

LARKSPUR LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of Joint Special Meeting
With Parks and Recreation Commission
March 7, 2017

Roll Call

Library Board Present: Chair Giacomini, Foley, Gunderson,
Melka, Shumway

Commission Present: Chair Friedel, Koepfel, Sunshine

Commission Absent: Blauvelt, Cimino

Staff: Library Director Akel
Recreation Director Whitley
Mayor Kevin Haroff
Councilmember Ann Morrison

Chair Giacomini called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR

The Library Director certifies that this Agenda has been posted in accordance with the requirements of the Government Code

M/s, Shumway-Melka, moved; 5-0 to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Teresa Rose, Madrone Avenue, asked for a copy of the attachment to the staff report.

Ms. Susan Schmidt, Piedmont Road, stated this meeting was not agendized by the City Council yet there is a majority of Councilmembers present. Mayor Haroff stated they had not spoken to each other about attendance prior to the meeting. Councilmember Larry Chu left the meeting. Ms. Schmidt stated the Parks and Recreation Commission did not agendize the meeting. Mayor Haroff stated it was posted and agendized as a joint meeting.

BOARDMEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

There were no reports.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Discussion/Recommendation to Larkspur City Council the joint support of the proposed Larkspur Library/Community Center project

Chair Giacomini stated the purpose of the joint meeting was to develop a statement of mutual support and areas of agreement to present to the Council in order to underscore the on-going commitment to the construction of the new library and community center.

Recreation Director Whitley stated the suggestions was for a formal agreement between the Board and Commission on the following five items: 1) There is a community need for a new Library/Community Center building; 2) The building would house the Library and spaces for the Recreation Department; 3) The building would be located on the Rose Garden site, encompass approximately 20,000 square feet, be single story, have 60 vehicle parking spaces, and incorporate views of Mt. Tamalpais; 4) The building will not offer a café or sports facilities; 5) Giving credit to extensive work already performed by staff and members of the community, the program will not be revisited. Design, construction, and funding details are not in the purview of the Board or Commission.

Chair Giacomini asked for comments on item #1. Boardmember Foley stated they want as much community input as possible but she did not want to rehash items that have already been agreed on. The current library does not work and they need to move forward- she does not want to start from “ground zero”. Boardmember Melka stated the current library has structural issues and is not big enough to provide the types of services and programs the Board and staff would like. They need more space. Boardmember Foley stated the current library is not accessible to the disabled community. Library Director Akel agreed with the comments made by Boardmembers Melka and Foley. She added that parking was limited and they are lucky if they can go for one week without something going wrong in the building (power going out, leaks in the roof, etc.). The small size of the Children’s Room severely limits what staff can do in terms of programming. Boardmember Gunderson stated he was a bit “old school” and thinks of libraries in terms of collections and as a “gathering place”. A new library would serve both of these needs.

Chair Giacomini asked for comments on item #2. Recreation Director Whitley noted the library would be using the Hall Middle School Gymnasium, a facility handled by the Recreation Department, for an upcoming teen event due to the lack of space at the library. Having more space that can be used by both departments is imperative. Library Director Akel stated libraries are becoming focal points and are often called “cultural centers” or “community centers” and have multi-faceted functions. Boardmember Shumway agreed and stated they need to look at shared facilities that will compliment each other. They have not deviated from this original perspective. Commissioner Sunshine stated the opportunities are endless and combining the two functions is very forward thinking. This would also build a sustained library membership in the community- the combination of the two is going to be larger than the sum of its

parts. Boardmember Foley agreed and stated the proposed location was crucial. Boardmember Shumway stated there also seemed to be inadequacies with respect to the space available to the Recreation Department.

Commissioner Koepfel asked if the community has expressed the need for a new library and community center. Boardmember Foley stated "yes"- however, some patrons love the current library. She stated the intent of this meeting is to get consensus on what they agree on and continue to build momentum. Commissioner Friedel stated they would never get 100% agreement from the community. Boardmember Shumway stated they were partners and they need to invigorate the process. There will always be "naysayers". Commissioner Friedel stated it was important to come together as one cohesive group.

Chair Giacomini asked for comments on item #3. Commissioner Friedel stated she thought #3 and #4 could be combined. It was disappointing to see seven or eight months of three hour meetings and hours of outreach condensed to three sentences. All of the items discussed in #3 and #4 were thoroughly discussed. Boardmember Gunderson agreed- it seemed, at times, that they were taking two steps forward and then two steps backwards.

Chair Giacomini asked for comments on item #5. Recreation Director Whitley explained that the "program" included the things that are laid out inside and the day-to-day activities. Commissioner Friedel stated it include shared spaces, shared programs, rooms that work for multiple purposes, etc. Commissioner Friedel stated the following analogy of a condominium unit could be used: "walls in" would be the purview of the Board and Commission, "walls out" would be the purview of the Council. The Board and Commission could help with the planning with respect to funding but it was really in the hands of the Council. Boardmember Foley agreed that they could help in any way. She reiterated the need to move the process along. Boardmember Shumway stated the Board and Commission should be strong advocates for the new facility.

Chair Giacomini opened the meeting for public comments.

Ms. Susan Schmidt stated she was on the LARC Committee with Commissioner Friedel and they met twelve times over a three-month period. There has been a lot of hyperbole about the amount of public outreach. She referred to the letter from the Foundation to the Board and noted there were opportunities for the public to go to meetings but not many people attended. Few people knew about the Survey Monkey and the participation was grossly exaggerated. The decision about the size of the facility (20,000) was made at a time when the architects were circulating two preliminary drawings. They depicted the building options as being surrounded by parkland and inset on the parcel. The architects came back with a drawing that depicted a building that covered the length of the lot (300 feet). It was very unlike what the Council had seen when they approved the 20,000 square feet. She asked them to be open to the idea of re-thinking the need for a 20,000 square foot building. There are some very

large spaces in the design including the browsing area (5,000 square feet). There are spaces in the design that are not as multi-functional as they could be. She stated she was speaking for herself and not the Foundation.

