



LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES

Special Meeting
May 28, 2009 6:30 pm
Room 113, Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street
Menlo Park, Ca. 94025

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at approximately 6:56 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

McDonough, Chair (P), Dawson (A), Sloo (P), Soto (A), Tedrow (P), Traum (A), Zara (P)

STAFF PRESENT:

Susan Holmer, Director of Library Services
Lisa Ekers, Engineering Services Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alice Bradshaw
Aldora Lee
Rebecca McDonough
Betty Meissner

A. Public Comments

Mrs. Meissner shared that there is an upcoming Project Read learner workshop where learners who have participated in the San Jose community leadership program will share their experiences with other Project Read adult learners.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Draft EIR for Burgess Gymnasium/Traffic & Parking Study implications for library

- Ms. Ekers gave an overview of the project status and rationale. This information is available in detail on the city's website at this location <http://www.menlopark.org/departments/pwk/cip/gym/index.html>.
 1. The design process for the new gym facilities began in 2003. At that time fifteen public meetings were held to gather feedback from user groups and the community at large. The last city wide feedback campaign was held in early 2008, that meeting was attended one member of the public.
 2. There are several required approval steps based on the city building regulations. Among those is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR); this report is required because of the traffic and

parking issues that can't be mitigated. There is a forty-five day comment period for EIRs, which in the case of the gym design was extended to May 26, 2009. The consultant must respond to all comments on the EIR.

3. City staff sampled the Civic Center/Burgess campus parking lots during several days throughout the report creation period. Staff would count parked cars in each lot at half hour intervals – noting when city vehicles used parking spaces. During this sample period, the traffic consulting firm did ask Mrs. Holmer about library usage peaks. The parking analysis looks at campus wide use of parking – but doesn't have the granularity of specific lot use and frequency of lot use. It was noted that at any given point during most days there are over 100 parking spaces available on campus.
 4. The Planning Commission is ultimately responsible for voting on the recommendations in the EIR. The City Council will then certify the EIR and the project will then move on to the Building Department for the issuance of permits.
- Questions and Answers for Ms. Ekers:
 1. Mrs. Lee asked about the possibility of flipping the entrance of the gym so that the entrance would face the Burgess fields.
 - a. Ms. Ekers responded that a 180° flip was not considered in the public design phase. City staff and the consultants are aware that competing events are scheduled on campus. There are several efforts being planned to help spread parking usage:
 - i. Signage to direct campus users to specific lots for specific buildings or events
 - ii. Including a parking preference in meeting and event notices
 - iii. Increasing the number of bike racks and paths throughout the campus.
 - iv. Conversations are also happening with SRI regarding an agreement to share their parking facilities on Laurel with users of the Burgess campus after business hours.
 - b. Mrs. Sloo noted that the planned location of the gym doors does make it easy for users of the gym to get to the library before or after they use the gym.
 - c. Mr. Tedrow noted that the skate park uses a lot of space near the new gym. If the skate park were moved to the Laurel side of campus, there would be more parking available near the proposed gym.
 - d. Mrs. Lee noted that SRI has begun to rent offices on their campus to other companies, so that control of some parking areas on that campus will pass to SRI's tenants. These tenants may or may not agree to allow public use

of their private parking lots.

2. Mr. Tedrow mentioned that he had heard that the current gym design was being driven by the donor's preference for holding large events at the venue.
 - a. Ms. Ekers responded that the gift of funds for the gym was specified as being a gift to meet the city's needs. The current gym courts are not of a standard size and the new gym will address that deficit for volleyball and basketball.
3. Mrs. McDonough asked about the impact on city employee parking on campus.
 - a. Ms. Ekers did not have information on the number of employee cars parked on campus with her. She, however, noted that the police and public works departments have been asked to look into alternative parking options for the city vehicles currently stored in parking spaces in Burgess lots.
4. Mr. Tedrow noted that lot 6 was remodeled in the 1990s. It is not adequate as it is and now 17 spaces will be removed. Also, there is the expectation that library usage will increase as enrollment in MPCSD schools increase. An increase in school-aged children usually implies an increase in library usage.
 - a. Ms. Ekers noted that the state environmental studies (relates to the SEQUA requirements) use project uses and footprint to calculate impact. If the library usage is increasing then perhaps the library is in need of a separate EIR.
 - b. Mr. Tedrow noted that the library isn't expanding but it is in continual use. The monopolizing of the campus parking facilities by recreational users will impact use of the library.
5. Mrs. Sloo noted that a walk of 5 minutes in length would deter library usage. Is there a plan to increase the number of spaces?
 - a. Ms. Ekers responded that increasing available parking is not part of the current plan. However, the campus changes often. Currently there is no funding available for additional parking.
6. Mrs. Sloo acknowledged that this discussion about the impact to the library of the change in usage of lot is occurring late in the process. However, the library was not notified of the significant impact to the usage of lot 6 until last week. How does the Commission get involved in these discussions earlier?
 - a. Ms. Ekers noted that the comment period was advertised in the Almanac, on the city website and via the city email lists. There was a significant outreach attempt. Ms.

Ekers also noted that each city commission does have its area of interest and influence. The City Engineering Department works with the commission involved with the given project; in this case it was the Parks & Rec Commission that was the main focus. Not all liaisons to city commissions were notified of potential impacts of this project.

- b. Mrs. Holmer noted that the Library Department's was asked much earlier about peak usage times at the library.
 - c. Mr. McDonough asked that the Library Department be consulted when there is an impact from a city project to lot 6.
- 7. Ms. Bradshaw noted that many library users are elderly and that they will be pushed out of the library if they aren't able to find parking in lot 6. Ms. Bradshaw noted that there was a significant impact to library patrons and volunteers when part of the parking lot was used for the temporary skate park a few years ago.
 - a. Ms. Ekers noted that six months is usually needed for traffic flow patterns to settle after a campus change. It is accepted and acknowledged that convenience is a factor in the choice of parking locations by users of campus. It is expected, however, that there will be a lot of drop-offs for events at the gym.
- 8. Mrs. McDonough noted that the parking study showed that there were usually more than 100 parking spaces available on campus. If those spaces are mostly in one lot, why isn't the gym being located there? Also, is there any forecasting being done for site usage?
 - a. Ms. Ekers report that lot 5 is relatively unused during much of the day. This is the lot near the little league field and along Burgess Dr. This lot serves little league games, tennis, informal activities at the picnic area and the playground. The Park and Recreation Commission discussed these uses.
- Mr. McDonough will invite a representative from the Engineering Department to attend the next Library Commission meeting.
- The EIR approval for the gym project will go before the Planning Commission on Jun 29.

C. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:26 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, June 8, 2009 at the Menlo Park Library main branch.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Zara, acting Secretary to the Library Commission