

APPROVED

MINUTES

Library Advisory Commission (LAC)

December 8, 2004

Council Conference Room

250 Hamilton Avenue

7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Sanford Forte, Sandra Hirsh, Lenore Jones (Chair),
Paula Skokowski, , Tom Wyman

Commissioners Absent: Genevieve Gerard, John Stucky

Staff Present: Paula Simpson, Evelyn Cheng

Council Liaison: Hillary Freeman

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS – None

BUSINESS

1. Approval of draft minutes of Special Meeting on November 18, 2004.

€# With corrections, Wyman moved to approve minutes of Special Meeting on November 18, 2004. Skokowski seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion with City Auditor about possible Library audit.

€# Sharon Erickson gave a short introduction to her role and responsibilities as City Auditor, including recent and ongoing projects her office is conducting for the City of Palo Alto. She welcomed any suggestions from the LAC about how her office can help the Library clarify issues but emphasized that the Office of the Auditor conducts performance audits and provides an impartial objective assessment of policy choice, but not direction.

€# Members of the LAC asked for clarifications on the process, how numbers were gathered in the City Auditor's 2002/2003 Service Efforts and Accomplishment (SEA) Report and raised the possibility of requesting an independent Library audit to provide perspective and lend credence to the premise that something has to be done for Library. Areas to consider

- history of library budget cuts and comparison with other cities outside Palo Alto's adjacent areas
- library staffing and funding

- capturing changes in library use over time
- use of technology in Palo Alto compared to other jurisdictions

€# Freeman clarified City Council's process of determining the City Auditor's annual work plan.

€# Skokowski questioned the necessity of having an audit since the LAC is not disputing data but rather how the Library should be structured in Palo Alto.

€# The LAC agreed to revisit the possibility of a Library audit in March/April 2005.

€# Erickson said she will be happy to (1) come back to LAC to review data in the 2003/04 SEA Report in January, and (2) contact the LAC before presenting her next work plan for Council's approval.

3. Review of City Manager's recommendation on library policy direction and discussion of LAC recommendations

€# Simpson gave an overview of the recommendations, including background information, for long and short range plans to consolidate and strengthen library services, which will be presented to Council on December 13. The LAC will be given the opportunity to speak on this item.

€# Jones recognized the following from the audience:

- Paula Sandas, a College Terrace resident and former Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) Board member, spoke about her support for the branch library system and distributed services.
- Bob Moss, Treasurer of FOPAL, spoke about the Cable Co-Op grant in regards to possible closure of Downtown and College Terrace libraries.

€# Members of the LAC discussed the recommendations, asked for clarifications and worked on the position they will take and present to Council on December 13. Key points to include

- reiterate LAC's motion passed on November 18, which has also been endorsed by the FOPAL Board, that
 "the LAC recommends the City Council adopt a long-term vision for the Library that includes a full-service library, on an existing or to-be-determined site, supporting a distributed branch library system that includes the current branches, and also recommends the library be recognized as a Top 5 priority for the 05/07 budget cycle."
- the LAC will support the recommendation for a full service library and formation of a Blue Ribbon committee to develop an implementation plan, but will not support the short-term proposal to close branch libraries.

- the LAC recognizes the City's financial challenges but asks for \$850,000 to adequately support and maintain the branches as they exist now for a year to allow the LAC to come back to Council with a proposal for distributed library services.

€# Jones will speak in behalf of the LAC on December 13. Members of the LAC are encouraged to attend the Council meeting.

REPORTS

Commissioner reports and questions:

1. Wyman lauded the Library's Annual Report (2003/04).
2. Freeman said the Children's Library renovation project may be eligible for additional federal funding.

Staff Liaison Report: None

COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Library is cover story in the 12/08 issue of the Palo Alto Weekly.
2. Freeman expressed pleasure for the opportunity to serve as Council Liaison to the LAC in 2004. The LAC expressed appreciation to Freeman for her time and helpful suggestions.

AGENDA for meeting on January 27, 2005:

The items suggested for the meeting are:

1. City Auditor's Report: Service Efforts and Accomplishments, 2003-04
2. Update on Children's Library schematic designs
3. Debriefing of December 13 Council meeting and discussion of next steps
4. LAC action on January 29 Council retreat discussion of Top 5 Priorities

Wyman moved to adjourn.

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