

## **PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED FOR 12.17.20 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING**

From: Library Users Association  
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 4:57 PM  
To: City Librarian, City Librarian (LIB) <[citylibrarian@sfpl.org](mailto:citylibrarian@sfpl.org)>  
Subject: Library Commission Agenda Comments for 12-17-2020 Meeting

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Dear Commission/Commissioners:

We send this email in accordance with Agenda instructions for tomorrow's meeting, with concern that the public will not see these in the same way it would were these comments made at the actual meeting.

In this regard, we are concerned that the Agenda instructions may be misleading -- currently we have seen no mention, for example, of where these comments are to be published in, for example, the Minutes.

We intend to make public comment at that meeting as usual, and hope that no one will misunderstand that the comments in this email are the full extent of our comment. For that, please listen at the meeting or its recording, and for a partial but often flawed sense, see also the Minutes.

### I. General Public Comment

A. The Library needs to review its privacy practices. In a range of ways they are problematic, not living up to ethical and frequently announced standards. They have not been reviewed for more than 10 years, despite the last privacy review at the time recommending regular review.

B. The touting of Facebook on multiple pages of the monthly publication, "At the Library" should be stopped immediately, along with the touting of other social media. We have been saying this to you for some time, with no apparent effect, unfortunately.

See, for example, the September edition, which has a box -- "Get Social"! -- on two of four pages, and the symbols for Facebook and other social media on every other page. You may be interested to know that the City's Board of Supervisors just yesterday "condemned" the use of the Facebook founder's name as part of "Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital," and some of the reasons are documented in their legislation.

C. The Library Commission should review in detail the limited service being provided to the public, particularly in-person service and non-virtual service, which typically serves, among others, 'at-risk' or 'vulnerable' communities.

--Library hours are highly limited and include zero evenings (none after 5:30) even though patrons have repeatedly requested more evenings consistently over the years in Library surveys. By comparison,

Berkeley Public Library, with a similar per-capita funding, has at least one location open four nights a week until 8pm.

--Only about one-third of the Library's locations are open for curbside service. By comparison, Berkeley Public with similar per-capita funding, has ALL four locations open for curbside service.

-- The quality of the service should also be reviewed in detail, preferably with a survey of patrons -- and a Commission agenda item. No newspapers are offered. And while magazines/periodicals were recently added to the materials available, a recent request for five major magazines showed that the most recent of 3 of the 5 titles were 5 MONTHS old, and for two the most recent of five requests were 2 MONTHS old.

D. There have been difficulties with people being able to 'attend' virtual meetings. There needs to be a careful evaluation / survey, and agenda item that would make public improvement potential. There are a variety of issues, some of which we have mentioned in previous meetings, including incomplete instructions and Chair not allowing enough time to enable those with problems to have a fair chance to recover / get access.

## 2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIBRARY COMMISSION ACTION TO APPOINT A LIBRARY COMMISSION AFFAIRS ANALYST

This is highly problematic, as the Commission never voted to approve, or discussed, in public, the name change from Secretary (of the Library Commission) and change of duties.

The Commission is supposed to be an independent policy setting body, with its own Secretary, as described in the Bylaws. The new position description is nowhere to be found in the Bylaws.

In addition, the Secretary was primarily working to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties, and was accountable to the Commission. In past years, there were annual performance reviews.

The new position appears to be the employee of the City Librarian, accountable to that position, not the Commission, and that reduces dramatically the independence of the Commission.

We will have other comments to make on these two items and others on tomorrow's agenda, which we hope to make, as in the past, at the meeting itself.

We would be glad to speak or otherwise communicate with any Commissioner about any library matters.

Thank you for your attention to this.

Peter Warfield  
Executive Director  
Library Users Association