

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION**

December 8, 2008

6:30 p.m.

Manhattan Beach City Hall

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**ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Adams, Gembica, Hook, Popovich and Rhees

Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Geoff Dolan, Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill, Library Consultant Linda Demmers, MDA Johnson/Favaro, Recreation Services Manager Mark Leyman, Steven Klein, Los Angeles Council Library, Manhattan Beach Library Manager Don Gould, Friends of the Library President Jean Klaren and Recording Secretary Jane Grace

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the January 14, 2008 Library Commission were approved as written.

**CEREMONIAL**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

08/1208.1 – Presentation and Discussion of Program Data and Conceptual Designs for Library Expansion

City Manager Geoff Dolan addressed the Commission, reporting that Manhattan Beach residents contribute excess property taxes designated for library services and that the County has been setting aside these excess funds for the City. We reported to City Council an excess of several million dollars, with an annual flow of approximately \$700,000. Council was asked what those funds would generate if we somehow bonded the funds and whether they would be interested in using the funds to renovate or build a new library. Mr. Dolan reported that the Council felt this was an achievable project and authorized us to enter into contracts with MDA Johnson/Favaro and Library Consultant Linda Demmers to determine what our choices are when we downscale from our original 28,295 square foot facility designed for the Facility Strategic Plan (FSP).

Mr. Dolan reported that Ms. Demmers has developed two program alternatives, comparing them to our current library (12,500 square feet) and the proposed “ideal” library (28,295 square feet); Steve Johnson and Jim Favaro have prepared preliminary concept options for the two program alternatives. Mr. Dolan indicated that our goal is to take the Commission’s comments and observations of the concepts and present them to City Council in January. Mr. Dolan reported that cost information is not to be presented tonight but suggested that, as a general rule, the smaller option is something we can finance with the current revenue and the larger option might require community fund-raising or City discretionary funds.

Ms. Demmers presented square-footage comparisons of two program alternatives, compared to the 28,295 square foot proposal. She explained that the “gross square footage” is what you build and the “assignable square footage” is what you get to use, i.e. program space. She suggested that we should focus on the content rather than the size; rather than talk about what we need, we are going to talk about what we are going to do with the space; how we program; what is the content, what do we need to perform the functions for that space? Ms. Demmers indicated that a

larger building requires more staff, more collections, seats, computers, a bigger community meeting room, more restrooms, etc.

Ms. Demmers reported that the County has adopted facility planning guidelines for their community libraries at 0.5 square feet per capita. She reported that our current library is a good bit below these guidelines (0.36). When you bring the building up to 17,151 square feet, your square foot per capita will be 0.49; 22,288 square feet – square feet per capita 0.64; and 28,268 square feet – square feet per capita 0.81.

Jim Favaro reported, from an architectural viewpoint, the challenges that the City is facing with the present library facility.

- Cluttered and uninviting entryway
- Restrooms not compliant
- Undersized community room
- Technology stations awkward
- Inadequate children's area
- Library undersized
- Adult areas dense and inadequate
- Should be more than a place to store books
- Awkward frontage – sloped land on front of building an inefficient use of space
- Not neighborhood friendly

Mr. Favaro presented four options (A, B, C, D) for a new library facility:

- A. 17,500 square feet – one story – \$8-10 million
  - Generous set back – 20'
  - Renovate interior
  - Open Air Walkway
  - Entrance faces plaza
  - Children's area twice the size
- B. 19,500 square feet – one story – add \$2 million
  - Maximize footprint
  - Closed-in set back
  - Extended wings
  - Entrance on north visible from sidewalk
  - Second entrance
  - More gracious – inviting to people
  - Public area between children, teens and adults
  - Staff off to the side
  - Skylights for light
- C. 22,500 square feet - two story
  - Similar to 19.5 square feet
  - Second floor with view of the ocean; adult reading room
  - Street level – mezzanine for reading room
- D. 19,500 square feet – two story
  - Identical to option C except for street level space
  - No library space at street level

- Bistro/coffee shop at street level (3,000 square feet); – revenue generating; entrance directly off sidewalk, open morning, noon and night; visual, physical access of library
- Second floor with view of the ocean; adult reading room

During a discussion among the Commissioners, the following points were made:

- Commissioner Rhees inquired about the consequences of the bistro/vendor going out of business – Mr. Favaro indicated that it would be an amazing retail space (right on the sidewalk) and it would be important to confirm the viability of the vendor
- Commissioner Popovich inquired whether there is any plan to bring the library down to street level – Mr. Favaro indicated it is better to have the entrance on the long side of the building because the teen and children’s areas should be located near the entrance
- Mr. Dolan asked the consultants and library manager to speak to the increase of operating costs for a two-story building:
  - Mr. Gould indicated that there would be more staffing (surveillance) costs with the addition of a second story
  - Ms. Demmers indicated that the County’s new service model has smaller service desks with one person at each desk – a compact business desk and a desk for the librarian. Staff time is doubled when you have to move materials from one floor to the next.

