



San Francisco Public Library

**SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION
& SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION**

Minutes of the Special Joint Meeting of April 25, 2011
(Showing only Library Commission actions)

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a special meeting on Monday, April 25, 2011, in City Hall, Room 400.

As amended and approved at the June 16, 2011, regular meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am.

Library Commissioners present: Breyer, Gomez, Kane, Munson, Ono and Randlett

Library Commissioner Nguyen arrived at 10:18 am.

Recreation and Park Commissioners present: Buell, Harrison, Arata, and Lee.

Recreation and Park Commissioners Bonilla, Levitan and Martin arrived late.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 NORTH BEACH BRANCH LIBRARY

Jill Bourne, Deputy City Librarian, said the [North Beach Branch](#) is the last of 24 branches to be built or renovated as part of the Branch Library Improvement Program (BLIP). She said the Master Plan was unanimously approved by both the Library Commission and the Recreation and Park Commission in September, 2008. She said the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Environmental Impact Report for the Master Plan on April 21, 2011. She said the Planning Commission also adopted findings that the project does conform with the City's General Plan.

Marcia Maytum, architect for the project, said they began to develop plans for the Master Plan in 2008. She gave a presentation on the Plan.

She said they investigated multiple options and held an extensive public outreach program on the Plan. She said they designed the Library and redesigned the park with a new children's playground that meets the needs of the residents of North Beach. She said in the summer of 2009 one block of Mason was closed to test the effects of the street vacation. No impacts were found to the community from the closure.

Karen Mauney-Brodek, Recreation and Parks Department, said the neighborhood surrounding the playground is estimated to have .45 acres of open space per 1000 people, which is 95% below the City average of 9 acres per 1000 people. She said this plan expands the park's open space over 20% and increases the open space by 12,000 square feet. She said the project is very important to this neighborhood. She said the model is available for everyone to view. She said the Library and Recreation and Parks Department have attended over 15 community meetings on the Master Plan.

Public Comment

Bob Planthold said he supports the staff's recommendation for the Master Plan. He said an increasing number of our population will be seniors and therefore more people with disabilities. He said the preferred alternative is the only one that is truly accessible. He said the Mayor's Disability Council unanimously supported the plan before you. He said this will also serve people with babies and toddlers.

Zach Stewart said he is opposed to the project. He said he is astounded by the public relations campaign that has been mounted in support of this. He said the library is loaded with money and Park and Rec has no money to do their improvements.

Donna Bero, Executive Director, Friends of the Library, said this has been a long process and she has had the opportunity to speak with many of our members who are in support of this project. She said they represent a large constituency of supporters of the Master Plan.

Joan Wood said she lives about a block and a half from the North Beach Library. She said she is representing herself and the Coalition for a Better North Beach Library and Playground. She said there are two phases in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the Recreation and Parks Department does not have the money to do their phase of the project. She said it seems everything has been rushed. She said there were no changes to the EIR based on their comments. She requested that the two Commissions at least delay action today.

Carrie Biles said she has 25 years experience as an architect. She said she has reviewed the design carefully and it is an elegant and useful design. She said she supports the project.

Ellen Egbert said she is a long time Bernal Heights resident. She said she is very lucky that she can walk to various parks in the neighborhood

as well as the beautifully remodeled Bernal Heights library. She said the library does not have a lot of money and they keep a close eye on the budgets of the various projects. She said the library has a history of renovating branch libraries whenever possible.

Brian O'Flynn said some years ago eminent domain proceedings were brought against his property at 701 Lombard. He said he spent 10 years gaining permits to build apartments on the property. He said he asked the library at that time if they would like to incorporate a library into his project and he was told no they wanted to renovate the existing library. He said there is eminent domain abuse in the City and County of San Francisco. He said eminent domain is to be taken for a specific dire need. He said in this case the need was for open space. He said he lost several million dollars in the process. He said you are being asked to be complicit in this injustice.

An anonymous citizen said it is not legitimate to discriminate against speakers who are anonymous. He said the language on the agenda is unsuitably vague. He said actions must be specified on the agenda. He said when he referred to not giving money to the Friends and Foundation he was talking about the Library but it could theoretically be Recreation and Parks. He said during the bond election the Library said no branches would be demolished. It was motivated by Noe Valley but no one said it only applied to Noe Valley. He said the goal is to benefit everyone in the long term not a few in the short term. (See Addendum for a summary of this comment submitted by the speaker.)

Peter Warfield, Executive Director, Library Users Association, said he is concerned about the vagueness of the agenda item. He said the word "vacation" is not understood by the general public to mean a permanent street closure. He said the timing of this meeting is very unfortunate. He said this is not about better libraries this is about spending money. He said the view corridors will be damaged. He said this library is landmark worthy and should be remodeled. He objected to the planned plaque of the current library and that it does not need to be in or on the new library and that it can be within or near the new library. He said that is shocking. He said the plaque should be in the new library. He said Mr. Herrera's memo lists a number of organizations opposed to the new library, but does not include the Library Users Association.

Howard Wong, architect, said many members of the North Beach community have had expectations for a long period of time on the 701 Lombard site and that it would be open space. He said the North Beach library has always been one of his favorite buildings. He said the library in its current location would be easily renovated and expanded.

Julie Christensen, representing the Friends of Joe DiMaggio Playground, said she wanted to commend the heads of the two departments for the cooperation on this project. She said the staff members working on the project have gone above and beyond in their efforts. She said they have

stood together and brought a solution to an almost unsolvable problem. Support from your Commissions would be greatly appreciated.

Commission Discussion

Library Commissioner Kane thanked the public for coming out on this project. He said he wanted to thank staff for all their time. He said there have been a lot of Commission and community meetings on this subject. He said he has seen overwhelming support for this Plan. He said each of the projects in the Branch Library Improvement Program has been looked at very carefully. He said the Library has been very attentive to historic renovation. He said we have won awards for the Richmond, Noe Valley and Bernal branches. He said we have taken a hard look on whether renovation, remodeling or in this case a new library best serves the library's need. He said this plan is a fantastic plan for library needs and it satisfies ADA issues. He said he hopes his fellow Commissioners will continue to support the project.

Recreation and Park Commissioner Levitan said she is very sympathetic to what Mr. O'Flynn has gone through, but she said we are where we are and this is a great project in a part of the city that needs it very much. She said thank you to Julie Christensen and the countless volunteers that have gotten us to this point and she said she looks forward to supporting this plan today.

Recreation and Park Commissioner Lee said he wanted to echo Commissioner Levitan's comments. He said this has been a long process and he is supportive of this plan. He said he thinks it is needed as a resident of North Beach through most of his childhood. He said his family still lives there. He said he wanted to address a comment that came up regarding the public noticing of this meeting. He said the materials were available on Thursday and did meet the requirements for public noticing.

Recreation and Park Commission President Buell said many of the considerations of the public that were opposed to this project seem to fall into the category of the broader issues of planning and context of the project. He said the Recreation and Park Commission is looking at the quality of services that are provided to the public and he thinks the Library Commission falls into the same category as trying to provide the best libraries they can. He said much of the controversy had to do with the planning and he was persuaded by a unanimous vote at the Planning Commission that the broader issues were aired and heard fully. He said he doesn't know if the Planning Commission has ever had a unanimous vote so it went a long way in convincing him to support the project.

Library Commissioner Breyer said that hopefully this library will create a great civic symbol for the community. He said the future of libraries is really about books and also about bringing people in the community to this place where it is technologically feasible for people to get on the Internet. He said 80 percent of people who don't have access to the

Internet go to the public library for that. He said you have summer programs for reading and you have after-school programs where you have a safe place for children to be. He said the library will continue to build this project with the Department of Public Works and will strive to have a balanced operating budget and all of that is really based on the investment from the people of San Francisco.

Library Commission President Gomez said she speaks for all of our Commissioners in thanking everyone with the Department of Public Works, Recreation and Park, the Library, and the architects for this amazing collaboration. She said the staffs from those organizations did an amazing job in addressing the needs that were raised by the community. She said we can never satisfy everyone's desires but she said she does appreciate many of the community member's responses and concerns and she said she thinks many of these have been addressed. She said she would like to ask the Library Commission for a motion.

Motion: By Commissioner Munson, seconded by Commissioner Kane to approve the proposed [Resolution](#) adopting environmental findings, approving construction of the new North Beach Branch Library on 701 Lombard Street and a portion of Mason Street as proposed for vacation, approving demolition of the existing North Beach Branch Library, making various recommendations to the Recreation and Park Commission and Board of Supervisors in relation to the project, and authorizing other official acts in connection with the project.

Action: AYES 7-0: (Breyer, Gomez, Kane, Munson, Nguyen, Ono, and Randlett).

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 am.

Sue Blackman
Commission Secretary

Explanatory documents: Copies of listed explanatory documents are available as follows: (1) from the commission secretary/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's website <http://sfpl.org>. 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).

ADDENDUM

These summary statements are provided by the speaker: Their contents are neither generated by, nor subject to approval or verification of accuracy by, the San Francisco Public Library Commission.

Library Commission Meeting of April 25, 2011

Item 1: General Public Comment

Anonymous Citizen: Stop the Hate, Stop the Ignorance – Don't accept money from the Friends & Foundation

It is not legitimate to discriminate against speakers who are anonymous.

Your agenda item for “various recommendations” and “authorizing other official acts” is unsuitable vague. Actions must be specified on the agenda.

I have been called the Ray Clary of the San Francisco Public Library. I am not really qualified, but it is a nice idea.

The “Friends & Foundation” could theoretically be Recreation & Park, but it is the Public Library. A neutral example I use is the Arts Festival in Civic Center that was given \$50,000 by BankAmerica, then covered with sneering contempt, four years later it didn't exist.

During the Bond election the Library said no branches would be demolished. It was motivated by Noe Valley but no one said it only applied to Noe Valley.

The goal is to benefit everyone long term, not a few in the short term.