

SAN JUAN ISLAND LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Workshop for the Purpose of Strategic Planning
Hybrid Attendance- in person in the Library's Meeting Room and by Zoom
(access information provided at www.sjlib.org)
October 5th, 2024

1) Call to Order: President Boyd Pratt called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

Members Present: Boyd Pratt, Karen Vedder, Barbara Sharp, John Aschoff, Kyle Loring

Staff Present: Laurie Orton, Anthony Morris, Kasey Rasmussen

FOL Present: none

2) Visitors: Steve Ulvi

3) Public Access: none

4) Agenda Approval:

MSC Karen Vedder moved and Barbara Sharp seconded to accept the agenda as submitted. Carried.

5) New Business

a) Preparatory Discussion of Facilities and Finances

Boyd began the meeting with an overview of the District's facilities. He presented a brief history of the buildings the Library has occupied and the previous renovations to the current building at 1010 Guard Street. Boyd noted issues with the current building, including reaching capacity in terms of collection space and physical space (including the children's and teen's sections, and quiet/reading spaces), and the burden of continuing maintenance needs for a 50+ year old property.

He discussed previous boards' consideration of options to improve or expand the current building, as detailed in the SHKS Architects *Our Library Building: Today & Tomorrow, SJIL Building Condition Assessment & Feasibility Study* from May 2018, none of which ended up being feasible. Following that process, the board explored options for other properties, narrowed the selection down to three potential properties and did feasibility studies, and decided to move forward with purchasing the 660 Spring Street property. The District obtained a Limited Tax General Obligation (LTGO) Bond in the amount of \$2,075,000 at 2.2% interest to purchase the property in November 2020, with principal payments to begin December 1st, 2024.

Boyd explained that prior to the property purchase, the board had engaged with the public in a series of meetings and workshops, and felt they had robust community support for the new building project. However, the Covid pandemic forced the District to pause development of the new building project, and in Boyd's view, the break during Covid between purchase of the property and the bond election in November 2022 caused the project to lose momentum and public support. Following the failure of the bond, the board pivoted to focus on passing a levy lid lift to fund continuing operations of the current building.

Now that operational funding has been secured for the next ten years with the passing of the levy lid lift in August 2024, the board is returning to the question of the future of the Library's facilities and finances regarding the Spring Street property.

b) Strategic Planning for Spring Street Property

Finances

Annual Expenses/Property Fund Budget

Board members discussed carrying costs for the Spring Street property, including utilities, property insurance, bond interest, and salary for the General Maintenance Worker. In 2024, the total cost for these items was approximately \$120,000. Additionally, the Library has been paying an attorney for work on the insurance claim, and principal payments on the LTGO bond begin this December.

Laurie reviewed the 2024 property fund budget and discussion followed on how long the Library can afford to keep and maintain the property with the current annual expenses.

Demolition

Board members considered the plan to demolish the current building on the property. Karen noted that from the time of purchase, the plan has been to demolish the building, based on cost analysis when that site was selected. Discussion was held on how demolition would affect the annual cost to maintain the property. Laurie noted that the presence of a vacant building on the property has contributed to the high insurance costs.

Laurie pointed out that demolition costs were last estimated before the leak and leak remediation, which may lower the demolition cost. She will ask OCMI to provide an updated demolition estimate.

Property Value/Property Sale

Board members discussed the current property value and how demolition might affect it. The last appraisal of the property was approximately two years ago. The board asked Laurie to pursue an updated appraisal.

Boyd noted that, were the Library to sell the property, it is unlikely we would ever have the same opportunity again in terms of a suitable property, appropriately located, and at the low interest rate we currently have on the bond.

Insurance Claim

Discussion was held on the status of the insurance claim. Laurie reported that we may not find out the settlement amount until early 2025, if we proceed to mediation. Karen noted that financial decisions regarding the property can't be made until a result is reached on the insurance claim.

Fundraising

Boyd reviewed the history of our fundraising efforts for the new building project. Laurie noted that we have not been able to meet our fundraising goals for this year or previous years, and no longer have a dedicated fundraising staff position. Board members agreed that in order to pursue significant private fundraising, we would likely need to hire someone for that role.

Discussion was held on fundraising needs and the possibilities for support from the San Juan Island Community Foundation. Boyd, John, and Anthony will plan an informal meeting with Amy Saxe-Eyler, the SJICF Executive Director, to explore options.

Board members discussed the possibility of pursuing another bond and concluded that, considering the economy and current atmosphere regarding taxes in the community, a bond proposal should not be pursued for at least five years.

Library Capital Improvement Program Grant

Laurie reviewed the Washington State Department of Commerce LCIP grant we were awarded in May 2023 in the amount of \$2,000,000. The grant funds are disbursed after project completion as a reimbursement. We won't know until next year if the legislature will renew the grant for the coming biennium.

Facilities

Partner Organizations

Board members considered the role of the Library as a community center, and discussed the possibility of partnering with other organizations and agencies for a joint use project at the Spring Street property.

Affordable Housing

The board reviewed the affordable housing proposals received so far. Discussion was held on the ways in which an affordable housing development at the Spring Street property could benefit or harm the new library building project.

Visitor Steve Ulvi shared his view that a new publicly-funded affordable housing project, at the Spring Street property or entirely separate from the Library, is likely out of reach based on funding availability, and any affordable housing project would be impossible without being fully privately funded.

Facility Needs

Kyle noted that regardless of what happens with the Spring Street property, the current building can't meet the Library's needs. Board members reviewed the facilities needs as reported in the SHKS *Building Condition Assessment & Feasibility Study* and discussed the Library's physical, space-related needs in the current building, particularly dedicated spaces such as children's and teen's areas, program spaces, meeting/study rooms, and storage space. They considered how to cope with those needs if we have to remain in the current building, and how space limitations may affect the breadth of the Library's mission. Ideas discussed included moving more services offsite, reducing collections to increase space for meeting/study spaces, and locating more offsite storage. Karen pointed out that if we remain in the current building, we will not be able to keep up with the expectations of a modern library and the services they provide.

Break at 10:44 am. Meeting resumed at 10:54 am.

New Building Project

Board members brainstormed ideas for alternate paths to achieve a new building at the Spring Street property. John brought up the idea of a phased approach to the building project. Board members discussed ideas of how the Library might use the Spring Street property to fulfill some of its needs, such as storage and meeting space, before we are able to advance to a full new building.

Discussion was held on the options and associated costs to create architectural designs for a phased approach to a new building. Laurie noted that we would need to engage in a community meeting process to come up with an architectural plan, as we had planned to do last fall with Allied8 and Fivedot before shifting focus to the levy lid lift.

Lunch break at 12:05 pm. Meeting resumed at 1:00 pm.

Discussion continued on the possibility of a phased building project approach.

The board reviewed construction cost estimates produced by OCMI in April 2022, and a sample site plan created by Allied8 and Fivedot in February 2022.

Anthony brought up the possibility of strategic planning with the public about their wants and needs from the Library, either in the current building or a new building. Board members agreed it was too early to pursue that step, but discussed other options including surveys to collect that information.

Next Steps

Action Items

1. Laurie will get a detailed schedule for the potential mediation process from attorney Susannah Carr after October 16th, 2024.
2. Karen will draft an explanation of the mediation process and timeline to share with the board at the November 12th, 2024 regular meeting.
3. Kyle and Karen will prepare to represent the board at mediation if needed.
4. Laurie will obtain a new appraisal for the Spring Street property.
5. Boyd, John, and Anthony will meet with Amy Saxe-Eyler, SJICF Director, to discuss fundraising.
6. Laurie will ask OCMI to produce an updated demolition cost estimate for the vacant building at Spring Street.
7. Laurie will clarify terms of the LCIP grant regarding a phased project and will update the board when a decision is made by the legislature to renew the grant or not.
8. The board agreed to investigate the option of possible volunteer architectural help with a new building design that would be completed in phases.
9. After the insurance settlement is determined, the board will set a date for a public meeting. Boyd will prepare a list of questions we wish to ask for public input on prior to that meeting.
10. Tabled discussion of site needs and potential surplus section of the property for affordable housing for a later date.
11. The board agreed to include a standing agenda item for "Planning Updates" at regular monthly board meetings beginning November 12th, 2024.

Break at 2:19 pm. Meeting resumed at 2:31 pm.

c) Strategic Planning for Library Services based on Decisions in 5(b)

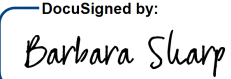
Anthony led the board in a strategic planning discussion, continuing the brainstorming session began in the September 10th, 2024 board meeting. Board members reviewed ideas about library resources and services (current and ideal) from the previous session as well as ideas Anthony collected in staff brainstorming sessions. Then they sorted through the ideas to determine whether they could be accomplished in the current building, would require a new building, or if they would be possible in another offsite location, but not necessarily a new

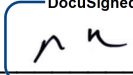
building. In the final step, board members arranged the items discussed in order of importance to the Library's mission.

Discussion was held on how items considered in strategic planning could be incorporated into a public survey as discussed earlier.

Adjournment

MSC Kyle Loring moved and Karen Vedder seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:02 pm. Carried.

Respectfully submitted: 
Board Secretary

Approved: 
Board President