



# *San Francisco Public Library*

## **SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting of OCTOBER 19, 2023**

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting **OCTOBER 19, 2023**, virtually and at the Koret Auditorium, Main Library.

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

Commissioners Present: Wolf, Mall, López and Bolander.

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

Peter Warfield, Executive Director Library Users Association, Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, said the Agenda does not make any note about how people can access the meeting and the way to join the meeting has changed, he believed the Library is a hugely important source of information and all kinds of enjoyment. There are newspapers, current newspapers, current magazines, and all kinds of current books, he hopes they get to the library quicker.

Carrie Blanding introduced herself as the new Interim Executive Director of The Friends of the Library Foundation and said she is excited to work with the Library and the Commission.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the Library minutes are a poor reflection of what he said and he was disappointed the Commission did not take roll.

#### Commission Discussion

Motion: By Commissioner **MALL** seconded by Commissioner **LOPEZ** to approve the SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 Minutes.

**Action:** AYES 4-0 (Wolf, Mall, López and Bolander)

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE**

Ally Holmes, Senior Strategist with Gensler, Margaret Sullivan with Margaret Sullivan Studios, Susanna Rosa with Contigo and Carol Anne Carroll from CC&G gave an update on the Library's Strategic Planning, sharing insights from the external engagement and what the path forward will look like, Some highlights they shared from the work included that San Franciscans are grateful for the library's essential services of access to information and what people would like to see in the future, including connecting people to and navigating of the City's resources.

#### **Public Comment**

Peter Warfield said he thought it was very important and significant and something to take seriously, which seems to be happening and asked how the people were recruited in the community for the questionnaire and focus groups and he was not asked to take part.

Michael Vincent D'Anella-Mercanti, Friends of the Library Foundation said he was happy to show support for the Strategic Planning process and the labor it takes to get all of this information is never easy. He said Library systems across the county are looking towards SFPL for guidance on how to address many of the systemic needs and the Friends is ready to help in any way.

#### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Mall asked how people were selected to provide feedback.

City Librarian, Michael Lambert said Contigo embedded in the communities and focus groups were invitation only. They worked with Community Based Organizations and partnered with organizations representing people reflective of the city.

Susana Rosa said they worked with many CBOs, which informed the Strategic Planning Focus Group process, and anyone could contact them who was interested in participating in the process, they sent flyers to the libraries and went to the branches and recruited patrons to participate in Strategic Planning focus groups. They also partnered with organizations who directly serve the diversity reflected in the city.

Commissioner Mall said when she sat with staff, when they were discussing Strategic Planning, their primary concern was safety and looking at the Futures it is farther down on the list and asked if there were enough outlets for people to plug their devices into.

Lambert said there were not as many outlets as there should be and space has now been identified as one of the Library's Foundational Imperatives, coming out of the Strategic Planning the Library will go into a Facilities Master Planning.

Holmes responded the order of the Foundational Imperatives did not reflect relative importance, they are all critical and safety is very important.

Commissioner Lopez asked how the Library can improve its dissemination of information, targeting schools and churches about its services.

Commissioner Bolander said the outreach included as many people as possible and the Library now has the data to make decisions. He said the issue seems to be more of a messaging or marketing challenge. He asked how SFPL differs from other Library systems, and it is interesting that what is in the SPI requires a different talent mix or an expansion of what Librarian means.

Margaret Sullivan said in the Library world there is a saying that ‘we’re all unicorns, but we are all the same too. The question to ask is what it means in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to be centered around the core values that came out of the Carnegie work, which is Library as a social connector, a learning environment, and a place for cultural activities to foster access to resources that will help people flourish individually and as a democracy.

President Wolf said she was not as enthusiastic where the Strategic Planning is right now. The San Francisco Public Library, over its history, is known for being bold, aspirational, forward thinking and being a leader in the community and nationally and she is not seeing that in these documents. Wolf said sometimes you have to give people what they want but you also have to help them see a whole new world and challenge their perceptions, she didn’t see that in the documents either. In the Library’s dedication to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, one way to solve that problem in the city is early literacy and, in our society, right now democracy is at stake and Libraries are the source of and future of democracy in the Country, if we don’t take a stake in that we’re missing the boat. Wolf said she wanted us to be bold and risk taking and the Library has the opportunity to lead.

Commissioner Mall said President Wolf said that beautifully and it takes us up several notches, and inspiring to think that way, we can be bold, and we should be.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 SUMMER STRIDE 2023 REPORT**

Alejandro Gallegos, Community Programs and Partnerships Manager, reported on Summer Stride 2023, which he said is the biggest system wide program occurring over 3-months. Gallegos said almost 24,000 people participated in Summer Stride, and of that 12,822 were children, 1372 Teens and 8,878 Adults. More than 16,000 finished the challenge reading more than 28,342, 481 minutes. Finishing the program means participants read at least 20 hours and the 20 hours can include other types of learning and participating in Library programs. Two recurring themes of the Summer Stride were being outdoors and STEM. Summer Stride original artwork was by K-Fai Steel.

#### **Public Comment**

Peter Warfield said it seems to be a very successful and has something to do with what a library’s primary function is, which is to inform, educate, entertain, and has something to do with books, this is something folks are doing the wonderful thing they can do at the library, which is use the facilities the library has, a wealth of books.

### Commission Discussion

President Wolf said it was a great presentation, and a program they all love and thanked staff and Friends for the support of the Summer Stride.