Mr. Philip Terry, Diane Lane, stated he was speaking for himself. He spent 35 years on the Library Board. He is an optimist and thinks they have the group that can make the dream of a new library happen. They need to look back and see where they failed before. He was in favor of a two-story building and stated it would be beneficial in the long term in terms of the property value and the functional use of the property itself. The Library is one of the most important features of a City. They need a larger and better facility. The location is ideal and the combination of a library/community center makes sense. He discussed the formation of the Foundation in 1977. The goal of the Foundation is to support the library.

Mr. Larry Lanctot stated he was speaking as an individual and not as the President of the Foundation. He discussed how the Belvedere/Tiburon Library was at one time in the County Library system but they became frustrated with the inability to control their own destiny and withdrew and formed a district. They made a concerted effort of involving the entire community. There is a certain sense of frustration with the time it is taking to do things- he stated some community members have been at this since 1972. They are in it for the long haul and want a new library. He briefly discussed the Foundation's response to the Board's letter. The City will need to raise money (bond or parcel tax) for a new facility and what matters is what the greatest number of people who live in Larkspur thinks about how the library should look like and how it should function. He referred to item #4, and stated the Council decided long ago that there would be no active recreation on the site. Item #3 gets too specific and he stated they should use more general terms. He referred to item #5 and was concerned about the phrase "the program will not be revisited". He stated things change in the real world everyday. The Foundation is behind the efforts to re-energize the process of getting a new library and community center.

Boardmember Foley stated some good points were made by the public. The Board and Commission needs to come up with things that they all agree on and can build on. Then they need to move forward. She agreed that they do not need to be tied to the size of the building, the number of parking spaces, the views, etc. They could modify #3 and #5. They need to build commonality.

Boardmember Melka agreed- they could take a more "macro" point of view.

Commissioner Friedel stated she was not sure they should go back to the beginning stages of the process and talk about square footage, views, single story, etc. She though #3 and #5 could say: "Give credit to the extensive work already performed by staff and members of the community". Boardmember Foley stated they could add the building specifics to that statement.

Boardmember Shumway noted there were many discussions about the possibility of two stories and the issue was the cost. Boardmember Gunderson stated the single-story aspect of the building was approved by the Council.

M/s, Friedel-Foley, that the Larkspur Library Board and Larkspur Parks and Recreation Commission put forth a joint agreement on items #1, #2, #4, and #5 as stated in the February 22, 2017 staff report prepared by Recreation Director Whitley and Library Director Akel.

Ayes: All

Absent: Commissioner Blauvelt, Cimino

Chair Giacomini asked for comments on item #3.

Boardmember Shumway stated there was agreement that the building should be located on the Rose Garden site. The appropriate number of vehicle parking spaces should be adequate to accommodate the building. Boardmember Foley questioned if they should get involved with the number of parking spaces- this is a planning issue. Boardmember Shumway suggested they retain the wording about the size of the building- "approximately 20,000 square feet". Boardmember Foley stated they should delete the wording about a single-story building. This is a design issue. The square footage is important because it impacts the programming. She suggested they eliminate the following wording: "incorporate views of Mount Tamalpais". This is a given.

Mayor Haroff encouraged them to avoid the use of mandatory language, such as "shall". They are making recommendations. Boardmember Shumway disagreed- he did not want to leave the issue open. There has been specific direction and action taken by the Council. There has been a sign posted on the site for two years saying "Future site of the Library and Community Center". Boardmembers Foley and Melka agreed.

Commissioner Koepfel stated he works in contract and the words "shall" and "will" are very strong words. He would prefer much softer terms- "should" or "will".

A resident from Heather Way stated he moved to Larkspur several years ago and he thanked everyone for their efforts. Larkspur is awesome. The word "shall" makes him mad- it is telling people what to do. They want as much buy-in as possible. The room is full of very influential people. He stated involvement and openness is key to the process. They need to work as a team and have one message.

Boardmember Gunderson suggested they cite the history of the site and preface #3 with the following: "The City of Larkspur has been fortunate to have acquired/received the Rose Garden site (LLCC) they anticipate the building...".

M/s, Friedel-Shumway, that the Larkspur Library Board and Parks and Recreation

Commission agree that the wording for item #3 of the February 22, 2017 staff report prepared by Recreation Director Whitley and Library Director Akel shall read as follows; "The building shall be located on the Rose Garden site, encompass approximately 20,000 square feet. Credit shall be given to the extensive work already performed by staff and members of the community".

Ayes: Foley, Melka, Shumway, Commissioner Friedel

Noes: Chair Giacomini, Koepfel, Sunshine

Absent: Blauvelt, Cimino

Abstain: Gunderson

Boardmember Shumway asked staff to prepare a letter to send to the Council. Recreation Director Whitley stated he, along with the assistance of Library Director Akel, would prepare a letter for the two Chairs to sign.

Boardmember Foley stated this meeting was extremely helpful and they should meet again soon. Commissioner Friedel suggested the two groups meet quarterly or twice a year.

Boardmember Melka stated this was a good framework for moving forward and the two groups should help the Council with a timeline, etc. Keeping people engaged in the process will be very important.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Giacomini adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Library.

Janice Akel, Library Director