



## LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting  
June 8, 2009 6:30 pm  
Menlo Park Library  
800 Alma Street  
Menlo Park, Ca. 94025

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at approximately 6:40p.m.

### **ROLL CALL:**

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

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

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

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Don Brawner  
Tim Goode  
Mike Lambert  
Elizabeth Lasensky  
Aldora Lee

### **A. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

### **B. INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Preliminary parking mitigation solutions - report from Lisa Ekers
  - Ms. Ekers presented follow up information to questions that arose at the May 28, 2009 special meeting using a PowerPoint presentation.
    - Both the gymnastics remodel and the new gymnasium have a combined Environmental Impact Report (EIR), even though each building is a separate project.
    - Wednesday and Saturday were selected as the parking sampling days. Sampling started at 5:30 a.m. and was completed at 10:00 p.m. All campus parking lots were spot counted at half hour intervals through out the sampling period. The sampling was done twice, once in July of 2008 and again in February of 2009.
    - Using the data collected, the EIR concluded no "significant" impact to on campus parking based on both city and state criteria.
    - Ms. Ekers then reviewed the parking options available on the Burgess campus in the six lots. Six months after the

completion of the project a review of the parking patterns on campus will be done, as this is the amount of time needed for parking patterns to settle.

- Ms. Ekers noted that the authors of the EIR will respond to all comments received on the EIR by the May 26, 2009 extended comment deadline.
- As city employees also use the Burgess campus lots, Ms. Ekers was asked to give information on employee use of lots. There are 250 full time equivalent (FTE) city employees at Burgess campus, 13 of which work at the library. Because of the shift nature of city business, there aren't specifics of how many employees park on campus in a given time over the course of a week. Mr. McDonough noted that the library also has 5 FTE volunteers per day who will also most likely park on campus. Ms. Ekers noted that part of the parking management plan would be to determine if employee parking should be consolidated to specific campus parking lots.
- Mr. McDonough asked if additional parking might be added across Alma near the railroad tracks. Ms. Ekers responded that the land between Alma St. and the railroad tracks is railroad right of way and cannot be used by the city.
- Mrs. Sloo noted that the EIR indicates a potential saturation of lot 6 with the proposed configuration of the gym.
- Mr. Tedrow asked if there was an estimate of the number of people expected to use the gym at given time. Ms. Ekers responded that the parking study was done of current usage without growth projections. She also noted that parking lots are typically not designed to meet peak demands, as that would result in very large parking lots that would be empty much of the time. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process estimates 123 net demand increase for parking campus parking spaces, 98 of those for the new gym.
- Mr. Traum asked about the number of assessable parking spaces that would be added as part of this project. Ms. Ekers responded that there would be eight accessible parking spaces near the gym. (There are currently three accessible parking spaces in front of the Library.)
- Demolishing the current skate park and rebuilding a skate park elsewhere was an option that was suggested at the May 28 special meeting. Ms. Ekers returned with an estimate of \$0.25M for that work – which would also include reconfiguration of the parking on Alma side of campus.
- Mr. Lambert noted that the downtown parking lots are saturated. He asked if there is a comparison of that saturation of downtown parking lots to the usage levels of the campus parking lots. Ms. Ekers responded that the City Council has approved a parking study for downtown.
- It was noted by Mr. Goode that after the library's expansion in the 1990s, there was also a parking lot change. Ms. Ekers noted that data from that prior parking lot changes were not in the current EIR or in the CEQA process.

- Mr. Goode added that extra parking spaces were added to lot 6 after the initial parking lot reconfiguration in 1990. At that time it was estimated that the population of Menlo Park would level off at 25,000. Menlo Park has exceeded that population estimate; losing parking spaces on campus will impact library users. There are over 21,000 library cardholders and it seems that their needs were not included in the discussion of the new recreation facilities.
  - Ms. Lasensky expressed concern for the safety of people walking to and from the parking lots. Especially people who access the library. Ms. Ekers noted that the existing walkways near and through lot 6 would not be removed. The project will include additional sidewalks and paths for use to and from the library and gym from lot 6 and other campus lots.
  - Mr. Brawner expressed surprise that the current EIR and traffic analysis was even brought to the City Council. The level of service for traffic at the Ravenswood and Alma crossing is currently very poor and will get worse with the construction of the gym. He also expressed the opinion that a solution to the encroachment of gym users to the library parking lot would be to relocate the gym to Stanford owned land on El Camino (currently locations of vacant car dealerships).
2. Belle Haven community Meeting 5/13 and Belle Haven Homeowners Assoc.
    - Mr. McDonough attended the meeting and reported that it was well attended by the community. This was a Redevelopment Agency discussion. Feedback from the community included a request for an increase in library services. Mr. McDonough also met the new president of the Belle Haven Homeowner Association and attend one of their meetings.
  3. Commissioner Reports
    - Ms. Zara reported that she attended the June 1 meeting hosted by David Bohannon on his proposed Menlo Gateway project for the section of the Belle Haven neighborhood nearest Marsh Road and Bayfront Expy. The meeting was attend by 15 people many of whom represented the developer/real estate/construction communities but also included an MPCSD school board member, a Belle Haven neighborhood resident and graduates of JobTrain programs. The meeting overall was positive and Ms. Zara feels that the project seems to be of overall benefit to the city. Interestingly, the area of the proposed project, while in the Belle Haven neighborhood is within the boundaries of the Redwood City School District. So any project based increases in school funding would go to the Redwood City School District and not to the Ravenswood City School District (which is the district that encompasses the current residential area of Belle Haven).
    - Mr. McDonough reported that Mayor Robinson, City Manager Rojas and the City Attorney have met with the Ravenswood City School District regarding payment for library services rendered. There is no information as yet on the outcome of that meeting.
  4. Staff Communications.
    - Mrs. Holmer shared that the PLS council has decided to apply for

Federal Stimulus funds to increase system broadband access and for the implementation of Radio Frequency Identification (RF Id) of collection materials. (One of the criteria for stimulus fund application is that the projects be broad based and large in scope.) Currently the PLS council is waiting for the grant guidelines.

- Susan Hildreth stepped down as State Librarian (she is now City Librarian for the Seattle Public Library.); Deputy State Librarian Stacey Aldrich was appointed Acting State Librarian. Gov. Schwarzenegger is expected to appoint a new State Librarian soon.

### **C. BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. Future pursuit of additional funding sources for library
  - Deferred.
2. Deferred project priority for library website redesign
  - This initially approved project priority was removed from the '08-'09 budget at the time of the mid-year budget review and it is not currently listed for funding in the proposed '09-'10 budget. Mrs. Holmer did state that the Library staff does have a donated copy of Dreamweaver, the web design software used by the city IT department. Time permitting the Library staff may be able tweak the Library webpages to somewhat improve usability.
  - Mr. McDonough made a motion that the Commission ask the City Council to add the funding for this project priority to the '09-'10 budget. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.
3. Preliminary Library Budget '09-'10
  - On June 2 there was a budget hearing at the City Council meeting. At that meeting a \$23,000 per year benefited page position was removed from the Library budget. But the funds remained in the overall Library budget so that it can be used for temporary staff and outreach events (e.g. Teen Night). In general Mr. McDonough feels that there is good support of Library projects from the City Council.
4. Parking Lot 6/Library patron usage impact, DEIR Burgess Gym/Gymnastics Center and Library Commission discussion

Chair McDonough asked each Commissioner, Staff member and member of the public present to state their opinion of the evening's discussion regarding the proposed location of the new gym and it impact to Lot 6 usage by Library patrons:

  - Mrs. Sloo shared that she thought that the synergy of having the gym close to the library to be good for both facilities. However, she expressed concern that there is potential for negative impact to library users by the configuration of Lot 6 as the easiest parking lot for both facilities. Ms. Sloo thanked Ms. Ekers for the time she has spent working with the Commission on this topic. However, she noted that the Library seems to be at the bottom of the attention list of the entities involved in the planning of these recreation changes.
  - Ms. Zara shared that she thought that per the planning done by the City engineering department, parking on campus would be sufficient most times of the day. The planned enhanced signage, bike racks and paths will help with some of the parking congestion during peak usage times.

