

**OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION (LAC)
MINUTES – May 24, 2010
Main Library West Auditorium**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Citron called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Roll call:

Commissioners Present: Genevieve Katz, Sylvester Grisby, Billie Wooldridge, Muhammad Alabi, Tom Manley, Peggy Simmons, Carolyn Mixon, Susanna Gilden, Marilyn Citron, Linda White-Taylor, and Jill Broadhurst.

Commissioners Excused: Jessica Leavitt, and Steven Tidrick.

Staff: Carmen Martínez (Library Director), Winifred Walters (Grants Development Manager), Gerry Garzón (Associate Director), Gene Tom (Chief Financial Officer), and Rosalía Arteaga-Romo (Executive Assistant/Recorder).

1. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Katz made a motion to approve the minutes of March 22, 2010, as recorded.

Commissioner Manley seconded the motion.

Minutes were approved unanimously. Yes - 11; Noes – 0; abstentions - 0

2. Chairperson's Report

- None

3. Staff Activities Reports

A. Library Director reported:

- The City is contemplating the proposal of a new property tax as a solution to the current City's budget deficit.
- There will be an important budget meeting on June 24 at 5 p.m. Councilmember Brunner is frustrated with colleagues about not making budget decisions in a timely manner.
- The Library recently hired 9 librarians, after a one year process. We are the only library system in Northern California hiring at the moment.
- The City Auditor's Office has requested information to conduct a Measure Q audit. There were 12 recommendations from last year's audit with which the Library complied. This will be a 3-month audit and will probably be ready in the fall to present it to the LAC for their review and comments.
- On June 8th staff will present to the Life Enrichment Committee the request to rename the Library's West Auditorium the Bradley C. Walters Community Room. Will send meeting information to the LAC.
- Department Heads have been asked to rotate and chair the Life Enrichment Committee meetings.

- The Montclair Branch 80th Anniversary celebration will be on May 22nd.
- The Library takes very seriously the comments from the commissioners regarding volunteers at OPL, as a result, Winifred Walters will be absorbing the responsibility for volunteers into her work load; however, we won't have more details on this effort until an LAC meeting later in the year.
- **81st Avenue Library Fundraising.** Winifred Walters gave a quick update on the fundraising efforts for the new library. The total cost of the library project is \$14.8 million; \$3 million from private sources, the other is state grant and city funding. We have two major challenge grants, and are now at less than \$80,000 from our goal. We are confident that with small grants, donations, and other pending grants (project is under budget also) we will meet the funding goal.

B. Public Service - - Main/Branches Report

Gerry Garzón reported on the capital improvement progress at various branch libraries:

- 81st Avenue Library. There are difficulties with the contractor which are causing delays in the City taking possession of the new library. The City was scheduled to take possession on August 2nd.
- Asian Branch. Planning better access to a public restroom in the library. Working with Pacific Renaissance and staff to discuss planning and hope to finish up in two months.
- King Branch. Last month completed installing a new roof as part of the renovation; still under construction/renovation: cabling, ADA restroom, before end of calendar year.
- Elmhurst Branch. Will be closed for two months for entry renovation, landscaping, and painting.
- Melrose Branch. Replacing windows, planned to re-open June 16th.
- Piedmont Ave. Branch. Busy for the past 2 months dealing with the sale of the building by CityBank. The lease will expire this November 2010, and the rent will go up to \$4250 per month, from \$1 a year. Council approved a one-year lease with an option for another year. Staff is working with PANIL and the Library Friends to host community meetings to inform the public and explore alternatives. We are looking at various options, will organize an advisory group to work as a guiding group, hold community meetings as well, and begin the process to present a final report of recommendations to Council next year.

C. Measure Q 1st & 2nd Quarter Informational Report

Chief Financial Officer Gene Tom gave an overview on Measure Q (1st & 2nd Quarter) and overall we are well under-spent, with 40 full-time positions vacant at the beginning of the year. If we stay on track we expect a surplus at the end of the fiscal year to add to the fund balance of Measure Q fund, which will help stabilize the library budget. In the long term, the revenue that comes in does not match the money we get. One of the main reasons is inflation rates are low and we don't expect an increase in Measure Q revenues, we might keep a steady pace but it is not growing. Mr. Tom added that Measure Q funds are protected as they cannot be used for the City's general fund expenses. Our safe guard is the minimum balance, a little over \$9million in general public funds. If this amount is reduced we lose Measure Q funds. In response to a commissioner's concern about losing staff that was just hired due to budget cuts, Director Martínez confirmed that Measure Q is funding these positions and we were very careful about funding and keeping these positions intact. This year Measure Q collected almost \$12 million. Measure Q is also paying for the new rent increase for the Piedmont

Avenue Branch (one-year lease), and we are asking Council and community input for options for a new branch. We can absorb this rent for a couple of years.

4. New Business – None

Coordination of Volunteers/ Public Relations & Community Outreach

At the last meeting Commissioner Simmons wanted to know whether the Library has a volunteer program in place and the status of OPL volunteers. She is also concerned about the Library's public relations position.

Director Martínez replied that we lost our Community Relations librarian, when she took the Golden Handshake offer and retired last year. The Golden Handshake provision does not allow hiring someone for 2 years in order to save city funds, so the position remains vacant. There's no staff to fill that capacity and we are handicapped. We have a part-time library assistant who fills some duties of the Community Relations office, preparing the annual report, keeping up with press releases, among other things. Director Martínez added that there is a lot going on at the Library - - circulation is up on all materials, our website is getting thousands of hits p/week, we are a popular site on Facebook, doing more pr online, and capitalizing on social media as well as improving our website. The PR effort for the 81st Avenue Library is up and running promoting the library, we've hired 3 librarians, and a children's librarian is doing outreach at schools. Discussion followed as to what are the things that commissioners can help with. The other thing is to get the community involved on the 81st Avenue fundraiser. Chairperson Citron suggested putting together an ad-hoc committee to develop and coordinate volunteer efforts. Commissioner Grisby wants to open a friendly communication throughout the City of Oakland, and supports the idea of an ad-hoc committee. It was mentioned that Brenda Payton reporter with the SF Chronicle, did an article on the Oakland History Room, perhaps this reporter can be approached to do a story about 81st Avenue? Commissioner Simmons related that the literacy program is something that the commission can help with, since it is an Oakland wide program. Also, reach adult learners at 81st Avenue community. Commissioner Alabi also mentioned that a lot of people use the computer lab and there is not enough staff to help at Golden Gate Branch; he is willing to volunteer at events to promote the library. Chairperson Citron called for volunteers to form an ad-hoc committee. Commissioners Grisby, Simmons, White-Taylor, and Mixon volunteered to be the ad-hoc committee. Item for discussion at the next meeting.

5. Commissioner's Advocacy Report:

- Commissioner Wooldridge visited Eastmont Branch and is delighted to have a new children's and teen librarian, there are a lot of teen age kids asking questions and not enough staff to help. Huge turmoil with the new owners of the Eastmont complex, they don't want to open the second floor, which is not accessible from certain doors, the front entrance has to be closed per their requests, and do not want to open the complex on Saturdays. They are not very cooperative with the library or other tenants.
- Commissioner Alibi visited Golden Gate and Main Library, and is happy to see the libraries full of people.
- Commissioner Simmons went to 2nd Start Literacy Program and talked to a few staff members. She asked how people volunteered, and the main concern is losing one Sr. Literacy Assistant. She also saw a write-up on the website Better Oakland and people were concerned about the LAC being the oversight committee for Measure Q. Commissioner Simmons was concerned

about these comments and feels we need to respond (what the Commission does, and how do they oversee Measure Q expenditures). She's not familiar with Measure Q and would like staff to address the issue. Director Martínez briefly explained the role of the LAC as the oversight body for MQ, and how staff keeps updating the LAC on MQ expenditures. We also have an annual MQ audit.

- Commissioner Mixon has gone to various libraries and observed (Golden Gate, Rockridge, and Temescal) they are always busy and staff works very hard.
- Commissioner Gilden agrees with Commissioner Mixon's statement.
- Commissioner White-Taylor – no report.
- Commissioner Katz informed that FOPL and Lakeview Branch Friends met and came –up with the idea to pair up with a new friends group to help them develop and establish a group, and are eager to help at 81st Avenew. Also, FOPL published their newsletter and are covering the various friends groups. Keep FOPL in mind when looking for volunteers.
- Commissioner Broadhurst visited Diamond, Eastmont, Chavez, Golden Gate, Lakeview, and Montclair. It is a great sense of pride in the communities to have these branches providing an essential service; somehow staff is making them work, and she got a good feeling about them.
- Commissioner Grisby – no report.

6. Old Business - None

7. Agenda Building – Determination of Schedule of New/Outstanding Items

- Ad-Hoc Committee

8. Open Forum (Public Comment)

Bob Shurtleff, Friends of Lakeview Library, encouraged LAC to contact FOPL and Lakeview Friends for help in their ad-hoc effort. The Friends groups are here to offer assistance.

Josephine Lee, Golden Gate Friends, announced that the branch is holding its annual Jazz on Sundays program, including history of jazz and jam sessions, from July 11 – August 29. Encourages youngsters to come in and participate in the jazz lessons.

9. Announcements

- Due to staff schedules, there will not be a July meeting. The next meeting will be on September 27.
- Chairperson Citron announced her resignation from the LAC; it has been an honor and privilege to serve in this community. Director Martínez thanked and acknowledged her, as she moves on new ventures. The Commission needs to select candidates and vote for a new chair. If any commissioner is interested to be a candidate, please contact Director Martínez. Also, we are still looking for a youth commissioner to fill one of the vacancies.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35

Submitted by:

Carmen Martínez,
Library Director