

Pleasant Hill Library Task Force Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: June 9, 2014

Large Community Room, Pleasant Hill City Hall, 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Attendees:

- Karen Mitchoff, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Michael Harris, Pleasant Hill City Council
- Jack Weir, Pleasant Hill City Council
- Jessica Hudson, Contra Costa County Library
- Sandra Bonato, PH Recreation & Park District Board
- Jack Prosek, Pleasant Hill Library Fund
- Katherine Bracken, CCC Library Commission
- Norman VanHole, resident
- Patrick Remer, Pleasant Hill Library
- Jennifer Andersen, Pleasant Hill Education Commission
- Bill Bankert, Pleasant Hill Planning Commission
- June Catalano, City Manager
- Martin Nelis, City staff

Introductions – the attendees made self-introductions and indicated which organization they were representing.

Reports from Sub-committees

1. Needs Assessment & Sites Analysis

Chair Harris reported the subcommittee met on May 22nd and reviewed various possible sites for a future library. He stated that the committee looked at four options but decided to concentrate on the following two sites:

- Three County owned properties - the current library site (5-acres), the 8-acre site just east of the library site and the Flood Control District site (6-acres) off Beatrice Road (and Cleaveland); and
- Pleasant Hill Park

The County properties have strong development potential which could help to fund the new library and would involve partnerships with the County, MDUSD and the City of Pleasant Hill. The Beatrice Road site is the closest of the three County properties to the Downtown area with access on Cleaveland Road. All of the County properties are in close proximity to the PH Middle School and

The Pleasant Hill Park site is more centrally located and closer to City Hall and the Downtown area. A partnership with the PH Recreation & Park District is feasible if some type of land swap was possible using the Beatrice Road (Flood Control District) for ball fields in return for giving up current park space for the new library.

Resident Norman VanHole suggested expanding the project to encompass a larger ‘Civic Center’ complex with sports fields and other facilities. Chair Harris replied that the Task Force had not made any final decision on what the final project would look like or eliminated any options at this stage.

Library Field Trip

The Needs subcommittee toured three libraries (Orinda, Lafayette and Walnut Creek) on June 5th. The library manager at each location conducted the tour and gave an overview of each facility’s features and programs. Sandy Bonato made notes during the tour and these notes will be presented along with a slideshow at the next meeting of the Task Force.

Some essential elements in a library are larger ‘storytime’ areas, private meeting rooms, reading rooms, technology centers and that all areas are flexible.

Community Outreach Subcommittee

Patrick Remer provided the subcommittee report. The committee is working on four questions with particular focus on the first two at this time:

1. Whom will we need to focus on with outreach?
2. What information will we want/need to reach out with?
3. When will information for outreach be appropriate?
4. How will we go about reaching out?

The subcommittee has started to create a list of key stake holders who will be good points of contact as outreach progresses. It has also started to create a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ’s) that can be answered as the Task Force moves forward with its plans.

Councilmember Weir stated that it is important to frame the discussion in the public domain over what type of facility is being planned and also that all public information should go through the Outreach subcommittee.

Funding Subcommittee

The Funding subcommittee has not yet had its first meeting. County Librarian, Jessica Hudson, presented a memorandum outlining the deferred maintenance costs for the current Pleasant Hill Library. There are many issues with the building and the estimated deferred maintenance costs are at least \$10 million. She stated that a more detailed report would be forthcoming later in the year. Some of the critical needs that were identified in the 2007 study included installation of a fire alarm system, seismic upgrades and ADA accessible bathrooms. Other items that were supposed to be done within five years of the report included installation of a full fire sprinkler system, replacement of the HVAC system, an updated electrical network, a complete plumbing renovation, and elevator modernization.

Chair Harris asked the Funding subcommittee to meet prior to the next meeting of the Task Force and also to get information on how other recently constructed libraries were funded.

Project Timelines

Councilmember Weir suggested that given the condition of the current library building there is a sense of urgency to constructing a new facility and this may need to be conveyed to the public early on in the process. Others concurred with this statement and Chair Harris stated that the Needs Subcommittee would focus on what type of facility is desired, where it is to be located and report back within 3 to 4 months. How to fund the project would be an important consideration and community outreach would be critical in building support. It was suggested having an optimistic proposal and a pessimistic one based on funding.

Councilmember Weir suggested scoping out the estimated size of the building which would allow the Funding subcommittee to work on the range of costs and to determine the funding possibilities based on this.

Sandy Bonato asked at what point do we decide that this is a community library or a building with other joint uses. Chair Harris suggested that the Needs subcommittee work on estimating the space needs for various programs and features over the next several months and report back to the Task Force.

Other Business

Supervisor Mitchoff mentioned that the County was considering a county wide general sales tax measure and she was hopeful that if the measure was successful, that some of the additional revenues might be used to support library services throughout the county. She also stated that she was hopeful that rather than the County spending money on the deferred maintenance needs of the current building, that some of this funding could be used to go towards the construction of the new building.

Sandy Bonato stated that the Friends of the Library was a critical element in support of the libraries that the Needs subcommittee visited but she was unsure of the level of involvement by the Friends at the Pleasant Hill Library. Katherine Bracken stated that the Friends of the PH Library had more than 100 members who held parking lot book sales quarterly and contributed around \$25,000 annually towards the library services.

The Task Force agreed to hold the next meeting on July 7th at 11:00 a.m. in the large Community Room at City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.