



**LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES**

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**Date:** September 30, 2024

**Recording:** [https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=1b67596d-8811-11ef-ab4b-005056a89546](https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=1b67596d-8811-11ef-ab4b-005056a89546)

**Location:** 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue Library Branch, 1021 81<sup>st</sup>. Avenue, Oakland, CA 94621

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Co-Chair Mary Forte called the meeting to order at 5:51 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 12**

Chiye Azuma, Vice-Chair  
Brad Boyd  
Brittany Rae Buckmire  
Alternier Cook  
Mary Forte, Co-Chair  
Carolyn Jones  
Anand Patel  
Karen Roye  
Gabrielle Sloane Law, Co-Chair  
Cristina Tostado  
Alex Weinberg  
Karen Zukor

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 1**

Carolyn Moskovitz

**STAFF PRESENT: 2**

Jamie Turbak, OPL Director  
Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant to the Director

**1. Roll Call**

**2. What Are Commissioners Reading?**

Co-Chair Mary Forte opened the floor for sharing during the icebreaker. Various commissioners shared what they are reading and details about the materials and the authors.

**3. Open Forum/Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present.

**4. Approval of Draft Minutes: July 29, 2024**

Commissioner Karen Roye made a motion to approve the minutes as published. Commissioner Karen Zukor seconded the motion. Commissioners Brittany Rae Buckmire and Cristina Tostado were not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

**5. 2025 Action Plan Update**

Commissioner Chiye Azuma presented the 2025 Action Plan. She shared that the Community Engagement committee had reviewed the plan at their meeting and made edits. She also shared that Sustainability Committee would review the plan at their next meeting and return with edits to be incorporated. The goal is for the plan to be adopted for the year 2025.

Commissioner Chiye Azuma handed the discussion over to Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law who summarized the edits that were made by the Community Engagement Committee.

After feedback from commissioners regarding the edits, the Action Plan will come back to the October meeting to be finalized after the Sustainability Committee has met and reviewed it.

**6. Mentoring Plan**

Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law shared how Commissioner Mary Forte mentored her and introduced her to branch managers, electeds, and the work of the commission. She also shared that the motivation behind the mentoring plan was to expand opportunities to join the commission to people who are not necessarily connected to City of Oakland and/or have historical knowledge.

Commissioners agreed that having an introduction to the work of the commission by a more senior commissioner is helpful and important. It was suggested that the mentoring plan contain a “do’s and dont’s” for mentors to use. It was also suggested that mentors take racial equity training as a pre-requisite to being a mentor. Commissioner Karen Roye will research the training that is used at the SF Library to see if it meets the criteria of the City of Oakland.

Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law will incorporate the suggestions and send it out to all commissioners on a blind cc email with the invitation for feedback. She reminded

commissioners that the mentoring plan is informal and will change as needed as the needs and goals of the commission change. Commissioners Karen Roye and Karen Zukor volunteered to be mentors. Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law will connect mentors to mentees.

#### **7. Commissioner Assignments**

Commissioner Mary Forte started the discussion regarding commissioner assignments. She shared that due to upcoming vacancies, some branches will be without representation. Elmhurst, West Oakland, and Rockridge will need commissioners assigned to be advocates.

Commissioner Alternier Cook requested an email list be distributed so that commissioners can contact each other regarding advocacy. Staff Kere Gonzales will send out a confidential email listing to commissioners with advice to blind copy recipients so that commissioners remain compliant with The Brown Act.

#### **8. Life Enrichment Committee Report Debrief**

Commissioner Mary Forte recapped the sequence of events during the presentation to the Life Enrichment Committee on September 24, 2024. She shared that she spent a considerable amount of time of the presentation discussing the concerns about the audit and the budget. Commissioner Mary Forte shared the following questions that were asked of the Life Enrichment Committee:

- What is the exact amount of Library reserves that are being used for each year?
- Where is the documentation and justification for using the reserves and will the funds be returned?
- How can the Library Commission be included in future budget discussions before decisions are made?
- Is there a timetable for returning or replacing the funds and what will it take to come into compliance?
- What is the clear definition of the fiscal emergency?

The above questions had not been answered because the official budget has not yet been released.

Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law shared that councilmembers seemed concerned and expressed that they wanted the answers as well. The annual report was held over to the next committee meeting pending clarification from Finance about the questions and the final budget to be included in a supplemental report.

Staff Kere Gonzales will send the recording of the meeting to commissioners. She will also post the photo of Commissioner Mary Forte giving the presentation to the commission's website.

