



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: May 18, 2026

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=a782cb42-5f7c-11f1-9b4d-005056a89546

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

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 5:45 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 10

Chiye Azuma
April Bell
Mary Cain-Simon (arrived at 6 pm)
Gay Plair Cobb
Kevin Covarrubias
Andrea Henderson (arrived at 5:50 pm)
Justus Samuels
Gabrielle Sloane Law
Cristina Tostado (arrived at 5:50 pm)
Karen Zukor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 2

Carolyn Jones
Anand Patel
Alex Weinberg

STAFF PRESENT: 2

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

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Draft Minutes: April 27, 2026

Commissioner Zukor made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cobb seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

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

4. Facilities Manager Update

Calvin Hao provided updates on the status of various library projects tracked at the end of the Library Commission Action Plan.

Minor Capital Projects (funded internally)

1) PGE energy efficient lighting – at Main and other locations

- Group 1 (Main) - **Completed**
- Group 2 (AAMLO, Eastmont, GG, Melrose, Rockridge) -- In contracting and city review process. Start date TBD.
- Group 3 (81st Ave, Fruitvale, MLK, Montclair, West) – Project Manager is starting to look into the work. Timeline TBD

2) ADA door at Cesar Chavez Fruitvale (funded through Mayor’s office) -- **Completed**

3) Mitigate heat with window films – at older libraries such as Melrose, Temescal, Lakeview, Golden Gate

- Melrose – **Completed**
- Temescal – Not scheduled. The windows at Temescal are unique because they are small leaded glass that vendors are reluctant to touch. Window shades have been installed in the interim.
- Lakeview – TB scheduled
- Golden Gate – Currently in talks with a vendor to get a quote. Expecting to get a quote in the next few weeks? (by July 2026?)

4) New window shades/blinds – at Elmhurst, Melrose, Lakeview, Golden Gate

- **All sites are completed.** Golden Gate was not on this list and will be getting window film instead (see above)

Capital Projects (not funded)

1) Conversion to heat pump/electrification - at Temescal, MLK, Golden Gate, Lakeview. Melrose has this work included in their improvement project.

- This work is on hold for all sites except Melrose (see Melrose below). Bond funding needed to start design work is not available until November 2026, at the earliest. Total \$2 mil will be available for design/planning/construction. Expect the total cost to be more, depending on the scope of electrification work; we are actively looking for additional funding. These sites have been selected because they are on gas furnaces and in need of upgrades. Replacing the gas furnace triggers electrification work. Temescal has a \$100k grant from BayREN, based on a loose quote of \$600k. Temescal received the grant because it’s particularly in bad shape.

2) Teen Zone at West Oakland received 100k grant (from People-people-people Foundation)- **Completed (Jan 2026)**

Major Capital Projects (Public Works acts as owner's rep)

- 1) Melrose – funded through state grant and CIP budget: held up because of lack of Project Management staff
 - Public Works Project Manager is now assigned. A new RFP is out to rehire a design consultant (previous contract was rescinded). Calvin will work with Public Works counterpart to move this project forward. Calvin is in contact with Melrose Branch Manager regarding project progress.
- 2) AAMLO – stalled because of lack of Project Manager staff
 - Project Manager is now assigned and getting ready to go out to bid after resolving comments from Building Dept and staff, and final signoff. Expecting that this will go out to bid in June 2026.
- 3) MLK Bike Shed – Project delayed because of electrical assessments. It was supposed to go out to bid summer 2025.
 - Public Works has hired an electrical engineer to design the electrical work for the bike shed. Originally, they thought power could be drawn from the building but it was determined the building didn't have sufficient power to spare. Drawings are ready and Public Works anticipates going out to bid soon. Electrical engineer is proposing to pull power from the light pole in the parking lot, an option that had not been considered before. The power needs are not that high.
- 4) Brookfield – Branch will reopen summer 2026
 - The project is currently at the mercy of PG&E. For the power switchover, a new transformer is needed. Scheduled for late June-July.

Feasibility Studies

- 1) Feasibility studies for Hoover-Durant, Piedmont, Main have been completed. Trying to restore links on the website. Need a web person on staff.
 - Web person has been hired and will be working on restoring the missing links on the website for Main and Hoover-Durant.
- 2) West Oakland – Resiliency Center study was funded by Measure KK
 - This is not solely a library project (combines Senior and Recreation Center) No Project Manager is assigned to this project. Available funding is \$1 million to cover design/planning.

Concerns expressed by several Commissioners about electrical issues at Fruitvale and MLK Branches. Commissioner Cain-Simon asked about how to get gutter problems addressed. Calvin responded that a service request can be submitted and Commissioner Azuma reminded that facility issues can be reported to her as the liaison and she will compile these for Jamie. Commissioner Covarrubias asked about facility problems at Asian Branch. Calvin wasn't familiar with the particular concerns but will check with his team.

5. Community Relations Manager Update

Tarshel Beards gave an overview of her work and team managing social media, print, marketing, major programs as well as major partnerships such as the Roots (limited edition library cards) and KALW. She explains that community relations is every day and ensuring OPL is reaching and engaging the public through our messaging, especially those who might not be aware of OPL programs and services.

