



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: June 30, 2025

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=86e1fe17-56b3-11f0-b7f5-005056a89546

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gabrielle Sloane Law called the meeting to order at 5:51 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 9

Chiye Azuma, Vice-Chair
Mary Cain-Simon
Gay Plair Cobb
Carolyn Jones
Justus Samuels
Gabrielle Sloane Law, Chair
Cristina Tostado
Alex Weinberg
Karen Zukor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 3

Brittany Buckmire
Zacharias George
Anand Patel

STAFF PRESENT: 2

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

1. Roll Call

2. Icebreaker Question

Question: What is something that you love to do outdoors when the weather is nice?

Commissioner Samuels: Kicking a soccer ball, walking the hills, and flying a kite.

Commissioner Jones: Walking the dog in the East Bay hills.

Commissioner Weinberg: Going to Strawberry Canyon or Temescal pools.

Commissioner Zukor: Gardening, pruning her roses.

Commissioner Azuma: Gardening and trying to not grow weeds.

Commissioner Tostado: Hiking, tanning on the beach, walking the dogs, and hanging with friends.

Commissioner Cobb: Walking in her neighborhood.

Commissioner Sloane Law: Hiking in the hills.

Director Turbak- Gardening, planting fruit trees (apple, lime, pomegranate, persimmons).

Staff Gonzales- Hanging out in the backyard with her granddaughter.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

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

4. Approval of Draft Minutes: April 28, 2025

Commissioner Cobb noted an amendment in the minutes. Commissioner Cobb made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Zukor seconded.

Commissioner Samuels abstained from the vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

5. Second Start Presentation

Jessica Trimmer shared information about the library's adult literacy program called Second Start which is Oakland's only literacy program. She shared that 1 in 5 adults struggles with literacy which impacts salary, personal finances, career, and health.

Next, Jessica described how the Second Start program helps people:

- Train tutors who work one on one with adults in the program.
- They meet people where they are and when they are available at Main and other library branches.
- The tutoring is goal-based and focuses on reading, writing, spelling, math, and literacy.
- Financial literacy, health literacy, and digital skills are offered.
- Assistance completing job, housing, and other applications is offered.
- Drop-in sessions
- Online high school diploma completion
- ESL classes in partnership with Laney College
- Online professional development

Jessica shared a few of the success stories including one student who is in his eighties and had very recently read his very first birthday card from his family.

At the end of the presentation, Jessica asked commissioners to spread the word about Second Start and encourage their communities to volunteer as tutors.

6. Equity Training Updates

Staff Gonzales recapped Objective 5 of the Action Plan which is to support the goal and objectives of the Racial Equity Action Plan and reminded commissioners that as part of that objective, the Racial Equity Team made a recommendation for commissioners to take the “Reducing Bias and Cultivating Inclusion” training.

Staff Gonzales took a poll to determine who had taken the training. Those who had not taken it would be enrolled in an upcoming training. Staff Gonzales informed commissioners that the next three sessions are on July 18, August 22, and September 19.

Staff Gonzales asked commissioners to complete the classes as quickly as possible and to reach out if there were questions.

7. Annual Life Enrichment Committee Report

Chair Sloane Law introduced this item by giving context. She explained that the report to Life Enrichment Committee is an annual report which describes of the activities of the commission, recommendations from the commission, and communicates regarding the oversight role.

Chair Sloane Law explained that this review by the commission is a high-level review of report content to determine if there are items or activities missing, and to note whether there are other things that should be included, and/or removed. She explained that editing related to grammar, punctuation, etc. would come later.

There were suggestions to include:

- Reduction to the library budget and examples of impacts of the reduction including maintenance issues in branches.
- Updates on the feasibility studies.
- Updates
- Highlighting of programs and services that were included in the talking points.

Chair Sloane-Law wrapped the discussion by asking that feedback be sent to her no later than July 7, 2025.

8. Commissioner Advocacy Updates

Upon introduction of this item, Chair Sloane Law stated that she wanted to check in about which commissioners had the opportunity to meet with their elected officials

- Commissioner Tostado reported that she had not met with CM Wang but did have side conversations getting commitments to keep libraries open.
- Commissioner Weinberg reported that he was not able to meet with CM Unger’s office. He also reported that he was at the Rockridge branch for storytime on Saturday and it was lovely.
- Commissioner Cobb reported that she had met with the Chief of Staff for the Interim Mayor and CM Gallo, and she has a meeting scheduled with Mayor Barbara Lee.
- Commissioner Zukor reported that had not had a meeting with CM Ramachandran.
- Commissioner Azuma reported that she had met with the interim mayor regarding District 6.

- Commissioner Sloane Law reported that she and Commissioner Cain-Simon met with CM Houston's staff.
- Commissioner Samuels reported that he had not met with CM Fife, however Commissioner Sloane Law reported that she had a side conversation with CM Fife.
- Commissioner Jones reported that had met with the interim mayor. She also reported going to one of the budget presentations where she had another conversation with CM Kevin Jenkins and the City Administrator.
- Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that she met with CM Houston's staff member and with CM Gallo briefly.
- Staff Gonzales pointed out an error in Attachment D- the CM assigned to Commissioner George. Staff Gonzales will correct the error.
- After asking for clarity around the advocacy reports and branch updates, Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that both Elmhurst and Chavez were experiencing the following issues with the summer lunches:
 - a. Lunches incomplete such as do not contain a protein or a sunbutter and jelly sandwich missing sunbutter.
 - b. Vendor acting as if the kids should be grateful for whatever they get which feels demeaning.
 - c. Stale carrots and potato chips presented as a vegetable.
 - d. A turkey ham which appears to be pork ham; both branches have asked for a photo of the packaging to be sure they are not serving pork to kids who don't eat it.
 - e. Generally unappetizing food.
- Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that she had brought protein bars for the branches and suggested the vendor have some form a protein available at the branches. Director Turbak talked a little bit about the complexity of the lunch program and how it is administered by the Human Services Department. Commissioner Cain-Simon offered her assistance, if needed.

9. Standing Committee Updates

Sustainability Committee

Commissioner Sloane Law reported Commissioner Cain-Simon had been elected as the Chair of the Sustainability committee.

Commission Azuma also reported the formation of an ad hoc committee for updating the Action Plan. Commissioners Cain-Simon, George and Azuma are currently on the ad hoc and hope for a member of Community Engagement committee to join as well.

Community Engagement Committee

Commissioner Sloane Law reported that Community Engagement had no substantive updates.

10. Director's Update

Director Turbak covered the following:

- There are lots of great summer things happening including the summer reading where there are games and prizes for kids, teens, and adults.

- There are tons and tons of summer programming; too many to highlight just a few. Take a look at the website and chances are you'll find something you and your family is interested in.
- There was a Father's Day event at 81st Avenue branch where there was a professional photographer who took photos. There was also a craft activity where the fathers and kids made picture frames to hold the photos.
- The OPL Youth Poet Laureate for 2025 was selected; his name is Cael Duenas-Lara.
- There is a limited-edition library card launching in partnership with Children's Fairyland for their 75th anniversary.
- The budget passed. The library did not see any personnel cuts, reductions in service or operational impact. Although the General Fund budget was reduced, the first bullet point on the budget packet is to restore the maintenance of efforts for parcel taxes across the board. This is thanks to the advocacy of the library commission.
- The Chavez lease update recommendation passed unanimously at committee and is on consent for council.

11. Chairperson's Update

Chair Sloane Law reported that the City is developing a roadmap to fiscal sustainability which will be presented at the July 8th Finance Committee meeting. Chairs would like to meet with commissioners (virtually or by phone) during recess. Stay tuned for more information.

12. Agenda Building

July 2025- Facilities Project Manager Update

August 2025- Recess

Fall 2025- Speakers from various library programs.

13. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

/ s /

Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant