



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: March 30, 2026

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=c03cb246-32c5-11f1-bb28-005056a89546

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

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chair Mary Cain-Simon called the meeting to order at 5:49 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 9

April Bell
Mary Cain-Simon
Kevin Covarrubias
Gay Plair Cobb
Andrea Henderson
Carolyn Jones
Justus Samuels
Cristina Tostado
Alex Weinberg

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 4

Chiye Azuma
Anand Patel
Gabrielle Sloane Law
Karen Zukor

STAFF PRESENT: 2

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

1. Roll Call

2. What are Commissioners Reading?

Vice-Chair Cain-Simon opened the floor for sharing during the icebreaker. Various commissioners shared what they are reading and details about the materials and the authors.

3. Approval of Draft Minutes: February 23, 2026

Commissioner Samuels made a motion to approve the minutes as published. Commissioner Covarrubias seconded. Commissioners Cobb and Weinberg abstained. Commissioners Henderson and Tostado were not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

4. Open Forum/Public Comment

There were no members of the public present during this segment.

5. General Plan Update

Daniel Findley and Genan Suleiman of the Planning and Building Department presented their progress on the General Plan. They explained the General Plan as a guiding document that lays out the citywide vision, supporting goals, policies, and implementation measures for long-term planning.

They described the Phase 2 Elements as:

- Land Use and Transportation- Addresses population growth, housing, arts and cultures, and jobs; outlines what can be built and builds a transportation system.
- Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation- Creates equitable and accessible parks and recreation facilities; preserves open space and enhances connections to open space.
- Infrastructure and Capital Facilities- Plans for resilient systems such as water, sewage and electricity; supports equitably distribute public facilities such as libraries, schools, and civic buildings.
- Noise- Minimizes the adverse effects of noise pollution on public health.

Over the next year, the timeline moves into community inputs and then goes to decision makers for consideration.

Commissioners were encouraged to provide comments on the draft framework via a portal available through April 23, 2026 and to visit the website www.oaklandca.gov/gpu to sign up for the newsletter or see upcoming events.

6. OPL Advocates

Colleen Haikes, Director of Friends of the Oakland Public Library (FOPL) introduced herself and introduced FOPL as a non-profit organization supporting OPL systemwide. She described it as distinct from the branch friends' groups as it does not belong to a specific branch. Colleen also shared that FOPL was established in 1950, has granted \$4.5M since 1993, and has over 1500 dues-paying members. FOPL is comprised of 18 volunteer directors, four paid staff, and over 200 volunteer. FOPL exists to:

- Supplement public funding
- Provide advocacy and a civic voices for the library with elected officials and the broader public.
- Mobilized volunteers, donors, and community members.
- Serve the full OPL system.

FOPL raises funds via the The Bookmark Bookstore, annual memberships, and donations and grants. In closing, Colleen recommended commissioners save the dates of May 17th 1-3p for the Spring Mixer and June 5th 7p for the 15th anniversary of the Youth Poet Laureate.

Commissioners will keep monitoring the reports and checking with their branches.

7. Commissioner Reports and Updates

These were the commissioner's reports and updates:

- Commissioner Zukor reported that the monthly repair clinics at Temescal have been hugely successful.
- Commissioner Tostado reported the CM Brown suggested a cheat sheet from the commission for ongoing issues at libraries. She also reported a clean up at MLK and that staff had reported smelling the products from the janitor's closet.
- Commissioner Sloane Law reported that she had not visited her branch but had been working with the OPL Advocates on the call to action for the Finance Committee and City Council meetings.
- Commissioner Samuels reported that West Oakland has a good book club that is growing. He also reported that the Taste of West program has been very successful.
- Commissioner Patel reported that things are going well at Montclair and foot traffic is up. He also reported that there have been individuals hanging around outside of the branch after hours and neighbors are keeping an eye on the branch.
- Commissioner Jones reported that she had not visited her branches but had been on a crusade to get the seniors in her neighborhood signed up for Libby, Hoopla, and Canopy. She reported that she had been working with them to show them ebooks and how the apps work.
- Commissioner Henderson reported that she met with the Chavez branch manager who reported things were going well but that the branch isn't cleaned often enough. She also reported meeting with the Melrose branch manager and attending the Melrose friends' meeting. Commissioner Henderson wants to help drum up foot traffic at Melrose.
- Commissioner Covarrubias reported that he and Chair Azuma had met with CM Brown's community liaison and discussed coordinating branch visits. He also reported that he had attended a park cleanup on February 7th where he'd met with CM Wang. He continues to nurture the relationships with councilmembers and their staff.
- Commissioner Bell reported that she had visited AAMLO on February 21st and the fire alarm went off during an event that was ending. She also reported that she attended the friends' and stewards meeting. Commissioner Bell that commissioners who share councilmembers coordinate their conversations and visits with them.
- Commissioner Cain-Simon reported that Elmhurst is looking good. She also reported that there was a trash pickup on Saturday. She reported a skills trade job fair took place January 31st was a success. The event was put together by the branch manager Nicole and a volunteer Christina Jenq. Dimond is doing well and they have a very active friends' group.
- Commissioner Azuma reported that MLK had a litter walk on Valentine's Day which was attended by current and former commissioners. She also reported that the MLK friends' Instagram account now has 56 followers.

