

# APPROVED

## MINUTES

### Library Advisory Commission (LAC)

May 6, 2006

Downtown Library

270 Forest Avenue

2:00 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Sanford Forte, Genevieve Gerard, Sandra Hirsh (Chair),  
Lenore Jones, Valerie Stinger,

**Commissioners Absent:** Paula Skokowski, John Stucky

**Staff Present:** Paula Simpson

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Hirsh called the meeting to order at 2:05p.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

### BUSINESS

1. Solicit public input on draft recommendations for the long range library plan

#### Comments.

This plan doesn't have the chance of the proverbial snowball because it sets up a turf war, Word War III, between north and south of Oregon Expressway. Stopped counting at 700 houses around the Main Library. 1.5 voters per household could vote against a bond issue or parcel tax. Speaker provided a map to show the number of households surrounding the Main Library – there are likely 10,000 households in the Main Library's service area.

This Library bond issue is being tacked on to the police building and that's a problem.

Your public relations about the plan have been extremely poor. Telling people they have to pay a new tax and yet get a little less in their particular branch is not smart.

Palo Alto Historical Association supports the section of the plan that calls for Newell to be the research branch. The PAHA collection dovetails with the city library collection and this is a logical match. PAHA and City have a 50-year contractual association to protect local history. Historian and reference librarians help people access the archives. Newell Branch as described offers convenient centralization for families and researchers.

Historic Resources Board should review this plan – one review for the building, one for the library materials.

What is the price of this plan? Aren't you putting the cart before the horse? How can you not have any idea of what this will cost. People are not very friendly toward a bond issue right now.

Many people do not want the Mitchell Park Library torn down.

Why doesn't the City give PAHA all its historic resources and they can do what they want with them. The Roth Building would be the perfect place to house those materials.

What you've done with this plan doesn't tie in with the survey. You need to make that connection in the text.

City should put pressure on Stanford to let people use the Stanford Library instead of buying books for PACL, let people go to Stanford so you don't have to spend money on our library.

People can become associates of Stanford.

Books in the Stanford Library re different than those in a public library.

Representative of the neighborhood surrounding the Downtown Branch says the neighbors are working together to preserve this value community resource. They worked successfully to get Saturday hours restored, and to get the Downtown Branch off the list of Police Building potential sites. They have worked and failed to prevent the Library staff from taking public space to house Library office space.

This plan doesn't strengthen this branch in the system. It marginalizes this collection. There's no reason the collection in this branch can't be strong. We want this branch to be valued, therefore they cannot support this plan.

You've already taken away the reference collection. Giving us space and hours is not enough. We want a guarantee. How many times are we going to have to stand up to the same group of city hall insiders who keep trying to take away our branch?

Don't strip everything away and turn this branch into a popular reading room.

Make more use of the patios.

Don't put staff in the reference room.

Where is staff being moved to? Do we get our reference room back?

This plan builds in conflict. You're improving in the south and at the same time marginalizing Downtown in the north.

Don't have a virtual branch. If you say you have one, that allows the City Manager to say there are still five branches.

This neighborhood is growing. Need improved children's services.

Reconsider your terminology . Don't call them branches, call them libraries. Calling them branches raises the community's blood pressure. Downtown neighbors want a library, not a branch.

We question keeping the Children's library to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger. A large library is not a good place for children to feel comfortable.

The way this plan is presented will be problematic to the voters. You're already diminishing the demand by doubling the size of the Children's Library and expanding Mitchell Park. It's good to have the children segregated.

You're not giving north Palo Alto anything to get them to support this plan.

Renaming the branches is backwards. If you diminish the name of something, you're going to lose votes.

Overall thrust of the plan is good. Would like Main to be a focus but understands the attention give to Mitchell Park. Mitchell Park may be the right place for an expansion, but the way it is proposed is problematic. What are you giving the north?

It's self-evident that it will reduce the necessity for staff because of shifting to self check-out. Have to come up with ways to be more efficient.

Couple how you're going to do things to improve efficiency with how you're going to cut staff. Need to show the containment of staffing levels with the introduction of technology.

You can maintain staff morale, as staff retire, by filling those positions with volunteers, such as members of Friends of the Library.

