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ORCAS ISLAND LIBRARY DISTRICT



Library Board Retreat Minutes

March 13, 2019

Library Board President Alex Conrad called the Board Retreat to order at 10:07 a.m. in the Orcas Island Library Community Room. Also attending were Trustees Martha Fuller, Teresa Patrick, Jens Kruse, and Madeline Sheplor; Library Director Phil Heikkinen and staff member Janet Marlow.

Alex opened the Retreat by stating that the Library expansion slogan was “Books and Beyond,” and that he would like the Board to focus on defining the “Beyond” during the retreat.

The Board began with topics tabled at the Regular Board Meeting:

Coffee Service: The Board discussed the options for the use of the former lobby, including the possibility of coffee service, with the general consensus that it will depend on health department regulations as well as the finances involved in the installation and operation of the possibilities. Alex stated that he wanted to go out for proposal once the Board and Library stakeholders decide what was wanted, not in response to a vendor request. Collectively, the Board agreed on the following options to present for input at the next portion of the Retreat:

- a. A cart/kiosk
- b. A truck/vehicle
- c. Built-in cafe with modifications to existing library infrastructure
- d. Vending machines
- e. Simple coffee/beverage service, such as a hot water pot and/or Keurig machine
- f. Do not pursue a coffee/beverage/food service

Alex agreed to contact the Health Department to fully understand the regulations.

Electric-Vehicle (EV) Charging Station: The Board discussed the possible addition of an EV charging station at the Library. The general opinion of the Board is that spots in the current parking lot are too scarce at times to dedicate one for EVs, however one possibility could be to include it for street parking on Rose Street. Martha volunteered to discuss the topic with Island Market in order to understand their experiences.

Position Descriptions: Alex asked that all Library position descriptions be reviewed and updated as necessary. Janet agreed to distribute the current descriptions to the Board, and they will be reviewed by the Policy & Personnel Chair, Teresa, with assistance from Madeline.

The Board agreed on the following discussion topics for the second half of the Board Retreat with Library stakeholders: (1) Use of the Building Post Expansion; (2) Former Lobby – Ideas for Use; (3) Acoustics & NanaWalls; (4) Use of Outdoor Spaces; (5) Coffee Service; (6) Expanded Nontraditional Collections; (7) Service Hours; (8) Library’s Role in Emergency Response; (9) Other Stakeholder Concerns.

The Board took a break from 11:03 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Library public stakeholders, including members of staff, volunteers, and Friends of the Library joined the Board at 11:30 a.m. for the second portion of the Retreat. Lunch was provided, and its service occupied the first 15 minutes.

50 Library Board President Alex Conrad called the public portion of the Retreat to order at 11:45 a.m.
51 and facilitated introductions. He introduced the topics defined above, and asked the group to
52 provide their input on each.

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1. Use of the Building Post Expansion

- Attendees mentioned the success of having a dedicated staff member for programming but felt that the space allocated for programs is too long and narrow.
- There was an idea of taking out one row of books closest to the periodicals in order to accommodate larger groups. A staff member mentioned that the last row of shelving could be transformed into something movable.
- Another participant mentioned that the speaker and screen should be elevated to increase visibility.

2. Former Lobby – Ideas for Use

- The participants agreed that they would like to see the lobby be transformed into a vital part of the library.
- Trustee Martha Fuller explained the Facilities Committee’s vision of a coffee bar.
- There was concern from some participants that noise in the former lobby area negatively impacts any function ongoing in the Community Room, particularly for the hearing-challenged. Participants brainstormed possible solutions, including adding a second set of doors or removing the doors entirely.

3. Acoustics and NanaWalls

- Related to the noise of the former lobby, Phil explained that an improvement to the acoustics of the Community Room is currently in a bid package of improvements.
- Alex explained the NanaWall moveable walls to the attendees and asked the group if they felt the walls were necessary.
- Children’s Librarian Jenny DeGroot pointed out that she could have more children’s programs, including those involving music, if she could close off the space. She also mentioned that the NanaWalls would allow parents to let toddlers explore their area freely without fear of wandering.
- The general consensus of the participants was that the teen area is often noisy and sometimes disruptive after school, and one participant wondered if they would get even louder with a wall. There was a discussion of videogames, with one participant wondering if the library should limit times that videogames could be played. Several participants pointed out that this is a good problem to be having, in conjunction to the programs being very well attended – this means that people are using the building.
- Alex asked if we could get teen participation on our advisory committees to give input and/or shadow the Board to learn about governance. The consensus of the group was that this is an excellent idea.
- The Board asked participants what should have priority if necessary: acoustical improvements in the Community Room or the NanaWalls, but there was no determination.