8. Chavez Library

9. Director's Update

Director Turbak shared the following:

- At their regular meeting on Tuesday, 3/24, the City's Life Enrichment Committee considered the purchase of the former Community Foods Market at 3105 San Pablo for the purpose of establishing the Hoover Durant Branch Library. In front of a large crowd of library advocates in person and online, the Committee (Chairperson Fife, Councilmember Gallo, Councilmember Houston, and Councilmember Wang) unanimously approved the action. The purchase of the property will move forward to the next step: the consent calendar at the City Council meeting on April 14 at 3:30 pm. I want to thank all the public speakers for supporting this Ordinance and asking Council Members to vote yes.
- I attended a capital campaign kickoff hosted by Friends of Piedmont Avenue Library (PAL) on March 24. There is currently no site identified due to the termination of lease agreement with Oakland Unified School District's Piedmont Avenue CDC but community turnout at the meeting was strong and several volunteers offered to form a capital campaign committee.
- I attended a Branch Friends Network meeting at Melrose Branch Library on March 7 that was attended by 26 Friends representing 11 different groups. The group held a roundtable on membership and fundraising, and Sara DuBois shared an overview of the FOPL grant process. It was the strongest turnout I recall and indicates building momentum with community and volunteer support for OPL.
- The Oakland History Center's Diorama contest was so successful last year that they are doing it again! Don't miss your chance to participate. Come to the [Search for Treasure in Old Newspapers](#) program on April 18, 2:00-3:30 for a full walkthrough of newspaper search methods. Completed dioramas can be dropped off at the library between Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, July 5. Find out how to get started and see all the guidelines [here](#).
- OPL broke 17,000 followers on Instagram in January. There were 1,032 follows this month in March. This is way above our approximate average 350. Also reached 90% more accounts, received about 212,000 views during this period, and 29.8% increase in profile activity compared to last period.
- On Wednesday, April 8th the Oakland Public Library will receive the Making Democracy Work Award from the League of Women Voters.
- April is Arab American Heritage Month and there are some great programs coming up such as embroidery workshops, Yemini coffee and tea, belly dancing, author talks, music, art and culinary sessions. Please check out all the offerings on OPL's webpage.

10. Committee Announcements

- **Community Engagement-** Committee did not meet due to lack of quorum, but will form an ad hoc committee to draft the talking points. The ad hoc members will be Commissioners Sloane Law, Bell, and Henderson. Commissioner Tostado will join if she is available.
- **Sustainability-** Had a wonderful meeting and decided to continue to meet on the 3rd Thursday of every other month. The next meeting will be March 19th.
- **General Plan Ad Hoc-** Has not met. There will be a presentation from the Planning Commission in March. General Plan ad hoc members are Commissioners Cain-Simon and Weinberg.
- **Action Plan Ad Hoc-** Does not meet but operates by updating the action plan and has just released the most recent iteration of the Action Plan. The ad hoc members are Commissioners Sloane Law, Cain-Simon, and Azuma.
- **Room Naming Ad Hoc**
Committee met and gave their update at the January meeting. Director Turbak is currently working on the room-naming policy and will update when available. The ad hoc members are Commissioners Cain-Simon, Cobb, Covarrubias, and Weinberg.

11. Chairperson's Update

Chair Azuma shared that interviews for the commission will happen in April. The commission is looking for individuals in districts 5, 7, and people who are enthusiastic about service. She also shared that there will be an AAMLO tour on Saturday, April 18th.

12. Agenda Building

March 2026- OPL Facilities Manager, OPL Advocates, General Plan Update

April 2026- Auditor Presentation, Annual OPL Advocates Mixer, Christina Jenq, Talking Points

May 2026

13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant