



San Francisco Public Library

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 15, 2021

(As approved at the regular meeting of May 20, 2021)

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting on April 15, 2021 virtually and telephonically pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Sixteenth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020. The purpose of the orders is to provide the safest environment for all persons consistent with San Francisco Department of Public Health Order of the Health Order No. C19-07e and current public health recommendations, while allowing the public to observe and address the Commission.

The regular meeting of the San Francisco Library Commission was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Huang, Lee, López, Mall, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi and Wolf .

Commissioner Ono excused absence.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Bradley Wheidmeyer said he was a forty five year resident of the city and expressed concern the branch in Golden Gate Valley, which he said is a master piece of architecture, designed by Ernest Coxhead, is threatened by additional shadows being cast on the the branch from an upcoming construction project. He wanted to make sure the Library Commission will speak out for the architectural heritage of San Francisco Libraries.

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, said he wanted to make some general observations about how the library is functioning. He disputed the claim that the library is the most democratic of institutions. He said the library commission is appointed by the mayor and nobody elected the city librarian. He said there is no needs assessment or involvement of the public for reopening the Library. He asked why there is no discussion about the lack of service and pointed to the lack of evening hours.

Marie Ciepiela, the executive director of the friends of San Francisco public library spoke in support of the library reopening plan. Since March 2020, she said the library system has been asked to do many things, like work as contact tracers and the city's emergency response were very dependent on the incredible work of the library staff and she said they're thankful for their sacrifices. They've heard from many passionate supporters who feel the absence of the 29 branches and 95% believe libraries are essential like parks in San

Francisco. She said they recognize that reopening all the 28 branches is going to take considerable time and effort and offered the organizations support.

Brigid Mailley said they live down the block from the Golden Gate Valley Branch library on Green street and wanted to alert the library commission that on Tuesday April 20th the board of supervisors will hear a second appeal of the project at 2651 that sits one parcel above and to the south of the historic Golden Gate Valley library branch. The caller said the proposed project is a private expansion that will block light to the main reading room of the library. The caller said this will impact the users there's a group of neighbors who are opposed to this private project that will impact their public treasured neighborhood library. They asked the library commission to voice their opposition to the project or get educated about how it will impact that branch library. Thank you very much.

Leticia Yang wanted to underscore the significant concern within their community about the fact that there will be a private residential project which will negatively and permanently impact an important resource such as the library. They said it really is a magical space and provides services in a space to people of all ages from young children to the elderly, that it's really a community center that's quite important to the neighborhood. They said to Commissioner Wolf that given her tremendous experience in the arts and museums she can appreciate the importance of light to a space and for people to challenges the planning department that light doesn't matter to the Golden Gate Valley Library.

Candace McKenzie said they supported what the last several callers have stated about the project at 2651, this is a private addition involving a full floor plus a roof deck. They said they would like to add what others have said is to remind the commission that the 2012 renovation included heat exchange windows on the south side and solar panels on the roof. The result was at 25 percent operating cost reduction. They pointed out that the renovation and addition height on this adjacent building will eliminate the environmental advantages and increase the cost of operating this library.

Maureen Hallz caller said they are also a neighbor of the Golden Gate Valley Library and wanted to piggyback on the last three callers who communicated a lot of what they planned to communicate. They wanted to remind the commission that not only does this private residential expansion add no additional housing units and the bulk expansion of that project will block light into the main reading room of the library dramatically altering the defining features of that public resource permanently and to the detriment of users. They said for the planning department to say that the light can be compensated by having electrical lights on rather than having the natural light coming through the windows is kind of a ridiculous comment and the significant shading onto the solar panels will render them ineffective cutting off the renewable energy supply and cutting off the reduction of the carbon foot print.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 RAMAYTUSH OHLONE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT RESOLUTION

Commission President Mary Wardell Ghirarduzzi introduced the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement Resolution and read the resolution and land acknowledgment in its entirety, saying this was part of the racial equity action plan and in our efforts towards racial equity we remember the people of the land which is the city and county San Francisco inhabits.

Gregg Castro, Association of Ramaytush Ohlone Principal Consultant who highlighted the importance of the Acknowledgement and why we need to elevate traditional knowledge. He thought it's important to remember the essence of what we're doing here, that's in finding truth in history. Gregg said lot of the history of California of the San Francisco bay area has been hidden, sort of like by the fog that encompasses our bay. The fog of history has covered up a lot of what happened before including the history, the knowledge, and the acknowledgement of the original people in the bay area. He welcomed this opportunity

to have a moment to share with you that they're still here. He said they are still the care takers of this place, they look at it as not a right but a responsibility and they welcome every opportunity to acknowledge that, collaborate and work with the library in order to fulfill that stewardship that was given to them by their creator. He said there's lots of opportunities for it, specifically the library, a place of knowledge, a place of gathering of documents and of sharing that knowledge. He said the Library has a unique opportunity and responsibility that they're looking to work with on in filling those gaps that have existed for far too long.

Tom Fortin, Chief of the Main Library, highlighted the work that has gone into that partnership thus far. Tom said we hope to create a space with the American Indian Cultural District at the Main Library where people can learn about American heritage and culture, with culturally relevant education, art and information sharing programs in an inclusive and safe library safe. He said the Manager of the Main History Center is already at work with the AICD assisting their researcher to help archival existence, papers, and other relevant collections and resources to track native American gathering places over time and they will work to identify gaps in the collection.

Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer outlined next steps in the partnership with the Ramaytush Ohlone and the AICD communities. Maureen asked for the Commission to consider and approve the Ramaytush Ohlone Land acknowledgement Resolution.

Explanatory documents: [Ramaytush Ohlone Resolution](#) and [presentation](#).

Public Comment

Caller Number Twelve said they were little bit disturbed that it's about things and not people. They said we need to have employees of the library who can embrace and share the knowledge with people from the native communities in San Francisco and the rest of the population. They said there should be positions included in this as part of the acknowledgement that we need to do more and the working class living members of the native community of our city need jobs as well as many other working class people and who better than people of the native community to be employed at the library.

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, said he very much appreciated what the previous speaker said and what some of the previous things have been said by the library. He said when we read the statement at the beginning of each commission meeting, that we occupy the unceded homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, it struck him, that maybe we should give it back. He said he appreciated Mr. Fortin's presentation very much and the first thing to do was to do an assessment of the collections, assess what exists currently and see where the gaps are.

Naima said she wanted to call in and say how this move is one of the things that makes her really proud about being on staff at San Francisco public library. She watched the amount of effort and consideration that has gone into adopting such a resolution and is proud this this is a priority in taking care of our people of color and recognizing and seeing people of color and the contributions that we've made. She gave her kudos the librarians and library staff who contributed to this process.

Commission Discussion

There was no Commission discussion on the item.

Motion: By Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Huang to approve a resolution to require the reading of a statement acknowledging the Ramaytush Ohlone community at each Commission meeting.

Action: Ayes (6-0) Huang, Lee, Lopez, Mall, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi and Wolf)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 SFPL REOPENING PLAN

Michael Lambert, City Librarian, gave an overview to the Commission the first phase of Reopening Plans for libraries. Michael touched on current services for patrons with 13 locations in operation and restored services in every Supervisor's district. By the end of the month we plan to add two more locations and SFPL to Go-Go service, the book mobile fleet, brings SFPL service to the mission, ocean view, treasure island. He said Library accounts and information services are being provided by telephone, chat, and e-mail through our telephone information circulation teams. He said the virtual programming has been extremely robust. He reported that library staff is preparing to make limited in person services for patrons physically inside our facilities. The City Librarian highlighted that staff continues to serve as Disaster Service Workers, currently 149, to fulfill numerous critical functions around the city. We currently have 149 library staff. He said the library is being intentional in reopening plans to prioritize health and safety as we pilot limited in person services at the main library and select branches. The Chief of Main and Chief of Branches joined the presentation who shared more details for plans to reopen the main library and pilot branch sites.

Chief of Main Tom Fortin said they'll start with the main floor and services will be limited to one-hour time limit in the space. There will be no seating, no in person programs and will continue the successful SFPL to go service at the entrance. He said this was a staff level decision. He said the entrance desk will be available for quick reference questions and more in-depth reference to the specialists on the upper floors. He referenced the plan is to have socially distanced public internet computers and access to reservations will be managed through a new reservation software that will manage the time outs. Limited browsing on the first floor will be available.