The Community Engagement Committee offers to support this work and asked how best to help. Tarshel asked for more specifics about what the Committee is trying to achieve

and gave the example that increasing foot traffic is a need across the system. She added that tagging OPL on social media helps raise awareness. Also, the Commission can also use the call to action of encouraging people to get a library card. This makes an effective elevator speech and is easy to offer and to speak to your audience about the services or resources (be specific) that will be relevant to them.

6. Quarterly Maintenance Report

Library Commission reviewed Attachments B and C

7. Annual OPL Advocates Mixer Debrief

Annual OPL Advocates Mixer took place on Sunday, May 17th from 1p-3p at Main Library. The event was well attended, slightly smaller than last year, but still good. There was a lot of positive feedback. The set up was much nicer this year and there was a lovely performance by the Youth Poet Laureate.

8. Commissioner Reports and Updates

- Commissioner Zukor – Tool Lending Library is lacking signage
- Commissioner Cobb – Main reports progress with custodial service
- Commissioner Samuels – Lots of programming and a growing book club at West. The Friends group website is up.
- Commissioner Tostado – More visibility needed at Eastmont Mall
- Commissioner Cain-Simon – Participated in monthly litter walk at Elmhurst. Stationed RV is back after a couple months absence. Spoke with Council Member Houston at Oakland Feather River Camp gala event. He supports the library and proud of Elmhurst events. Elmhurst will have an exciting BBQ event with a historical motorcycle group.
- Commissioner Covarrubias – Updates from Branch Manager on AAPI Heritage Month programming and increase unhoused presence. Will follow up with Council Member Wang’s office on this. Attended a meeting on the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) with City leadership. Library Measures C and D will be in full compliance with the proposed budget. Reached out to Council Member Wang’s Chief of Staff and await a response.
- Commissioner Henderson – Did not receive an email response from Council Member Gallo. Problems with the electrical wiring at Fruitvale Branch. There was a good Mother’s Day event with Mam community at Melrose Branch.
- Commissioner Sloane-Law – Brookfield Branch is still closed. Spending time at 81st Avenue Branch and using DVDs, CDs and the seed library. Waiting to hear from Council Member Houston.
- Commissioner Bell – Coordinating with Commissioners Samuels and Cobb to visit Council Member Fife.
- Commissioner Azuma – Participated in MLK Branch litter walk and planted sunflowers. Interested in creating an enclosure around the Bike Fix program that happens in the front of the library to reclaim the space. Attended the Friday afternoon Bike Fix program at 81st Avenue with the bike mobile and lots of kids. Also there was an Oaxacan chocolate demonstration.

9. Director's Update

Director Turbak thanks Commissioners for their support and attendance at yesterday's mixer.

On May 5, 2026 City Council approved the purchase of the former Community Foods grocery store on San Pablo Avenue to be converted to a library for the Hoover Foster area. This is a huge milestone, but the project is far from complete. We need to raise about \$11 million dollars to transform the grocery store into a library. In partnership with the Friends of Hoover Durant and other volunteers, OPL will produce a case statement to be used for fundraising.

Also on May 5, 2026 City Council approved library contracts with Cities of Emeryville and Piedmont. These agreements establish payment to City of Oakland for Oakland Public Library to provide full library service to residents of these cities. Both agreements are for 3 years and contain escalations for inflation.

On Friday, May 15, 2026 Mayor Lee published her proposed budget for FY26-27. In this proposal, the Oakland Public Library's maintenance of effort (MOE) is restored to the full amount of \$14.5 million. This allows OPL to unfreeze several positions and add one librarian for Hoover Branch as well as pilot a one year \$700K safety program at Main and MLK. This is tremendous news and appreciate the advocacy by the Library Commission that continued to raise this issue.

This weekend will launch OPL's summer program. There are over 400 events as well as a reading and activity game for all ages to have fun and win prizes. If you do not already receive OPL's monthly e-newsletter you can sign up with the QR code on the bookmark. Throughout the summer there will be weekly emails with featured events. There is something for everyone!

Sunday, June 7 will host a Juneteenth pre-cookout at the Main Library with food, games a DJ and mocktails.

Oakland Public Library is teaming up with Oakland Roots SC and Oakland Soul SC for a special Summer 2026 limited-edition library card celebrating community, literacy, and the love of soccer. Cards are available now while supplies last.

10. Committee Announcements

- **Community Engagement**-Did not meet
- **Sustainability**- Meeting upcoming this week
- **General Plan Ad Hoc**- Comment period closed
- **Action Plan Ad Hoc**- Commissioner Bell will assist in updating the Action Plan
- **Room Naming Ad Hoc**- No action. Waiting for Library Director to send a draft
- **Talking Points Ad Hoc**- This Ad Hoc is dissolved.
- **OPL Advocates Ad Hoc**- The group is tracking City Council Meetings and making sure there is a presence.

11. Chairperson’s Update

Discussion of AAMLO tour and determined to schedule the group tour on Saturday, August 1 at Noon. The two new commissioners should be available to vote by August after they are sworn. Really enjoyed the mixer and all the different people that participated and the special color coded tags that explained involvement and allowed for fun conversations and points of connection. Commissioner Jones submitted her resignation effective July 1.

12. Agenda Building

- June – Budget Update from Director
Farewell to Commissioner Jones
- July – Annual Budget 101 training from OPL fiscal staff
- August - AAMLO Tour on Saturday, August 1
Recess, no Library Commission meeting in August

13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jamie Turbak, Library Director