



# *San Francisco Public Library*

**DRAFT**

## **SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting of MAY 25, 2023**

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting on MAY 25, 2023, virtually and at the Koret Auditorium, Main Library.

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

Commissioners Present: Wolf, Huang, Bolander, Lomax Ghirarduzzi, López, and Ono.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Peter Warfield, Executive Director Library Users Association, [Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com](mailto:Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com),

Said the surgeon general of the United States released a new advisory on social media and youth mental health, which said while social media may offer some benefits, there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. And the Library should stop touting the social media in all of publicity on the get social at library and so on so forth.

Scott Feeny said they are a proud holder of SF library card and here because they are concerned and alarmed by the revelation that at least one public library branch has been turning off its public WIFI after-hours in a deliberate attempt to repel homeless people, which does not seem compatible with the library's mission of ensuring equal access for all. He said it was in response to pressure by a supervisor who believed that having homeless people near the library increased crime but the library's own research shows there's no correlation and anybody who has been homeless and tried to find services will tell you that it's an arduous process of applying for different services, getting copies of identity documents like reissued birth certificate to be able to exit homelessness and get help. Feeny asked the Library to keep the WIFI on at all library branches because everyone deserves the right to have access to the internet including unhoused neighbors..

Marie Ciepiela, Executive Director of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library said there is a book banning issue across this nation and I wanted to have everyone know that there are some resources of the American Library Association where there is more information about this. There is a website called United Against Book Bans to catch up on what's going on across the country. Ciepiela said they are having a fabulous book sale block party June 3rd in front of our donation center on 17th treat street. There are about comic books, book Mobile there to issue library cards and do basic outreach for how we unify and get books into people's homes, there will be about 10,000 books outside on the street.

Mary Harris, President of My Neighbors in Action, said they have lived in the OMI for 50 years and is asking for the Library's

continuing financial support for the new Ocean View library at the brotherhood site to keep costs down and allow for community events and outdoor space for classroom and family activities. Harris said they have the smallest city library and the largest amount of school age kids with two elementary schools nearby. The library is a valuable resource for our families, seniors and hopefully also be a cooling center for heat waves and the longer we wait, the more the library will cost. They have looked at other locations, but this is the best site for our children and outdoor activities for children.

Anastasia Yovanopolis said they live in district 8 and is pleased to come before the library Commission but not so pleased to report exactly what Mr. Feeney, had told you about. This is a supervisor and staff person who conspired with the neighbors to get the library to turn off the WIFI at night which would deny, deprive the homeless people access to WIFI at night after-hours and that seems to be against the library policy of free and equal access.

Alisa, said they currently live right next to Brotherhood Way with their family in D11, they are a member of two neighborhood groups, We Are OMI and Friends of the OMI Mini Parks, a group of neighbors dedicated to fostering community cohesion and making more vibrant green spaces in our neighborhood. Alisa said they strongly support the proposed location for the Ocean View library on Brotherhood Way in Orizaba, the location was being reconsidered in large part due to safety and parking concerns. Every neighbor and family they spoke to wants this library to move forward at Brotherhood Way.

Johanna said they are a community activist volunteer for the two organizations, we are OMI and Friends of the OMI mini parks and a new representative for the ocean view library of the community of neighborhood libraries. They asked the Library Commission to stay the course with the plan on Brotherhood Way for all the reasons Alisa and Mary have listed before you. This library could be a game changer and really become a beacon for a community that is typically overlooked.

Delia said they represent OMI community collaborative and have been running the program for about 15 years even though this program has been in place for 30. They are not able to use the current location for the library and are in competition with other neighborhood programs, the current library only has space for 10 students from the different programs to attend, the Brotherhood Way location would be amazing for our children. This side of town has been ignored for so many years and even though we had full community buy in, we went to numerous meetings, I don't understand why this location is still, we haven't decided. They asked for the Library to approve the location at Brotherhood Way.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 20, 2023**

### **Public Comment**

Peter Warfield said things he has said like his contact information have been omitted from the Minutes. He said the library should not be touting Facebook and recruiting users because of its toxicity. Warfield said it's not that it's hard to find magazines in branches, current magazines are still not always available during COVID there was a problem with the library didn't put magazines, current magazines into the library branches and so for months they just simply were not there at some places.

### **Commission Discussion**

**Motion:** By Vice President **HUANG** seconded by Commissioner **LOMAX-GHIRARDUZZI** to approve the **APRIL 20, 2023** Minutes. **Action:** AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, LomaxGhirarduzzi, López, Ono and Bolander)

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 BRANCH CAPITAL PROJECTS LIFT UPDATE**

John Cunha, Chief of Library Facilities and Andrew Sohn from Public Works Bureau of Architecture gave general updates of ongoing Library Improvements for Tomorrow (LIFT) projects. John gave an overview of the LIFT program and its history. Andy Sohn shared progress details from the last Commission update including budget updates.

Andy Sohn gave an update on the Chinatown, Mission, and Ocean View branch library projects. He said the library will schedule a ground-breaking ceremony for Mission as construction nears, likely in June. He said with these three entities there has been years of engagement with PUC and PG&E over the provision for a primary power service which exceeds the need for the engineering of the library but is going to reach conclusion in the first week of June when they receive engineering drawings from PG&E. The Mission Branch construction schedule is two years and will conclude in the spring of 2025. Sohn said the budget and the market factors for the escalation was due to what is called hyperinflation, particularly with regards to construction material costs, concrete and steel and supply chain volatility. The Mission project bid at greater than 6 million dollars over the estimated budget. For the Chinatown library, they have a process with the city real estate division to find a temporary site for the site so it will be in place prior to construction start in 2024. The project budget currently stands at 37.3 million dollars which is higher than the 32.4 million dollars from a year ago. This cost increase came with the 2022 hyperinflation and to help manage costs moving forward, they have embedded 5.4 million dollars of project contingencies. They will have the community meetings in August, design will conclude this fall in November. We'll permit from September until spring 2024 and start bidding in November and concluding in the spring with two years of construction. Late summer 2026 you should have renovated library. The Ocean View project, in terms of updates, there are two independent and different planning efforts for the Brotherhood Way corridor near the potential site, the SFMTSA. Brotherhood Way project that's strictly a safety project by NTA. Design and engineering for that will go through 2025 and implementation of that work would be in 2026 to 2028. The other effort is the Brotherhood Way active transportation and open space plan by San Francisco County transportation authority, and they are starting with a needs analysis and community engagement that should be underway, which will include a District 11 focus group. They concluded a preliminary project assessment last April with the San Francisco planning department, which is supportive of the library project and even a library project on the green way, but concerns such as including pedestrian access and safety of the proposed Orizaba site and they suggested the project be aligned with the CTA's plan for the active open space for whatever planning is to come. As SFMTA and SF CTA proceed with their independent studies the library will continue to consider site options and the library will be working with the city real estate division to gauge the current real estate market and explore these options.

#### **Public Comment**

EJ Jones said they are a lifelong resident of the Lake View OMI community and thanked the Library for taking the time to listen to community voices as they have requested investment into a new library for the community. They said as many neighbors commented during the March meeting and mentioned earlier today this library is something that the community has advocated for many years, and they support the idea of the Brotherhood at Orizaba location.

Peter Warfield said he is interested in good, better libraries for everybody he said they think they heard the mention of books once during the presentation and that's concerning what the priorities are. He said there is no shelving counts and no book counts for what exists currently and what the improved library will provide. Warfield said he appreciates there are going to be public meetings but there has been very little publicity including at this Commission and would appreciate a commitment to public well publicized meetings.

Rebecca Churn, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Friends of San Francisco public library said Friends is gratified to see the progress on the branch renovations, which is exciting for all these communities, and they are ready to raise the funds needed for the furniture fixtures and equipment for Mission and Chinatown branches and will be prepared to do the same for an Ocean View branch.

Kayla G said they live in Russian Hill and is here because the Chinatown branch is their branch and has been for the last five years since moving to that neighborhood. Currently it is a little uninspiring and this finalized design, they are so stoked for.

Lena said they were born and raised in Chinatown and works at a non-profit in Chinatown and said they are excited for the floor plans for the new Chinatown branch especially the dedicated teen space. The library is really a space for people to stretch their legs and especially for youth to do their homework on proper tables and chairs instead of on their bunk beds, so they really need that dedicated space

Matt Kensten said they are on the board of the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library and is enthusiastic about the opportunity to offer public comment to thank the board, city librarian Michael Lambert and Andy and thorough explanation of the space and the financials as the renovations of the Chinatown branch and the exploration for the other branches are considered. They said they are excited to lean in along with the rest of the board at the Friends to explore how the organization can support the library and really celebrate the redesign when it's completed in a couple years time.

Delia Fitzpatrick said they appreciate that everyone is in support of Chinatown and finds it disrespectful for those in Ocean and Lake View OMI that are still waiting for a branch that can fit this large community that has the highest amounts of seniors and children. To have to wait until 2028 for a library that can fit and give children the emotional and support that they need, is disrespectful.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Bolander asked about the budget overruns and details of that, and if there is a process if things go over by a certain percentage, do we have a detailed explanation as to why.

Michael Lambert said the Mission and Chinatown projects applied for some state money. There's a building forward infrastructure grant process the state legislature appropriated approximately 13.2 million dollars for library capital projects and San Francisco was one of the municipalities that was able to secure some of that

money. And those grant dollars will go to cover the cost escalation for Mission and Chinatown.

Sohn said they detailed budgets of every line item that goes into a project and when there is a cost overage like we did with these bids, it evaporates any contingency being held. External factors including additional fees for construction management that they did not anticipate and other regulatory things that are not within their department. The project design has not changed radically since they did the feasibility studies in 2018.

Vice President Huang said, this is hard right because on one hand our context is coming from largely sort of non-public sector situations where what you can do if something goes wrong is a different set of actions and feedback cycles are a lot shorter.

Sohn with the Chinatown library part of creating a higher budget was to build in contingency which is ample to manage from the contingency rather than manage by adding money to the budget.

Cunha said Maureen Singleton is drilling down on the details and they have a great relationship with the Board of Architecture and the process going from Mission to Chinatown has been very different learning from the mistakes made on Mission.

Bolander said if Mission is a one off and we have learned lessons from it, he is fine with that. HE said the problem is we estimated one and now it's 10 million dollars above and we need to know why and if it's going to continue to happen because we have to find the money and that he hopes this is a one off because we can learn from it and because it's important because, we are entrusted with a budget that the citizens give us to provide services and we need to use that responsibly. And with all the issues and challenges that go with that, it's a responsibility we must take seriously, and he appreciated everyone's thought on it.

Cunha said he agrees, and they've been keeping a close eye on Chinatown.

City Librarian Lambert thanked Commissioner Bolander for the feedback and added that when these projects started, San Francisco was probably the fifth most expensive construction market in the world. We've now surpassed Tokyo and San Francisco and SF is now the most expensive for construction. One thing we can do moving forward is bring greater detail when talking about budget and cost structure and the differentiation between construction costs and soft costs associated with the Department of Public Works. Maureen Singleton has been working very closely with our colleagues at the Department of Public Works to examine the fee structure and whether there's any opportunity to cut costs and reduce some of the fees.

President Wolf said it would be very useful when looking at these numbers moving forward even when we're on budget is to analyze the hard costs versus soft costs and understand where value engineering is playing a role. To help the Commission understand where we do and do not have control over costs.

Sohn said the way their budgets are built are operational costs such as furnishing and what are called project controls which are what you were calling soft costs, but they are not all soft there's a very broad thing that goes under project controls, that includes engineer fees but all the regulation stuff too. And then the hard cost is the total construction cost.

Lourdes Garcia, Public Works Bureau of Architectures said in relations to elevated costs this is not just the

library, working with the fire department, police department, libraries and every department is going through the same thing. They are evaluating every single project, going through value engineering right now. There are very detailed budgets all the way along and expect Chinatown to really stay close to the number that we're holding.

Commissioner Ono said they appreciate the discussion we had because there's some of us that are new and some that are old and being on the Commission, we are responsible, and we do have a job to do, and I appreciate all the questions about the budget. Ono said they respect what public works has done and how you've come through for the Library so many times. That Commission branch is a unique one. Fighting with the PG&E and PUC, all these different issues that came up, it's a lesson learned and I'm glad we're going to learn from that and move forward with Chinatown and with Ocean View. For Ocean View why is it taking two years for SFMAT and SF PTA to do the community studies and can that be faster.

City Librarian Lambert said last fall he met with SFMTA Director Tumlin and Tilley Chang SFCTA Director, at the Brotherhood Way Orizaba intersection. Andrew Sohn was there from public works and other library staff, and it was an exercise to really visualize what needs to happen there. They saw seniors trying to cross that roadway at 8:30 in the morning in rush hour traffic, it was a harrowing experience for them, and it became very clear for the need for studies there. They are looking at the Brotherhood Way intersection, a longer-term vision that would reclaim part of that roadway and make approximately 7 acres of green space for that southern part of the city. SFMTA is Commissioning an independent study. They recognize that improvements need to be made to that roadway irrespective of whether the library is cited at that intersection or not. And they have commenced that work earlier this year and that is why the library is monitoring those traffic studies. Because we need to better understand what commitments are going to be made, what mitigation can be performed to make that site safe and responsive to the cumulative community feedback that we have received.

Vice President Huan said it's extremely difficult because it feels like most people approaching this problem would try to force a very clear okay are we doing this or not type of conversation like now. And that's difficult because whatever decision you make if you're going to build it's going to be there for decades after you. Huang said they understand the urgency, and it is frustrating to see the timelines extend and extend but it's all in the spirit of getting to the most correct decision that we can.

Lambert said there is a difference between the Ocean View project and the two other projects. When we initially commissioned the branch library feasibility report, these were all three slated to be renovations. And the Mission Branch library and the Chinatown Branch library, they exist, and there is a difference between constructing a brand-new library and renovations. Initially Ocean View was slated to be a renovation and it was fully funded. The community spoke loud and clear that was not going to meet their needs and at those early Commission and community meetings and we communicated at the earliest stage that this will take longer. We are working with the real estate division for the city and the Brotherhood Way site has a lot of positives, most notably the fact it is city owned property. So that would solve for site acquisition and the cost associated with that. While we are monitoring these traffic studies there is value in taking a fresh look at the Randolph, broad street, main corridor where public transit already exists where the current libraries already sited.

President Wolf said she is grateful that the staff of the library listened to the Ocean View community when it was time for a renovation to say we hear you, that's just not going to be good enough and we are as the Commission putting dollars forward as our sign of a commitment to that promise to make a new branch. New

projects take time and hope the Ocean View branch exercises patience, but we know there's a fire under you to keep this going and we are with you on that. We have three exciting events coming up, in June we'll look forward to a ground-breaking celebration for the Mission Branch and then in August we'll have community meetings for the Chinatown branch and that will be a wonderful way to hear from the community about how that new renovated facility can create new programs and opportunities and having design charettes in the summer and fall for the Ocean View.

#### **AGENDA ITEMNO. 4 CITY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT**

Hilary Ake, Early Literacy Coordinator and Community Programs and Partnerships gave a presentation on the April 30, 2023, Día de los niños Día de los libros. Ake said the event is a yearly celebration of children and books, rooted in a Latin American tradition, it is a child centered event with the goals of promoting literacy and unifying families of all cultures. She said this year they had several incredible community partners who provided activities for families. One new partnership Ake highlight was with the Native-American health center. One aspect of the event is the book give away, she highlighted that studies show when children have books at home it increases their reading skills, vocabulary development and overall academic success.

Christy Estrovitz, Manager of Youth Services and Programs and Partnerships Division gave an overview of Summer Stride, which is the Library's award winning annual summer learning campaign. Estrovitz shared some of their internal goals, one of which is to inform and inspire staff with a community engagement focused program that prioritizes direct outreach and culturally relevant and joyful experiences that connect San Francisco youth, adults, and families with the library. She said the program starts next week, runs all summer and is for all ages, all abilities, all means it's an inclusive program. It has a host of free events for all ages. Estrovitz said every time a San Francisco student walks into a library this summer they can get a free book and this summer are book have created a new summer schedule, so they are going to be in four different parks every Monday, Thursday, this summer going to where camp groups naturally congregate and providing activities and access to collections. She thanked the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, which funds 99% of this program.

#### **Public Comment**

Peter Warfield said he appreciates hearing about presentations and especially when they have to do with that four-letter word that we don't otherwise hear that much having to do with books, and the illustration on page 48, shows lots of people doing all kinds of stuff interacting with books and with writing, with book cart with a bookcase that's full of books, which raises a question about the importance and the qualities of actual books. e-books are not the equivalent of books, when you have a book, you have something definite, you have something solid, which is not to say there is no point in having e-books but just appreciate and value the physical books.

Marciel said they are part of the SFPL staff with CPP our community partnerships and programming and she used to be an original kid power which was what the volunteers were called way back many years ago. Summer Stride makes the library connect with our community and we are doing book bundling, putting out great books, great packages with STEM kits and there's just so much and I'm so proud of being part of the Summer Stride team.



Matt Kenston said he is a member of the board of the friends of San Francisco public library and is grateful to see how the money is being used to extend the reach of the San Francisco public library and deliver on Friends mission to support and advocate for premier public library system in San Francisco. He said there is an extraordinary degree of organization required by library staff to pull off events like Día and Summer Stride. I would like to also encourage the teams at the library to always consider including the terrific ecosystem of independent bookstores in San Francisco to further the objective of improving literacy and I am fusing stories and he looks forward to supporting his children earning their summer stride tote bags this summer.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Lomax-Ghirarduzzi said this was a wonderful city librarian's report and acknowledged that all of us that are trying to be stewards of this critical public mission and to do it in a way that is faithful and is righteous to fulfill the mission. She said she wants to continue to life up Christy and the work that she continues to do. The relationship with the human rights Commission and all the other partnerships is what makes this happen and so thank you so much

Commissioner Lopez said we oftentimes take for granted that there are kids that their parents cannot buy books for them. That having a free book makes the day for them. That they live in a family household that maybe books were a luxury and when you see events like this and when you participate, it's not just you know like the disbelief of some parents that we are giving these away free and they can take it for each one of their children, equity is still something relevant and important. Lopez thanked the Friends because many of these books are donated and are purchased through them.

President Wolf said all of these rich discussions reinforce why books matter, why outreach matters and why we need our branch libraries to be in the best shape possible to be these beacons of hope and access and learning and it's wonderful summer stride pulls that all together about kids recognizing the power of the branch and their neighborhood and having books for the families. Wolf acknowledged Christy's work which inspire so many members of the team to join and participate.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 ADJOURNMENT OF THE MAY 25, 2023 COMMISSION MEETING**

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield asked the Commission to not adjourn until they insist that future Agenda Items have an Item at the end of the Agenda that provides for Commissioners to suggest items, they would like to see on future Commission Agendas. He said he saw that the Ocean View estimate went from 20 million to 47 million. That's a lot more than 13. There was also a 10 million dollar increase in the budget for Chinatown. Where did those come from, why, so on so forth. More information would be very helpful.

#### Commission Discussion



**Motion:** By Vice President **HUANG**, seconded by Commissioner **LOPEZ** to adjourn the meeting.

**Action:** AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, LomaxGhirarduzzi, López, Ono and Bolander)

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM

Margot Shaub - Commission Affairs Analyst

\*To access **Commission Meeting recordings** please visit: [Library Commission Meeting Recording](#)

**Please note: These are draft minutes subject to revision by the San Francisco Public Library Commission. Copies of the minutes and handouts are available in the office of the Library Commission Affairs Analyst, 6th floor, Main Library, 100 Larking Street, San Francisco, CA 94102-4733.**

Explanatory documents: Copies of listed explanatory documents are available as follows: (1) from the Commission Liaison Affairs Analyst/Custodian of Records, 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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).