

BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS- LARKSPUR PUBLIC LIBRARY
Minutes of Regular Meeting- July 11, 2005

Roll Call: Present: Trustees Helen Brenlin, Bill Broughan (arrived 4:08),
Don Graff, Marianne Rafter

Absent: Philip Terry

Staff: Library Director Frances Gordon

Library Board President Helen Brenlin called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: June 6, 2005

M/s, Graft-Rafter and approved 3-0 (Broughan, Terry absent) to approve the minutes of June 6, 2005 as corrected.

Approval of Warrants for June/July 2005

It was the consensus of the Board to approve the warrants for June/July 2005.

Public Comment

There were no comments.

Unfinished Business Items

It was the consensus of the Board to rearrange the order of the agenda items.

Discussion on the future of the Library and possible locations for relocating it

Boardmember Graff stated this topic should be the first one discussed at the upcoming joint meeting with the City Council. Boardmember Rafter stated they should also discuss the need for a community survey and the funding for a Planning Consultant. Boardmember Graff wondered if Steering Committee Member Dick Young could make a brief presentation about the survey at the Council meeting. He stated the Council should be made aware of the fact that the Board has looked at a number of sites and done some evaluation of the issue, excluding two key components (cost and the availability). One of the conclusions is that the Niven site has more of the desirable qualities than any other site. Boardmember Broughan would like to include the other subareas of CLASP and not confine it to the Niven property (Subarea 3). Boardmember Graff stated the Niven property would be the first choice. Boardmember Broughan stated he did not want to eliminate the Nazari property as a possibility. Boardmember Graff stated this piece of property might be used for other purposes. He stated they

also need to discuss timelines and decision points because sites will start to disappear. Library Director Gordon stated the new facility should be in the downtown area. Boardmember Graff stated the issue regarding "service area" should also be raised with the City Council. This issue would have an impact on location and funding. Boardmember Rafter stated the following two issues should be discussed with the Council: 1) \$50,000 funding request for the Planning Consultant, 2) request for a Reference Librarian position. Library Director Gordon stated the Reference Librarian position would be discussed during Fiscal Year 2006/07 budget. Boardmember Graff stated they would need a Financial Consultant at some point in time as they progress through the work program. Once the Planning Consultant has finished the detailed library program and has developed a schematic, layout, costs, and determined the required permits, the process can be stopped without doing much damage. At this point you have a product that could sit for a year and not lose its validity. The next big step would be to bring in a designer and start the fundraising process. He stated the City Hall complex is not considered an "essential building" and there was no timeline for its renovation. Boardmember Broughan stated this could be used as a rationale for a new Library building. Boardmember Graff stated this fact puts the Library on an independent path. Boardmember Broughan stated the new facility should include a Cultural Center that can be used by everyone from toddlers to seniors. Boardmember Graff stated the Council was concerned about traffic around the Niven property so they need to be careful about suggesting any use that would generate a lot of traffic.

Boardmember Graff stated the Board should talk to the Council about the Steering Committee's Website. Boardmember Broughan stated one of the objectives should be to get the Council to endorse the work of the Steering Committee. Boardmember Graff stated that was described in the work program. Boardmember Graff stated he did not think these initial costs (consultants) should be borne by public contributions. Boardmember Rafter stated they need the backing of a professional Planning Consultant before attempting any fundraising efforts. Boardmember Graff agreed and stated they need the following information from the Planning Consultant prior to fundraising: preliminary program, preliminary schematic concept, preliminary cost estimates. He stated they could agree to reimburse the City for the cost of the Planning Consultant. Boardmember Rafter discussed the on-going operating costs for the new Library. Boardmember Graff stated the City would be including and approving these costs in their approval of a new Library.

Library Foundation President Larry Lanctot arrived at the meeting.

Foundation President Lanctot stated they should keep in mind that the City donated approximately \$800,000 towards the Hall Middle School Gymnasium. This sends a signal that the City is willing to contribute its own money if the project is important enough. Boardmember Graff stated people want to see a commitment from the City before making donations. President Brenlin asked if people would be reimbursed for their donations if the project fell through. Foundation President Lanctot stated they have never been given a conditional gift and he would discourage that kind of thinking.

He stated there was no question that there was a need to improve the Library whether it stays in its current location or moves to a new one. Boardmember Graff stated some individuals would give substantial amounts of money if they could get some type of recognition. President Brenlin asked if the Foundation has established a Building Fund and Foundation President Lanctot stated “yes”. Boardmember Graff asked if the Board could tell the Council that the Foundation would be used as the fundraising vehicle for this project. Foundation President Lanctot stated “yes” and added the Foundation was created for the expressed and sole purpose of supporting the public Library in the City of Larkspur. Boardmember Graff stated they would get a full understanding of what is involved in the fundraising effort once they get a professional fundraiser involved in the process. Foundation President Lanctot stated the Foundation has approximately \$250,000 including an Endowment Fund of about \$100,000. Their fundraising includes an Annual Appeal letter which raises about \$12,000 to \$18,000 per year. He stated they need a “product to sell” before soliciting any major donations. Boardmember Graff discussed the timeline and stated they might be at that point by next spring and be able to describe in detail a program for the Library, including a schematic and preliminary costs. The design phase would be the next step. Foundation President Lanctot asked if the Board had a description of what the Library Planning Consultant would do. Boardmember Graff stated “yes”. Foundation President Lanctot discussed the book titled First A Dream and the analysis that needs to take place. Boardmember Graff stated much of that analysis has been done and he referred to the “Library Facility Review” checklist. Boardmember Graff stated one of the things that complicates the future of any library is MariNet. Boardmember Broughan stated you are not only talking about shelf space but also back room facilities to process orders and books. Boardmember Graff stated it was much easier to plan for a Library twenty or thirty years ago. Foundation President Lanctot stated that 50% of their donations come from Larkspur and the rest from other areas- Mill Valley, San Anselmo, San Rafael, etc. Boardmember Graff reiterated the need to determine the “service area”. Boardmember Rafter stated the Chamber of Commerce would prefer to have the Library in the downtown area.

Clarification of the role of the Library Board members (i.e. advisory vs. administrative) role

President Brenlin stated the Council would like to change the role of the Board from administrative to advisory. Boardmember Rafter stated the current ordinance worked well for the Board and she saw no need to change it. Boardmember Graff stated during the interview process with the Council it was made clear that the Board functions in an advisory capacity. Boardmember Rafter stated there were instances where the Board felt they needed to make some administrative changes (e.g. circulation policy). She stated the Board was responsible for the safety of the building. She would like the Board to have more power than just “rubber stamping” issues. Foundation President Lanctot stated it seemed pretty clear that the Library Director manages the Library on a daily basis and the Board sets policy. Boardmember Rafter stated the Board would like to study this issue with the Library Director. Foundation President Lanctot stated the

City Council does not expect to be running the City at an employee level and this is done by delegation from the Council to the City Manager who deals with the staff. The City Council does not call department heads to tell them what to do.

Current Tasks of Supporting Organizations (e.g. Friends, Foundation, and the Steering Committee)

Boardmember Broughan stated he has seen a better working relationship between these groups over the last 6 months. In addition, the roles have been further developed and defined. Boardmember Graff stated the Friends role in the process for a new Library needs further definition. He would like to have several members of the Friends on the Steering Committee. Library Director Gordon stated many of the members of the Friends were new to the group.

Agenda

Review and discussion of the draft document “Library Facility Review” checklist

It was the consensus of the Board to table this item to the next meeting.

Open – Round Table Discussion

There was no discussion.

Library Board Member's Oral Reports and Comments

There were no reports.

ADJOURNMENT

Library Board President Brenlin adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Toni DeFrancis
Recording Secretary