- Mr. Traum shared that he felt that better flow planning is needed for this project, as it is difficult to get from one parking lot to another when looking for a space. He also shared that he felt that the layout of the new gym is a bit of a “botch” as it seems that patron circulation and use was not fully considered. He also noted that he felt a bit blind-sided by the proposed recreational buildings. He suggested an alternate location of placing the gym where the current tennis courts are located, as that end of campus seems to have a surplus of parking according to the surveys done.
- Ms. Dawson expressed that she was aware of the placement of the gym. She also noted that the Burgess campus parking lots are much safer to walk through than those found downtown or at the new Safeway complex. However, the Burgess lots are not always well lit. The new gym has more benefit to the campus than detriment and the parking does not seem inadequate.
- Mr. Tedrow expressed that the location choice for the gym was unfortunate. There are currently 132 parking spaces in lot 6 and 17 will be lost due to the construction of the new gym. Approximately 100 spaces are used through out the day when there are no special events – Mr. Tedrow did a small survey at 4:00 one day recently. There seems to be an overabundance of people trying to use the parking lot. Suggest a move of the new gym current location of the skate park and change the front of the gym to face away from the library. The Commission’s role is to advise the City Council – the current gym placement is ill advised and needs to be re-thought. Mr. Tedrow then recommended that the Commission send a letter to the City Council as he agrees with The *Almanac* editorial of this week – the placement of the gym can be better handled.
- Mr. McDonough shared that he thought the new gym would drive more traffic to lot 6 and thus negatively impact Library patrons. Library volunteers will have to walk a long way to work for the city. Perhaps converting the area between the library and the Children’s Center to parking may help. The campus has too much activity concentrated at the Alma/Ravenswood end.
- Mrs. Holmer shared that she felt that the new gym would not have a negative impact on the Library. The Library has easy parking access, especially when compared to other libraries on the Peninsula.
- Ms. Ekers summarized the community outreach activities that have been undertaken and will be undertaken to publicize the new gym and its parking. She also noted that the Parks & Recreation Commission had already investigated placing the gym at the current proposed location before Mr. Arilliga came forward with his generous donation to the City. Ms. Ekers also noted that she was not sure if flipping the location of the gym front door was discussed.
- Mrs. Lee felt that the focus of the parking study was on the number of available spaces and not on how traffic will flow through campus. Currently it is not uncommon for there to be a line of cars at the Library book drop even when the Library is not open.
- Mr. Brawner noted that we don’t know who will be running the proposed gym – will it be public/private like the pool? There is a need to recognize that there isn’t sufficient space on campus for all the proposed building. There is lots of

space on El Camino – perhaps Stanford could donate some of that land to Menlo Park’s use as was done with the soccer field off El Camino in Palo Alto.

- Mr. Goode noted that when he was with the City of Santa Clara, city recreation department use of school gyms was a program that he helped to develop. There are several public and private schools (e.g. St. Raymond, Nativity, Hillview, La Entrada, M-A) in Menlo Park with gyms – it would be to the public good to investigate a potential partnership with those schools for city programs. Ms. Zara noted that because some MPCSD schools do not have on campus gyms, the “city” elementary basketball programs are for all intents and purposes MPCSD school programs, so some of the suggested partnering is already occurring. Mr. Goode also noted that he campaigned for Measure T and feels that the original plan should be honored without a significant change in facility size.
- Mr. McDonough made a motion that the following statement be sent from the Commission to the City Council:

We are concerned that competition for parking from the proposed plans for a new gymnasium may be detrimental to library users including families with small children, seniors and library volunteers. Members of each of these groups of library patrons tend to carry stacks of library materials to and from their cars and the Library.

Please keep the needs of our Library users in mind when considering options for the use of Burgess campus parking lot 6.

The motion was seconded, voting for the motion were McDonough, Dawson, Sloo and Zara. Commissioners Tedrow and Traum left before this motion was made. The motion carried.

5. Schedule special meetings for June and July and reschedule regular meeting for July.
  - No changes made, as three of the seven Commissioners were not present at this point in the evening.
6. Approve minutes April, May and May 28<sup>th</sup> special meeting
  - April minutes approval was deferred.
  - May 11 regular meeting minutes were approved as corrected.
  - May 28 special meeting minutes was deferred.

#### **D. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, September 14, 2009 at the Menlo Park Library main branch.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Zara, acting Secretary to the Library Commission