



San Francisco Public Library

**MINUTES**  
**Council of Neighborhood Libraries**  
**July 27, 2023, 4:00 p.m.**  
**CALL TO ORDER**

**Meeting Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Facilitator: Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor**

**Attendees:** A.J. Cave (ANZ), Toni Hines (BAY), Lena Yu (CHI), Marcia Parrott (EXC), Nora Dowley (GPA), Leonie Vandenberg (GGV), Sonia Moscardon (ING), Deirdre Merrill (MAR), Crystal Le (MBA), Judy Blanchard (MER), Kathy Mallegni (MER), Ruth Maginnis (NVA), Johanna Lopez Miyaki (OVI), Nicky Trasvina (OVI), Marcia Ehrlich (PAR), Deborah Oppenheim (SUN), Denise Sanderson (South West District Manager), Regan Gong (Northwest District Manager), Michael Roman (Junior Management Assistant), Florinda Battad (Library Technical Assistant II)

**Excused:** Katherine Hsieh, (CHI), Penni Wisner (EVA), Tyrone (Ty) Robinson (NBE), Edna James (OVI), Diane Silver (PAR), Peter Linenthal (POT), Marcia Popper (PRE), Elaine Cahn (RIC), Heather Gonzalez (RIC), Joan Walton (SUN), Monica Herbert (WSA)

**Library Administrators:** Michael Lambert (City Librarian), Dolly Goyal (Chief of Public Services), Margot Shaub (Library Commission Affairs Analyst)

**Guests:** Randle McClure (Chief Analytics Officer), Graham Galloway (Analyst Trainee)

**HOUSEKEEPING**

**Upcoming Meetings**

- The next **Library Commission Meeting in August** will be on **Thursday, August 17, 2023**, at 4:30 pm. *Hybrid in-person and virtual*
- The next **Council of Neighborhood Libraries Meeting in August** will be on **Thursday, August 24, 2023**, at 4:00 p.m., *SFPL Virtual Library*

**Branch Open Houses in August**

Branch	Date	Time
Ocean View	August 5	11am-2pm

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Golden Gate Valley Branch will have a Book Exchange on Saturday, 7/29 (1-2 pm). The branch is partnering with NEXT Village, a nonprofit serving older adults in San Francisco's

northeast neighborhoods. It will be an opportunity for neighbors to meet, exchange a book and have refreshments together.

## **UPDATES**

### **City Librarian's Report – Michael Lambert**

#### **12 Million Checked-Out Items**

- SFPL makes history by reaching 12 million checked-out items in a year, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- This milestone demonstrates the Library's commitment to access and the value of its collections and digital services. SFPL has the highest circulation per capita among urban libraries in the state.
- To celebrate, fortune cookies will be given to the first 100 patrons at the branches and the Main on Friday, 7/28.
- The Library also had 3.4 million visitors; one million more visitors than the previous fiscal year. We expect to eclipse four million visitors this time next year.
- Nineteen new librarians have been hired.

#### **Summer Stride**

- The Library's annual summer learning and reading program continues. Twenty hours of summer reading, learning, or listening will earn participants a finishing prize.
- Michael, with his eyes on the prize, is currently reading [Poverty, by America](#) and [The Wager](#).

#### **Q&A**

- **Marcia (EXC) – Were the new librarian positions internal promotions? Are there still open positions?**  
Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – The new librarians are a mix of internal promotions and people from outside our system. Five are bilingual positions. There will always be open positions, but right now they are not in the double digits.

### **Library Commission Report – Margot Shaub**

#### **[Library Commission Agendas, Minutes & Resolutions](#)**

#### **Highlights from the July Library Commission Meeting:**

- An update on the Strategic Planning Initiative was given. The Library Commissioners had a robust discussion about the purpose and importance of having a strategic plan. They acknowledged that the Library is doing great things, but asked how can the library be bolder and be leaders who can make a difference in the lives of the residents of this city.

#### **August Library Commission Meeting:**

- FY24-25 budget update
- Library collection trends
- Bay Beats
- Summer Book Club collaboration
- Junior Giants

### **Strategic Planning – Randy McClure**

#### **[Strategic Planning Initiative Update Presentation](#)**

- The Strategic Plan is a living document that will inform the Library's work towards a common goal by setting its priorities, mission and values.
- Valuable information was gathered through staff and community engagement:
  - Interviews with the Library Commissioners
  - Interviews with Department Heads of City agencies that partner with the Library
  - Staff Values Survey – 460 were completed.
  - Patron Intercept Surveys – just shy of 2000 were completed.
  - Staff Ambassadors – meetings where a diverse group of 32 Library staff in different classifications, departments, and locations, talk about the future of the organization.
- A handful of workshops will be completed before the information is analyzed and translated. By this time next year, the Library will have a new plan to guide its work moving forward.

## Q&A

- **Marcia (EXC) – How were the surveys framed?**  
 Randy McClure – The questions were open-ended. We had the same survey in every neighborhood, in different languages: Spanish, Chinese, and Russian  
 Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – The survey was open-ended so that we could learn about the individual and their needs, and so that they could give feedback.
- **Marcia (EXC) – Were there common themes?**  
 Randy McClure – We just finished the focus groups with community members. The consultants will start putting the information together.
- **Marcia (EXC) – Will you follow-up with staff to reach out for solutions?**  
 Randy McClure – We aren't necessarily looking for solutions, rather we're trying to build on our current priorities to create a new vision. The 2016 Strategic Plan needed to be done quickly, so staff and the community weren't engaged at this level.  
 Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – Strategic planning is usually done top down. This is the first time that our Strategic Plan is being done in this intensive way by starting with the staff and community.  
 Randy – There was also a high level of outreach to community organizations. We had a list of about 200 names, who then provided the names of other organizations.
- **A.J. (ANZ) – Was the survey sent to CNL members?**  
 Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – The branch user survey was exclusively taken at the library and the surveyors randomized where, when and who they approached.  
 Michael Lambert – We haven't received all the feedback from the surveys yet but have gotten some glimpses into what people want: more programming for seniors, STEM programs for adults, intergenerational programs, and more opportunities to engage with their neighbors. Our Strategic Plan will influence our capital investments, how our buildings are designed, how we deliver our services, and it is critically important in the process of positioning us into the future.
- **Michael Lambert – What are some of your aspirations?**  
**Marcia (EXC) – More meeting rooms**  
**Sonia (ING) – Security guards**
  - Michael Lambert – In order to keep the branches safe and welcoming, we've made improvements to how we are providing security. We are following a quadrant sector model where an officer is stationed at a branch and responds to calls at nearby branches that are in his sector. We have eleven security staff for the branches and have approval to hire three more.

**Nicky (OVI) – Consider the needs of disabled people in terms of access and being able to get to the library. It’s becoming more difficult to get around in the City, so parking and public transportation are important.**

- Michael Lambert– The Library is upholding its core value of access by renovating the Talking Books and Braille Center and collaborating with senior centers. We’ll continue to find ways to improve our service delivery and support ideas that help patrons reach our facilities.
- Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – One of the focus groups will exclusively discuss disability issues.

**Crystal (MBA) – Wildfire smoke is a recurring event now, so air filtration is important for people who are immune compromised.**

- Michael Lambert – We hope to come out of the Strategic Planning process with a vision that will help build a case for investing in our facilities. We aspire to make needed updates to our branches and make them a part of the City’s resiliency strategy.

- **A.J. (ANZ) – I think AI is impacting everything. Is the strategic group taking that into account?**

Michael Lambert – The group is not directly addressing AI, but the leadership team agrees that we need to know more about it. We are still learning what the possibilities for its uses are and need to be cognoscente of the dangers.

- **Leonie (GGV) – Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google has co-authored a book, [The Age of A.I.: And Our Human Future](#) about the pros and cons of A.I.. It would be great if the Library could get his input as part of a program.**

**Most programs, like Project Read are concentrated at the Main. Is it possible to have these programs at the branches?**

Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor – Programs are headquartered at the Main but participation in them can and are being done at the branches.

- **Leonie (GGV) – Will the Friends bookstore at the Main reopen?**

Florinda Battad – The Friends Bookstore at the Main has recently reopened.

The hours listed on their [website](#) are:

**Monday: closed**

**Tuesday - Thursday: 10am - 3pm**

**Friday: 12pm - 5pm**

**Saturday: 10am - 3pm**

**Sunday: 12pm - 4:30pm**

Michael Lambert – The Friends of SFPL are a separate non-profit and their Executive Director, Marie Ciepiela will step down on August 11, however they are poised for a successful transition.

- **Ruth (NVA) – Are the Friends still taking donations?**

Michael Lambert – Yes, the Friends Donation Center is in Potrero Hill, and it is by appointment. Here is the link with information on how to donate:

<https://www.friendssfpl.org/donatebooks.html>

**Adjournment: 5:00 pm**

**Respectfully submitted by Florinda Battad**