Chief of Branches, Cathy Delneo, highlighted the plan for branch library in-person operations with in-person service at the Chinatown and Mission Bay Branch Libraries launching soon after the Main Library. She said by the end of June they hope to launch a second phase of pilot branches with in-person service, which will bring services to all corners of the city. These were considered with an equity lens. The branches will conduct self-service holds pick up and check out, use limited number of computers, they'll be able to browse our library collections. She said branches will be open Monday through Friday ten a.m. to five thirty p.m. They plan to restore service to every branch library by late summer or fall of 2021.

Explanatory documents: [City Librarian's Memo dated April 12 – SFPL Reopening Plan](#); [SFPL Reopening Plan presentation](#); and [SFPL Phased Reopening Plan](#).

Public Comment

Mrs. Muller attempted to make public comments but had technical difficulties and was unable to comment.

Diane Gibson said they were a resident of San Francisco and wanted to thank everybody from the library involved both in what sounds like heroic efforts to put together a very thoughtful plan to reopen the main and other branches. The Caller said they were concerned in that it seemed it had been taking a long time for the branches to reopen particularly in comparison to the reopening schedules of some other bay area libraries. The Caller said the sooner the better to get as many branches open in a limited capacity so people can actually be in the libraries and work with the librarians and have a feeling of normalcy on how to use the libraries and they can't wait to step foot inside the library or two or three.

Peter Warfield from Library Users Association said we desperately need, is not so much whether you're putting signs up but, a patron centered perspective. He said when the Library closed on March 13th with practically no notice, just a few hours, thousands of people who rely on the library for a computer were cut off, himself included, thrown into a complete void with no help whatsoever as to what one might do as a substitute as to getting a computer or renting a computer an finding places to go. He said the Library is not communicating with the 20,000 people that when he last checked were on the Library mailing list. He said

he's gotten two letters in a year plus. That's all. He asked about hours, specifically evening hours and dropping off books at closed branches.

Naima said they were calling about the reopening plan said and pointed out that we need to do so with extreme care and caution for the staff that will be serving you when we return. They said four hundred Library staff have been deployed over the past year, they left over a year ago, walked out of the libraries and went to serve the city in so many beautiful ways. People are excited to come back need to breathe and take a moment and reacclimate and realize they haven't been able to deal with some of the things people who have been able to stay home during this time.

Marti Goddard, the Library Access Services Manager said thank you for the wonderful report of most of the work that's been going on while we're closed. Gave a shout out to Tom for providing wonderful leadership and to the books and braille, an award-winning team that staff has been providing full services for our patrons who can't read print because of a variety of disabilities. They called every single registered patron on the phone to make sure that they didn't feel isolated and that they stayed connected to the library. She said she is very proud about the work they've done.

Caller Number Five said there is an urgency to open and thinks it's important to do a hard pause or hard stop when we're about to open during a pandemic. The caller said when we're considering opening the library, there were things shared and looking at it from a safety standpoint and that this virus, we know social distancing, good hygiene and masking are things that keep it at bay, now we're going to a new phase with people coming into the building. The caller said the safety of our patrons and staff is primary.

Mrs. Muller said she urges The Library to have the Heights Branch at the top of the SFPL To Go list. She said it's been used for a Hub and if the Board of Ed wants to continue with there are three elementary schools within walking distance. She said at this point the nearest library is the Excelsior branch and she can't get to that branch because of lack of parking. She said if you no longer need to quarantine return materials, you should permit people to return the materials to the branch now, which would make life easier.

Commission Discussion

Vice President Huang recognized the difficulties for SFPL leadership to balance all the logistics and different factors in making an informed decision to reopen the Library, like staff still out working as DSW responding to COVID.

Commissioner Lee thanked the people who called in with their perspective. He said from the public comment, you can see people are concerned about safety. He said this plan is as optimal as it can be taking into consideration so many different perspectives and the Re-opening Committee is doing a great job.

Commissioner Lopez acknowledged the work the Committee has been doing, saying the task has not been easy and we're still not out of this pandemic. Commissioner Lopez said having more than half of SFPL staff working in jobs they didn't sign up for is difficult. She said the re-opening plan based on the knowledge we have and the services we can provide. She thanked the committee for all their hard work.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 CITY LIBRARIANS REPORT

Michael Lambert, City Librarian, gave a presentation and updated on recent Library activities and announcements. The following topics were covered: Update on San Francisco's Poet Laureate; TBS the new SFPL printing solution and Work It.

Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Community Programs and Partnerships gave an update about San Francisco's newest poet laureate, Tongo Eisen-Martin noting it is time for the eighth Poet Laureate inaugural address. Although it has always been in person in year's past, this year will be virtual on Zoom.

Bill Kolb, Digital Strategist, gave an overview of the new Internet Management and Printing Software the Library is implementing. Today's Business Solutions (TBS). TBS is a one enterprise solution and he said pieces of it already have been launched and this is a new interface that Library patrons will use to make copies, release print jobs, scan and send faxes. He said it's a much more user-friendly interface than our previous system and patrons can interact with the interface without touching the screen.

Lia Hillman, Fourth Floor Manager of the Main Library presented highlights of the **Work It** program. She said the program focus for the past six months has been promoting job seekers, personal finance and small business. The momentum for the program has grown and she noted that attendance numbers have more than doubled. She shared positive feedback from patrons who participated in the Work It program.

Explanatory documents: [SF Poet Laureate's Inaugural Address presentation](#); [Today's Business Solution \(TBS\) Internet Management & Printing Software Implementation presentation](#); [Work It programming highlights presentation](#).

Public Comment

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, said he appreciated SFPL providing a few seconds for people to access public comment for folks who may not realize that they are not in the queue to make themselves known to be in the queue. He said that he is really appalled that the library does not help people without access to a computer, there are over a hundred thousand people according to a city report without any access and that with all of these virtual programs or almost all of them have no clue when you look at the library's website that if you don't have a computer, you can still participate. He thought it was appalling that the Library had no public input on the new print system.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Mall said the new print program sounds unbelievable and that it is free and available to all San Franciscans is fantastic and the Library is really becoming a central focus in the lives of San Franciscans not just taking out a book and taking back the book.

Commissioner Lee echoed Commissioner Mall's comment particularly on the printing. He asked Digital Strategist Bill Kolb about if patrons can use their home computer for the printing service.

Bill Kolb replied that the printing service is available to patrons from a home computer, tablet, mobile phone, and any electronic device they can send a document from.

Commissioner Wolf echoed the comments from other commissioners. Commissioner Wolf acknowledged the incredible effort that the library staff makes to be patron focused and for SFPL To Go to future in person services at the branches, and keeping that focus at the forefront. The Commissioner acknowledged the amazing abilities of staff to pivot so quickly and consistently to make these services available and to not lose sight of the roll that the library plays in the lives of every person living here in San Francisco.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES MARCH 18, 2021

Public Comment

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, talked about the Minutes and that mostly his comments are directed toward management and overall the minutes are quite good.

Motion: by Commissioner Mall, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the [Minutes of March 18, 2021](#) Commission Meeting.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Huang, Lee, Mall, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi and Wolf)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 ADJOURNMENT

Public Comment

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, libraryusers2004@yahoo.com reiterated that the library used to, and many commissions and other bodies do it as a routine matter, should have at or near the end of a meeting an item that is reserved for commissioner's to say what they would like to take up at a future meeting.

Motion: By Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commission Mall to adjourn the Meeting of April 15, 2021.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Huang, Lee, Mall, Wardell-Ghirarduzzi and Wolf)

The meeting adjourned at **7:00 p.m.**

Margot Shaub

Library Commission Affairs Analyst

Explanatory documents: Copies of listed explanatory documents are available as follows: (1) from the Commission Liaison Affairs Analyst/Custodian of Records, 6th floor, Main Library; (2) in the rear of Koret Auditorium immediately prior to, and during, the meeting; and (3), to the extent possible, on the Public Library Commission webpage: sfpl.org/library-commission/public-notice/agendas. Additional materials not listed as explanatory documents on this agenda, if any, that are distributed to Library Commissioners prior to or during the meeting in connection with any agenda item will be available to the public for inspection and copying in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.1 and Sunshine Ordinance Sections 67.9, 67.28(b), and 67.28(d)