Make a policy statement that you'll expand hours with a proportionate increase in staff.

The understaffing can be addressed with technology and a volunteer program.

This isn't a good management plan if you're investing in staff and volunteers. If you put \$100,000 into a volunteer program, you could get \$300,000 back.

There are many high-tech volunteers available to help.

35% to 40% of circulation in public libraries is videos. It's not clear that your plan isn't an end-run around Netflix or Blockbuster. You should put a charge on videos like

Mountain View does (\$1 per video). Even 50c per video would make money. Your plan doesn't begin to look at what's going on in the real world.

MP moved items to the "front" and boosted usage with circulation.

Emphasize how patrons save money.

Media content moving to video on demand.

Staffing levels in PACL are more than adequate.

You need to articulate a particular vision for the Downtown Library. Large print, mysteries, new literature have all been taken out. We don't have any current materials anymore. There are only second rate books at Downtown.

Collections have decreased at Downtown. Books by the most popular authors aren't here anymore. They're all at Main and Mitchell Park. Was very upset when the reference room was closed. It would be nice to be able to browse in there.

Not everything should be on the Internet. Older people don't know how to use the Internet or they don't want to have to learn. Seniors at Channing House, Lytton Gardens, Senior Day Health all need collections.

The Commission should have gotten a sense of the low level of trust. If you have that sense, it should be reflected in the vocabulary in your plan. There is no focus for College Terrace or Downtown. You used identical language for both. You haven't come up with distinctive language for either of them. You are taking a gigantic step backwards by using the word "small", "minimally processed", and "uncataloged". Didn't we learn something as libraries – the catalog causes materials to be used. We have learned that putting materials in the catalog encourages their use.

This plan inadequately reflects the outcomes of the community survey. If you were paying attention, you would have Link Plus in place by the end of the calendar year.

The Internet cannot replace books. 50% of books are not online.

Don't want to read online. Want the reference room back, but don't need reference librarians.

Don't take away the things that are sacred, the things that make us secure. Need to have the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Need to have reference librarians at the Downtown Library.

Need weekend evening hours. The hours in the plan are not convenient.

A teen orientation is lacking in north Palo Alto. Teens should be segregated but able to use the Library.

Rewrite the section about the Children's Library. Fundraisers aren't going to like the total elimination of entire age groups.

Didn't know the Library had downloadable books. You need to advertise services available.

Assistance by a volunteer at Main contrasted positively with the lack of helpfulness of the full time staff. The volunteer didn't know much but was very friendly and tried hard.

"Push tasks down".

When I see paid staff filing books on the shelves, I always think it wouldn't take much to train volunteers to do that.

Library staff didn't need to buy new monitors for all the computers. You messed up the computers when you upgraded them. No CD-ROM drives, for example. Need some intelligence on the staff instead of stupidity.

Speaker lives near Mitchell Park Library and doesn't have a problem with the way it is now.

Neighbors around Mitchell Park Library don't want a Taj Mahal library.

Just build a second story on the existing Mitchell Park building.

It's really important to have walkable branch libraries. We have so many new housing units, we need to make the Library active and dynamic. Walkable branch libraries are important for existing residents, new housing, offices and workers.

Downtown Library is tired and not fresh. The highest priority should be books and reading. Don't get rid of the reference materials.

We should be encouraging people to walk to the branches.

You're losing all the people who work downtown.

Don't throw the kids out of the Children's Library. They're in a safe little cocoon. They don't belong in a great big library. Don't legislate when they have to leave the Children's Library. What are you going to do, card them to decide when they are ready to move on? They will know when they're ready for the big library. Don't tell them when they're ready to get out of the Children's Library.

Mitchell Park Community Center is overcrowded, too, and you're addressing their needs. Some expansion is necessary for them, too.

You're just talking about what is needed for the Library, not the Community Center.

Community Center rooms are only used 35% of the time. The former kiln room is 100% unoccupied.

Leave well enough alone at Main. Don't move Technical Services to Downtown Library.

Like the idea of mixing adults and children in the Main Library. It's like a one-room schoolhouse.

#### COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jones moved to adjourn.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:00 p.m.