4. Use of Outdoor Space

- Alex introduced the topic and asked if the amphitheater area is underutilized.
- Jenny DeGroot said that she uses it for Children’s story times when the weather is good.
- One participant felt that it’s under-landscaped to facilitate use, and that it would probably need carved-out seating to be fully functional, and perhaps more shade features.
- Phil informed the group that the Library would likely be offered a 16-ft totem pole next year for permanent exterior display and wondered if the participants had input on where it

100 should be placed. One participant suggested that, since it was carved by the Lummi, the
101 Library should consult with one or more members of the Lummi Nation to advise regarding
102 proper placement.

- 103 • The south plaza lawn is being used regularly, though perhaps it needs sturdier umbrellas.
104 Also, a chess board (either oversized on the ground or inset in a table) might be an
105 attractive feature.

- 106
- 107 5. Coffee Service
- 108 • Alex introduced the topic as well as the six options the Board proposed per above in the
109 Board portion of the Retreat.
 - 110 • One participant had specific concerns regarding the appropriateness of a coffee service in a
111 library, the competition with existing community coffee businesses, and the use of any tax
112 funding to support the idea; she suggested that the community be surveyed to see what is
113 wanted.
 - 114 • Another participant expressed that she would like to see the space energized in a quieter
115 way.
 - 116 • A staff member said that they felt there is demand, especially during meetings and
117 programs.
 - 118 • There was discussion among the group regarding the appropriateness of food or coffee in a
119 library, and whether we should limit locations where it is allowed. We have been seeing
120 changing patterns in libraries' policies and societal expectations.
 - 121 • General consensus was that a survey would be helpful, but the Library should be
122 thoughtful about how it is worded.

- 123
- 124 6. Expanded Nontraditional Collections
- 125 • Alex introduced the topic and asked if we should extend our lending library to other types
126 of resources and, if so, what?
 - 127 • Resources suggested: hotspots; telescopes; "Junior Ranger" backpacks; amp and voltage
128 meters, and other types of small equipment that people may need annually or rarely. One
129 participant suggested involving local science teachers to see what could be useful. Also, a
130 survey could be helpful.
 - 131 • Concerns raised: Physical storage space; perception that staff should be responsible to
132 teach patrons how to use equipment; checking condition upon return.
 - 133 • One participant mentioned that the Exchange had previous plans to implement a similar
134 program and that the Library should see what happened to that plan.

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- 136 7. Service Hours
- 137 • Phil introduced the topic and asked the group if they felt the current hours were
138 appropriate or not.
 - 139 • There was some discussion of extended evening hours, but the group felt this was not a
140 priority.
 - 141 • There was general consensus that the existing service hours were working well.

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- 143 8. Library's Role in Emergency Response
- 144 • Phil introduced the topic and explained that the current plan is for the Library to be a
145 communications center in an emergency, and that beyond that role, he felt the Library's
146 ability to be effective would be limited due to lack of a generator and other supporting
147 infrastructure such as cooktops and heat. If we were to add a generator, what capacity
148 should it have, i.e., lights and computers only, septic pumps, or also heat?

- 149 • Martha added that, should it be made into an emergency shelter, the Library would need to
150 ensure adequate staff in place to supervise.
151 • There was discussion of other tax districts' roles in the County's plans, and our role as part
152 of the whole.
153 • One participant suggested that the Library become a hub for preparedness materials,
154 similar to the seed library.
155

156 9. Other Stakeholder Concerns

- 157 • A staff member raised the issue of parking lot safety during the winter when the Library
158 closes well after dark.
159 • There was discussion of cameras, related privacy laws, and outdoor lighting options.
160 • Madeline said that, should we decide to move forward with exterior security cameras, a
161 policy governing their use should be in place before installation.
162 • Participants mentioned that additional lighting would be helpful to prevent trip and falls as
163 well, and therefore support the Library's risk management response. We could possibly use
164 floodlights in the parking lot for an interval around closing time.
165 • We do have flashlights and pepper spray that staff members can carry when leaving at
166 night.
167 • There was general consensus that the Library should look into installing additional lighting
168 in the parking lot and research possibilities of exterior security cameras. Now that daylight
169 is extending later into the day, we have more time to research and implement the best
170 option.
171

172 **Adjournment:** Having exhausted the allocated time, the meeting was adjourned by the President
173 at 1:35 p.m.

174 Submitted by Janet Marlow.
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176 Approved: _____