



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: April 28, 2025

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=373f252f-2601-11f0-9f54-005056a89546

Location: Main Library, 125 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gabrielle Sloane Law called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 12

Chiye Azuma, Vice-Chair
Mary Cain-Simon
Gay Plair Cobb
Zacharias George
Carolyn Jones
Anand Patel
Karen Roye
Gabrielle Sloane Law, Chair
Cristina Tostado
Alex Weinberg
Karen Zukor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 1

Brittany Buckmire
Justus Samuels

STAFF PRESENT: 2

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

1. Roll Call

2. What are Commissioners Reading?

This item was not discussed.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

There were no members of the public present; public comment was closed.

4. Approval of Draft Minutes: March 24, 2025

Commissioner Sloane Law noted an amendment in the minutes. Commissioner Roye made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Zukor seconded. Commissioners George and Zukor abstained from the vote. Commissioner Cain-Simon was not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

5. Commissioner Advocacy Updates

Chair Sloane Law introduced the new format for advocacy updates. Going forward, the item will be a roundtable at the beginning of the agenda with more time allotted. She added that commissioners are not required to speak but will be given the opportunity as part of the roundtable. These were the advocacy updates:

- Commissioner Sloane Law reported that she and Commissioner Cobb met with Burt Jones and had a positive meeting. She also reported she and Commissioner Cain-Simon met with CM Houston's staff member.
- Commissioner Zukor reported that Melrose is doing well and there is no update. She also reported that Tool Lending Library got a security door but still needs a window on the staff restroom and locks on the staff storage lockers in the meeting room.
- Commissioner Roye reported that AAMLO had multiple events in observance of Women's History Month. She also reported that AAMLO is recording stories of the elders in the community and curating the stories as part of its collection. Commissioner Roye reported that she will be leaving the Library Commission and joining the Budget Advisory Commission. May 19th will be her last meeting. Commissioner Samuels will step in as the liaison for AAMLO and Commissioner Zukor will continue as the liaison to Councilmember Ramachandran's office.
- Commissioner Patel reported that both Montclair and Dimond branches get packed when it rains. He was happy to see both branches full during rainy weather.
- Commissioner Weinberg reported that he is still trying to connect with Councilmember Unger's office. Chair Sloane Law will follow up on the email he sent and assist with coordinating the meeting.
- Commissioner Jones reported that she and Commissioner Azuma have an upcoming meeting with Kevin Jenkins. She also reported that she has been in touch with the Piedmont Avenue Friends group.
- Commissioner Tostado reported that she will schedule a meeting with the District 2 Councilmember elect Charlene Wang.
- Commissioner George reported that he will have more free time now that he is on paternity leave but does not have an update at this time.

- Commissioner Cobb reported that she and Commissioner Sloane Law met with Burt Jones, staff to Kevin Jenkins because Kevin Jenkins had a scheduling conflict. She also reported that she has a meeting scheduled with Councilmember Gallo on Thursday, May 1st at noon. Chair Sloane Law recommended that Commissioner Azuma attend the meeting with Gallo since she had been in touch with the Cesar Chavez advocate.
- Commissioner Azuma reported that several commissioners attended the Life Enrichment Committee meeting. She stated that it was good practice having to condense the statement and thoughts to two minutes. Commissioner Azuma also reported that she followed up on the bike shed project and had lots of fun watching the bike repair clinic.
- Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that she met with Councilmember Houston's staff member who asked about ways to monetize the library. She and members of the Elmhurst Friend's group explained that libraries and their services are free. Commissioner Cain-Simon also reported that Branch manager, Nicole, gave the group a tour.

6. Standing Committee Updates

Sustainability Committee

Commissioner Weinberg reported that Sustainability has a special meeting in June at which they will be electing a new chairperson.

Community Engagement Committee

Commissioner Sloane Law reported that Community Engagement did not meet and there were no updates.

7. Commissioner Assignments

The following changes were made to the commissioner assignments:

Upon Commissioner Roye's departure, Commissioner Samuels will take on AAMLO in addition to his current branches.

Commissioner Cain-Simon will take on Cesar Chavez Branch in addition to her other branch.

Commissioner Cobb will take on Councilmember Gallo in addition to the Mayor.

8. Mixer Debrief

Commissioners agreed that the event was a success; it was well-attended, fun, and they enjoyed themselves. The one piece of feedback shared by Chair Sloane Law was to have more variety with the food next year. The OPL Advocates may be asked to bring food as well.

9. Quarterly Maintenance Report

Commissioners reviewed the quarterly maintenance reports for each of their branches.

They also reviewed the summary report which showed the number of open tickets and the number of days open. Commissioners will continue to advocate on behalf of their branches to resolve issues.

10. Service Requests Commission Liaison

Staff Gonzales reported that the commission has a liaison for service requests that require a deeper dive or more investigation. Commissioner Azuma volunteered to be the liaison to the commission. She and Staff Gonzales will work together to troubleshoot issues.

If commissioners notice a service request that requires more investigation, they will provide Commissioner Azuma with the Service Request number and a brief explanation of why it is being escalated. Commissioner Azuma will forward to Staff Gonzales who will compile the requests weekly and forward internally for troubleshooting.

Staff Gonzales emphasized that this process may not always result in the issue being resolved or ticket closed but will result in commissioners having a better understanding of the issues and action taken to get them resolved.

11. Director's Update

Director Turbak covered the following:

- Negotiations continued in April regarding the Chavez Branch Library lease terms.
- OPL held a staff appreciation event and made treat baskets for each location in honor of National Library Week.
- Jamie and several other library directors met with California State Assembly member, Buffy Wick's District Director, to encourage State support for public libraries.
- OPL is preparing for the closure of Brookfield Library due to construction for a remodel project. The branch will close to the public Monday, May 19th. A press release will be posted on April 29, 2025.
- We are coordinating summer lunch service at seven libraries (Main, 81st, Chavez, Eastmont, Elmhurst, Melrose and MLK).
- April starts the busy outreach season. OPL attended over 16 outreach events in April.
- [Successful OPL Annual Advocates Mixer on April 6](#)
- [Big turnout for author event, Alexis Madrigal, *The Pacific Circuit*, on April 2](#)

Upcoming Events



Meet the Author: Dr. Edda Fields-Black

Friday, May 2, 2025

Add to Calendar

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

African American Museum and Library at Oakland

Description

The African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO) will host noted historian Dr. Edda Fields-Black to present her new book, *Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom during the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024). As part of AAMLO's "Meet the Author" program, she will speak on May 2, 2025, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at 659 Fourteenth Street in Oakland, California.

Most publications on Tubman have focused on her extraordinary escape to freedom and her subsequent returns to the South to lead others out of the clutches of enslavement. However, Field-Black has authored the only book to fully explore Tubman's service in the United States military. Tubman, a gatherer of intelligence, stood at the center of a network of spies. Her June 2, 1863 raid attacked rice plantations that constituted the "breadbasket" of the Confederacy. Moreover, Tubman's bold action liberated more than 700 Gullah-Geechee men, women, and children who had endured life in bondage.



Free For All: The Public Library - Screening and Filmmaker Discussion

Saturday, May 17, 2025

[Add to Calendar](#)

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

81st Avenue Branch

Free for All: The Public Library tells the story of the quiet revolutionaries who made a simple idea happen. From the pioneering women behind the "Free Library Movement" to today's librarians who service the public despite working in a contentious age of closures and book bans, meet those who created a civic institution where everything is free and the doors are open to all.

12. Chairperson's Update

Chair Sloane Law reported that she is meeting with city staff and representative from other commissions who have tax measures. She is continuing to work to get the city to clarify the definition of a fiscal emergency.

13. Agenda Building

This item was not discussed due to a fire alarm building evacuation.

May 2025- Budget 101 & Presentation, Commissioner Assignments, Farewell for Karen Roye

June 2025- Second Start Presentation, Equity Training Update

July 2025-

August 2025- Recess

14. Adjournment –Fire Department staff notified that no one could reenter the building. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at the time of the fire alarm at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

/ s /

Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant