



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: September 29, 2025

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=1d55f59f-a48c-11f0-8df7-005056a89546

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gabrielle Sloane Law called the meeting to order at 5:46 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 8

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 2

Anand Patel
Justus Samuels

STAFF PRESENT: 1

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

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Draft Minutes: July 28, 2025

Commissioner Cain-Simon made a motion to approve the minutes as published. Commissioner Azuma seconded. Commissioners Jones and Tostado were not present for this portion of the meeting. All others in favor. Motion approved.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

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

4. Icebreaker

Commissioners shared their favorite rainy day activities which included reading, hiking, swimming and relaxing.

5. General Plan Update

Commissioner Cain Simon explained that she is the commission's liaison to the General Plan Update Committee. The General Plan is the City of Oakland's long-term planning for what the city will look like in decades to come. She went on to explain that the role of libraries is essential in this sort of planning due to their roles in public education and roles in the community.

Commissioner Cain Simon explained that the city has narrowed down their visions to three options:

- Option A is a city of neighborhoods which would emphasize development in each neighborhood creating community centers.
- Option B is the concept of connected corridors and gateways where the emphasis is on transit between neighborhoods making moving around the city faster.
- Option C focuses on the Civic Center of the downtown area where the emphasis is on economic development and attracting industries to Oakland.

Commissioner Cain Simon asked commissioners to think about these options and how libraries can continue to serve under each of these plans. A call for an ad hoc committee was put out and the volunteers were Commissioners Zukor, Jones, Azuma and Cain-Simon. They will continue to work on ensuring that libraries are factored into the plan and will advise the commission as the plan progresses.

6. Commissioner Reports and Updates

These were the commissioner reports and updates:

- Commissioner Tostado reported that Asian Branch has monthly art classes for kids and have partnered with The Museum of Children's Art.
- Commissioner Weinberg reported that Rockridge has a Fall authors' series which is halfway through with the next event on October 15th.
- Commissioner Zukor reported that Melrose is doing well; they are continuing working on the landscaping outside. Temescal has had facility issues that are now being resolved thanks to the liaison with Commissioner Azuma and Staff Gonzales.
- Commissioner Sloane Law reported that she and Commissioner Cobb met with the City Administrator and there is good progress being made on the roadmap to fiscal health. She also reported a meeting with new Assistant City Administrator Michelle Phillips and feels that the City Administrator's office is engaging regarding getting back on track and restoring the maintenance of effort. She also reported that she wants to ensure that the feasibility studies don't fall out of focus.
- Commissioner Azuma reported that she attended an event held at Second Start on Saturday, September 27th at the Main Library where she spoke with staff and enjoyed good food. She also reported that the Friends of MLK Co-Chair has established a Next Door group and gotten registered with adopt-a-spot; there is a cleanup scheduled for Saturday, October 11th. Commissioner Azuma also shared that the Branch Friends' Network meeting is happening at the Dimond Branch on Monday, October 27th at 10:15am. Her final report was that the branch manager at Melrose has reported that all service tickets have been addressed.
- Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that Cesar Chavez needs maintenance. On a recent visit, an elevator panel fell down on her; pictures were taken, and it was reported. She reported that the branch also needs outdoor maintenance as well such as a power wash, landscaping, etc. She has emailed Director Turbak and would like to see the landlord make more effort. Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that Elmhurst had a litter walk on Saturday, September 27th for which former commissioner Mary Forte and others were present. The area was cleaned and looked very spiffy afterwards. Elmhurst also hosted "Coffee with a Cop" which gave residents a chance to voice concerns about open drug dealing happening from an RV that is located right across the street. Commissioner Cain-Simon's final report on Elmhurst was that they have partnered with a labor economist and are going to put on a trades job fair in January 2026.
- Commissioner Cobb reported that she had a conversation with the mayor's aide during which she highlighted the important of maintaining fidelity with the voters and asked that the mayor's office stay connected during the upcoming budget season. She also reported that the City Administrator gave rave reviews of Director Turbak and the library. She also reported that the exterior of the West Oakland branch needs cleaning. Commissioner Cobb's final report was that she had been in touch with Mana at Main who had no complaints other than trash bins which overflow and individuals loitering across the street.
- Commissioner Jones reported that the Piedmont branch has a new book club K-Pop theme. She also reported that Eastmont is hosting a weekly Latino film fest through the end of October that is really cool. Commission Jones' final report was that she had gone to and stocked up on the recent sale at the Bookmark bookstore.

7. Director's Update

Director Turbak shared that September was a fantastic month of programming and activities which included the following:

- The African American Quilt Guild of Oakland 25th Anniversary Exhibit and Reception at Elmhurst.
- The Expo de Lucha Libre wrestling match at 81st Avenue
- A Dia De Los Muertos Altar
- Print making workshops
- Bike ride and helmet giveaway
- Aztec dance performance
- Pinata crafts
- A Taste of West- food event at West Oakland
- Oral History Project reception at AAMLO
- Fatherhood Summit at Marriott Hotel
- 75th Anniversary of the Friends of OPL celebration at Bookmark
- Banned Book Month is in October- people can sign up to receive monthly e-newsletter.
- The Oakland Youth Poet Laureates performed at the newly established Joint OUSD and City Committee meeting.
- OPL will be honored by Tech Exchange- an organization that helps close the digital divide by giving people computers-with the Education Empowerment Champion Award which celebrates our role as a beacon of learning and opportunity for all communities.
- OPL recently opened a recruitment for web specialist; details are on the city's employment page.

Capital Projects Updates:

- Melrose- the task order is in progress.
- MLK Bike Shed- there is a meeting on 9/30 to discuss the status of the project.
- AAMLO- updated cost estimate is in progress.
- Brookfield- construction is underway.

Director Turbak's final announcement was great news: The Friends of the Oakland Public Library Board of Directors granted OPL \$260,000 in annual grants and \$155,000 for special projects.

The special projects grant will allow additional for library outreach, make improvements at 81st Avenue and West Oakland branch libraries, celebrate the Main Library's 75th anniversary in 2026, and tackle East Oakland library clean-up projects.

8. Committee Announcements

Sustainability

- Lost a member with resignation of Commissioner George
- Requests follow up on the feasibility studies; the links on the websites are broken.
- Quite proud of the work that has been done to get the windows at Temescal fixed.
- Requests follow up on the windows at Montclair

Community Engagement

- Commissioner Jones is the new (temporary) committee Chair.
- Added action plan to agenda building and will review at each meeting.
- Ad hoc committee formed to draft coalition building list.

9. Chairperson's Update

Chair Sloane Law shared that there are three new commissioners scheduled for appointment at the October 7th City Council meeting. She also will reach out to commissioners about their interests and areas where they can be useful on the commission.

10. Agenda Building

October 2025- Annual Report, East Oakland Engagement Team, Room Naming

November 2025- Annual Report, Hidden Treasures at Main

December 2025- Recess

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/ s /

Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant