

**SAN JUAN ISLAND LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Special Meeting for the Purposes of Public Engagement and Planning  
In person at Brickworks  
October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

**1) Call to Order:** President Karen Vedder called the meeting to order at 12:07 pm.

**Members Present:** Boyd Pratt, Karen Vedder, John Aschoff

**Staff Present:** Laurie Orton, Anthony Morris, Kasey Rasmussen

Total Attendance: approx. 100

**4) New Business:**

**a) Public Engagement & Planning for New Library Project**

**Opening Remarks:**

John introduced the board, staff, and steering committee members present, as well as consultants Sharon Khosla and Stephanie Ingram from Fivedot, and thanked community members for attending the meeting. He reviewed the agenda for the meeting and explained that the board is undertaking this public engagement and planning process because they want to ensure that decisions made regarding the new building project are in line with what the community wants out of its new library.

Boyd followed with a brief summary of the history of the San Juan Island Library, beginning with its origin as the Legion Public Library in 1922, the formation of an island library district in 1982, and the move to the current building in 1983. Boyd reviewed previous renovations of the current building, with the last renovation completed in 2005. Recognizing that the library had outgrown its current space, the board started looking at options for expansion in 2015. With consultants, they determined that the current property would not support further expansion and began looking at other sites. Following feasibility studies for three potential sites, the board selected the 660 Spring St. property, which the library then purchased in 2020.

Boyd explained that the property had been vacant for four years prior to purchase, leaving the building in a poor state of repair. The building was further degraded by flooding during the December 2021 deep freeze, caused by a burst pipe in the emergency sprinkler system. The library then worked with its insurers for remediation of the damage. Following their original plan to fund the building project, the board pursued a bond in the November 2022 election, which failed to gain adequate support with voters. In 2023, a public forum was held to gather feedback on the building project and the bond election. Boyd noted three key takeaways from that feedback session, which the board have used as guidelines as they move forward with the building project: that the library should focus on grants and private donations rather than a bond, that the library should provide clearer plans for the public, and that the community was very concerned with affordable housing and wished to consider that on the Spring St. site.

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After a pivot in 2024 to focus on a levy lid lift for the operations and maintenance of the current library, the board returned to the building project process in 2025.

Anthony spoke about the services the library currently offers, including traditional library services such as access to books and information, and also access to programs for all ages, as well as places to gather, places to learn, and places to have fun. He shared examples of some of the programs we offer, and how we've outgrown the space we are currently in. Anthony concluded that the library's work is to provide access to the resources needed to help the community thrive, and the consistent overcrowding and inability to provide the space for meetings, programs, and other uses tells us that the needs of the community are becoming greater than what we can meet in our current library. He noted that the flexibility of a modern library, designed for its purpose, would allow us to meet the community's changing needs.

Sharon and Stephanie briefly spoke about Fivedot's experience and focus on community-oriented design. They explained the activity attendees would participate in with the goal of gathering ideas, goals, and values for the new library.

**Break at 12:43 pm. Meeting resumed at 12:55.**

**Feedback Activity:**

Following the break, Sharon and Stephanie led the attendees in an activity, with each person sharing aloud their answer to the statement "I wish my library could..." They then led the group in identifying common themes from the answers given. Participants noted the following themes:

- Children of all ages need to be accommodated
- Meeting spaces of all sizes are needed
- Partnerships with other organizations should be considered in the design, in library programming, and in finances
- Outdoor spaces are needed
- Energy efficiency and sustainability should be part of the design
- Better parking is needed
- Better acoustics are needed
- Separation of loud and quiet activities is needed
- Historical and contemporary culture of the island should be honored in the design
- More bookshelves and storage space are needed
- Expanded open hours are desired
- Private funding/affordability to taxpayers is desired

**Q&A:**

In the remaining time, Laurie, Anthony, and the board answered questions that attendees submitted in writing. Questions addressed the following themes:

Design/Building Process

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- A question was asked regarding where the board is at in the design process. Board members explained that following this meeting, the next step will be public design workshops to translate the goals, values, and priorities identified at this meeting into physical design ideas, and then a conceptual design will be presented for feedback in January or February of next year. They noted that the conceptual design is not the final design, and elements may change as we get further into the process.
- A question was asked regarding plans for the current building. The board noted that while it is likely that we'll sell the current building, we won't be able to do so until after the new building is ready to occupy.

#### Funding

- A question was asked regarding the total cost for the project. Board members noted that we don't have a final estimate yet, because the cost calculations will depend on the size and design of the new building. They discussed the multiple size models produced in the *August 2025 Assessment Report* prepared by Fivedot.

#### New Site Possibilities

- A question was asked about what affordable housing has to do with the library. Board members explained that the board has taken into consideration the possibility of a portion of the site being used for an affordable housing project, after receiving feedback from the community during the 2022 bond campaign that affordable housing was a priority.
- A question asked if there were any boundaries to what the library wants to provide. Board members noted that the idea of the library as a community center is not unrealistic when reflecting on all the ideas shared by community members today, but ultimately it will be a decision made based on the realities of what is possible on the site, and within our budget.

#### Partnerships

- A question was asked about whether the board was considering partnering with other organizations. Board members noted that they have considered such partnerships, and they plan to take further action on exploring those possibilities after the conceptual design is produced.

Before closing the meeting, board members invited the community to attend the next set of meetings on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, which will be held in two sessions at Brickworks from 12-2pm and 6-8pm. The next meetings will take the form of a design workshop session, with the aim of translating ideas generated at this meeting into physical design elements, which consultants from Fivedot and Allied8 will then take into account when creating the conceptual design.

### **5) Adjournment**

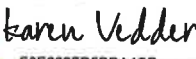
**MSC** Boyd Pratt moved and John Aschoff seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:53 pm. Carried.

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Respectfully submitted:

  
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Signed by  
Board Secretary

Approved:

  
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Board President

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