Commissioner Lopez said the program is generational and she sees families throughout the city with their Summer Stride tote bags, marketing for this project was outstanding.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 CITY LIBRIANS REPORT**

Rebecca Alcala-Veraflor, Chief of Branches presented on Branch Service Hours after COVID closure and recruiting they have done to return pre-COVID hours. After COVID the branches brought back service first with SFPL To Go which evolved into Browse & Bounce and took a phased approach to reopen branches. The last branch to return to 7-day service was Noe Valley, in October 2023.

Ileana Pulu presented on VIVA! Latinx Heritage Month, a celebration of Latinx Cultures and Traditions, which has expanded with events and programming throughout the year. Pulu highlighted the various writers who participated, events produced and book list recommendations.

Michell Jeffers, Chief Community Programs and Partnerships and Rebecca Alcala-Veraflor gave an overview of their participation in the MetLib Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which meets annually to discuss issues facing urban libraries on a global basis.

### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the Library has increased weekly service hours by twenty-three but there is only one location that has a single minute added to the evening hours. When the Library does surveys people have responded they would like more hours on weekends and evenings.

### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Bolander asked if it took three years to get back to normal service and hours and things are not the way these used to be in the days before COVID, but if you look at the macroeconomics, in general the City and the world have changed, the fact that we got those up and people are coming back and the circulation is at a good point is a testament to all the great work that the staff does.

Lambert said the Library was closed for Forty months.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 ADJOURNMENT OF THE OCTOBER 19, 2023 COMMISSION MEETING in Memory of SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN**

City Librarian Michael Lambert adjourned the meeting in memory of Senator Dianne Feinstein. He said: On September 29, 2023 Senator Dianne Feinstein passed away. Senator Feinstein is the longest-serving Senator to represent California in the United States Senate; and the longest-serving woman Senator in the history of the United States. She was a fearless trailblazing lawmaker; she was the first woman who served as president of the San Francisco board of supervisors, the first woman elected as San Francisco Mayor, and the first woman in the U.S. Senate from the state of California, the first woman to chair the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the first woman to serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the longest-serving woman in Senate history. She was well known among Democrats and Republicans for her ability to find common ground in order to get things done for the people that she represented, serving with grace, strength, and integrity. Once a Mayor, always a Mayor, as many who worked with her or lived in the city have seen, her dedication to San Francisco never wavered or waned, she brought the City back together after the devastating murder of Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk and led it through the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Her legislative accomplishments were many, she wrote and passed legislation to ban Assault Weapons, preserve the desert and secured the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Feinstein mentored both women and men in public service, rooted on her steadfast value of integrity and driving for a hopeful future. She will be remembered as an indomitable lawmaker and dedicated public servant inspiring generations of women to break barriers and seek positions of leadership. Born and raised in San Francisco, she loved the city and was a true Daughter of San Francisco - she was gold in peace and fire in war. May she rest as she lived, in power.

**Public Comment**

Peter Warfield said he lived through those times and he still gets chills when he thinks of how she spoke when he first heard the news from City Hall. Since then, he has thought it was pure poetry and every word was necessary and important in explaining what was happening and made her Mayor.

Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer said she considers herself lucky to have been born and raised in San Francisco and luckier still to have met and worked for Senator Feinstein. She met the Senator when she was 13, when her father was a part of the San Francisco-Cork sister city committee. He was proud to participate as an Irish immigrant and honored to work with then Mayor Feinstein because she saw the value of cultivating community and celebrating both what we have in common and our differences so that we can learn about each other to build bonds and respect for each other. Singleton remembered there were two planes in the delegation that went to Ireland and there was a dress code, she had to wear a dress, nylons, and heels, which was definitely not what she wanted to wear as a 13-year-old, but that's what she did because it was what Mayor Feinstein wanted. She grew up seeing Senator Feinstein in a leadership role and knew that women should lead and be at the table, helping make the decisions. She voted for her when she ran for governor and senator and knew, when she graduated from college, she had to work for her and got the chance in 1995 as a receptionist in her SF office. When she met Feinstein in the office for the first time, the Senator told her she was the ambassador to the office and for the people of California. The Senator expected staff to be professional, be kind, do their homework, and work hard, and she

checked up on staff to make sure they were meeting her standards. She would call the front phones to make sure they were quick and polite. To this day, when she gets a phone call, she answers by saying the organization, her name, and ask how she may help you. Senator Feinstein was also a kind and caring leader; she treated her staff like family and her concern for Singleton while she dealt with a major health issue while working for her is something she will never forget and is eternally grateful that she got work for Senator Feinstein and for the friendships she made while there that endure to this day. Anyone who worked for Senator Feinstein knew that she saw public service both as a calling and a commitment, and because of her – and her mother, that’s exactly how she still feels. May Senator Feinstein’s positive impact on women and the community live on and may she rest in power.

### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Mall said when she moved to the Bay Area, they didn’t have any friends and she went to the Mill Valley Library, to attend a women’s group meeting about jobs. Everyone shared what their dream job was and she said it would be to work for Dianne Feinstein, in her first run for Mayor. Someone in the group said she had a friend she could call, which she did and that encounter led to a lifelong relationship with Senator Feinstein, and it all started in a library.

Motion: By Commissioner **LOPEZ** seconded by Commissioner **MALL** to approve the SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 Minutes.

**Action:** AYES 4-0 (Wolf, Mall, López and Bolander)  
The meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.  
Margot Shaub Commission Affairs Analyst

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

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-notices/agendas](http://sfpl.org/library-commission/public-notices/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).