eliminated as Public Works staff determined there is not sufficient space to meet the needs of Library Administration.
- Merkes said each of these options would have required an additional two months to redesign and review the plan for Downtown Library.
- Stinger recognized the following from the audience:
 - 1) Jeff Levinsky, 1682 Hamilton Ave., spoke about the need to increase book space at the Downtown Library.
 - 2) Jean Wilcox, 4005 Sutherland, spoke against moving administrative offices to Mitchell Park Library.
 - 3) Herb Borock, P.O. Box 632, spoke in favor of using more space at the Downtown Library for the collection.
- Members of the LAC reviewed the information provided by Group 4, asked questions/clarifications, and considered various methods of raising the collection capacity, including moving computer tables, adding stacks and putting more books into the proposed multipurpose program room.
- To facilitate the discussion, Jennings provided a copy of the June 26 LAC subcommittee's report on the Downtown Library Design, completed after a review of the concerns raised by members of the public, which describes "the branch vision, current and future neighborhood requirements and design guidelines for the Downtown renovation."
- Discussion followed, with members of the LAC agreeing to make the following recommendations:
 - 1) Increase the shelving at Downtown Library by increasing height and number of shelves to allow the collection to grow to almost

- 2) Add the number of public desktop computers, increased to 14 from the current 11, and a specialized cabinet to hold loaner laptops which will allow the library to provide up to 18 laptops if funds are available to expand that service;
 - 3) Maintain the current design for the multipurpose program room;
 - 4) Keep Library Administration at Downtown Library.
- **Motion:** Palaniappan moved, seconded by Stinger: The LAC recommends going with Current Plan (as of 09-14-09), with 84”h shelving to hold 20,200 to 23,100 volumes.

Amendment: Palaniappan moved, seconded by Singer to: add another four extensions in the adult collection area in northeast wing of the library (Floor Plan - Option 1).

Motion as Amended Passed: 5-0

- Jennings said that Palo Alto has a unique library system and the challenge is to look at improving the collection across the branch system: core collections at Main and Mitchell Park libraries, branch libraries (Downtown and College Terrace) to focus more on high demand/interest materials that reflect the community it serves.
- The LAC agreed that a combined modification to shelving would be the most cost effective way to increase the collection at the branch, with no/little change in costs, timeframe and operations. Having a program room is vital and provides the flexibility to accommodate anticipated rapid demographical and technological change.
- **Motion:** Palaniappan moved, seconded by Stinger to: move the rest of the agenda to the meeting in October.
Motion passed, 5-0.

Hochberg moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.