Commissioner Hook inquired about their next step and suggested that it would be difficult to assess the project without knowing the costs and whether we have the money for the project. Mr. Dolan indicated that he would be meeting with County Librarian Margaret Donnellan Todd and staff to project costs and revenues, how to finance the project and who’s going to build the library (County or City) and what happens to the money normally spent on services while we’re closed for two years. Mr. Dolan asked the Commission for their views on the four proposals presented by Favaro/Johnson.

- Commissioner Gembica suggested that a second story would be nice but wouldn’t build it just for the view, suggesting that we have many other places with a view.
- Commission Adams indicted that she is mesmerized by the view
- Commissioner Rhees suggested that the view would be a magnet for people to come to the library.
- Mr. Johnson indicated that the reading room on the second floor would provide an acoustical separation from the rest of the library, with a potential for a very quiet area
- Commissioner Hook suggested that if we renovated and didn’t take advantage of the view, people would laugh
- Commissioner Adams inquired whether the second floor would be available to rent for events – Mr. Dolan suggested that the logistics might be difficult since the County runs the facility

- Commissioner Popovich suggested that teens are a growing population and she would like to see a larger teen area. Mr. Gould indicated that the teen area could be a dual use area for seniors when the teens are not present and, therefore, should be placed close to the adult area.
- Commissioner Popovich indicated that she is in favor of a coffee shop but envisioned in on the back plaza; the plaza could be used for children's and adult performances and the coffee shop could be incorporated with the outdoor space as an extension of the library. Mr. Favaro suggested that no vendor would agree to operate in that back location (off the busy street); a coffee cart, associated with the vendor, might be feasible. Commissioner Popovich suggested that the plaza is our only large outdoor space, other than Polliwog Park, and she doesn't see an easy access to this outdoor space from the library. Commissioner Hook said she would worry about taking small children out into the plaza.
- Mr. Dolan reported that a key element of a new facility would be a meeting room designed with access to the restrooms for joint library/city use when the library is closed.
- Commissioner Rhees voiced a logistic concern about parking with the side/front entrance and the lack of parking in the small parking lot across the street on Highland. Mr. Dolan indicated that there is no other place to put parking. Commissioner Hook suggested that we should encourage people to walk to the library but indicated that she has never had a problem finding parking for the present library.
- Commissioner Rhees indicated that she would recommend options C or D and let Council explore both options with the City Manager. She suggested that it would not make sense to not look into including an area with a view of the ocean. Commissioner Adams and Hook agreed.
- Commissioner Adams suggested that the height of the building should be an important consideration for City Council with the facility not exceeding the height of City Hall. Mr. Dolan indicated that the perception of three stories, which is not allowed, will also have to be addressed.
- Commissioner Rhees indicated that she would be in favor of a capital campaign, if necessary, to supplement moneys already available for the library, subject to identifying costs
- Commissioner Gembica indicated that she would strongly support a second story, hearing that funds are available.
- Commissioner Popovich indicated that she would like to see a small coffee/vendor area, combining it with a magazine/reading area.
- Commissioner Hook indicated that she would like some type of vendor area where a person could buy food. Commissioner Gembica liked the food/coffee cart idea.
- Commissioner Rhees suggested that we incorporate green technology in the building of the new library. Mr. Dolan indicated that there is a full Council commitment to do everything green that we can.
- All of the Commissioners agreed that there should be a second story and some type of food/beverage area and would be in favor of a capital campaign, if necessary.

Mr. Dolan indicated that staff will plan on going to City Council with this item in the first or second meeting in January. He also reported that the next joint commission/council meeting is with the Library Commission and it might be scheduled some time in late January.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None

**OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Jane A. Grace  
Recording Secretary

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Lisa Popovich  
Commission Chairperson