#### **9. Director's Update**

Director Jamie Turbak covered the following:

##### **FOPL Award Grant**

On September 4, the FOPL board met. They awarded the largest annual grant ever to OPL in the amount of \$250,000. A great deal of their funds come from the Bookmark

which is in a new location on Broadway. Commissioners should stop by and have a look at the new location which has revitalized the area.

### **End of Summer Party**

The End of the Summer Party was at West Oakland Branch. It was a fun time for families and patrons.

### **Oaklander Support**

In mid-August there was a fire in downtown that displaced several residents. The city set up an overnight shelter that was supported by OPL staff. Also, during the heat wave in late September, several branches served as cooling centers for Oaklanders.

### **Grants Submitted**

Two large grants have been submitted. One is a planning grant for music maker spaces in libraries and is a partnership with the SF Jazz. The other is a regional partnership with Oakland Undivided for \$650,000 for public access computers, Wi-Fi, and bandwidth.

### **Main Library**

We have been busy preparing for the reopening of the Main Library. The contractor is expecting to finish up major work in the next few weeks. The tentative reopen date is November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Guidelines for Behavior**

The current guidelines are old and dated. There has been an uptick in incidents since Covid. The guidelines are being revised so that the entire system is clear how we manage and respond to incidents.

### **Places and Spaces Radio Interview**

Director Turbak was interviewed by KCSM radio host Leslie Stoval. Staff Kere Gonzales will send commissioners the link to the interview.

### **Budget Planning for FY25-27**

Planning for the upcoming budget has started early. Departments are turning in assignments and materials for the upcoming biannual budget.

### **Piedmont Avenue Library Feasibility Study**

The Piedmont Avenue Library feasibility study is wrapping up. It will be published in the next few months. Director Turbak will be taking a report to City Council which will summarize the conclusions.

### **Security Contract**

ABC Security Contract provides security guards for the library. Their contract had expired. The contract was temporarily extended by Council through end of the fiscal year. A new RFP will go out for security services for the new fiscal year.

### **10. Update on West Oakland Branch**

Director Turbak reported that a conference room is being installed at West Oakland. There is also a new branch manager, Nitoshia Ford. She's been there for a few months and staff are excited about her leadership.

### **11. Co-Chairperson's Update**

Co-Chair Mary Forte reported that one commissioner is no longer available due to his time commitments. There are interviews for new commissioners scheduled for mid-October. She also encouraged commissioner to reach out within their networks to let them know about the commission and vacancies.

### **12. Standing Committee Updates**

#### **Community Engagement Committee**

Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law shared that the committee met and developed questions for the Safety Manager. The committee is also developing talking points to bring to commission for a vote in November.

#### **Sustainability Committee**

The committee will meet on October 10<sup>th</sup> at Dimond Branch. The deadline for published materials is October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **13. Ad Hoc Committee Updates**

**Survey-** Commissioner Alex Weinberg shared that the survey was updated to reflect demographic suggestions made by the Department of Race and Equity. The survey is with Director Turbak for review.

**Action Plan-** this was discussed in agenda item number 5 above.

### **14. Commissioner Advocacy Updates**

- Commissioner Alternier Cook reported West Oakland and Friends of Hoover Durant were at the McClymonds reunion where they distributed approximately 500 books. She also reported that the consultant for the Hoover Durant feasibility study held an outdoor community event to do a presentation on the survey results for preferred library locations.
- Commissioner Karen Roye reported that AAMLO had their monthly cleanup, an educational seminar on the use of the seed library, and a poetry reading contest. She also reported that Lakeview had a clean-up, will host a postpartum moms group and have a drop-in for technical assistance. She requested assistance with the potholes at Lakeview that need to be addressed.
- Commissioner Karen Zukor reported that Melrose has a volunteer garden with various vegetables. She requested assistance with grounds maintenance at Melrose. She also reported that Temescal frequently runs out of seeds in their seed library and requested assistance keeping them replenished.
- Commissioner Mary Forte reported that Elmhurst has a wonderful garden that has chickens. She reported that the Friends group will have a tea party at their meeting in November. She also reported that the mayor was present at the September Neighborhood Council meeting.
- Commissioner Carolyn Jones reported that all is well at the Piedmont Avenue branch and they have a Oaxacan hot chocolate machine.

- Commissioner Cristina Tostado reported that she visited the Piedmont Avenue library and is excited to visit Lakeview.

**15. Agenda Building**

**October 2024-** Feasibility Studies Update, Safety Manager Introduction, Action Plan, Quarterly Maintenance Report, Commissioner Assignments, Commissioner Introductions,

**November 2024-** Finalize Talking Points, Finalize Action Plan

**December 2024-** Recess

**January 2024-** Elections

**16. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

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Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant