

**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 6:09 pm.

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

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

Total Attendance: approx. 50

**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 working with the architectural and design firms Fivedot and Allied8 to undertake this community engagement and design process, with the goal of ensuring that decisions made regarding the new building project are in line with what the community wants out of its new library.

Boyd presented a brief 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 was running out of space in its current location, 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 building had degraded by the time the library purchased the property, as it had been vacant for four years prior to purchase. The building was further damaged by flooding during the December 2021 deep freeze, caused by a burst pipe in the emergency sprinkler system. The library worked with its insurers for remediation. Following their original plan, the board pursued a bond to fund the building project 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

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

housing during the 2022 bond campaign and wished to consider that on the Spring St. site. The board pivoted to focus on a levy lid lift for the operations and maintenance of the current library in 2024, and returned to the building project process in 2025.

Anthony spoke briefly about the services the library currently offers. He explained that the library's work is to provide access to the resources that are needed to help the community thrive. Those resources include traditional library services such as books and information, and also connections to people through the programs we offer, as well as access to places to gather, places to learn, and places to have fun. Anthony shared examples of the programs we offer and explained that the library is running out of space to accommodate patrons at these programs and in the building in general. In addition, the library doesn't have the room to accommodate certain patron requests, such as private meeting spaces, quiet spaces, or adequate room for children and teens, which tells us that our community's needs are growing faster than we can meet in the current facility. He noted that a new library, designed for its purpose, would allow us to meet the community's changing needs and be prepared to serve the next generation of islanders.

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

**Break at 6:45 pm. Meeting resumed at 6:58 pm.**

#### **Feedback Activity:**

After 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:

- Meeting rooms of all sizes are a priority
- Creative spaces are desired
- A cozy feeling is important
- Kid-friendly spaces are needed
- A separated teen space is needed
- Collaboration/partnerships with other organizations should be explored

#### **Q&A:**

Following the feedback activity, Laurie, Anthony, and the board answered written questions that attendees submitted. Questions addressed the following themes:

#### Design/Building Process

- A question was submitted asking for more drawings, models, prototypes, etc. of the new building. Board members noted that this community engagement process is meant to provide that, by producing a conceptual design for community feedback.

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

- A question asked if the board had considered other libraries as a model for our project. Board members noted that they are doing that, as models for both function and funding strategies.
- A question was asked regarding the maximum and minimum sizes considered for a new building. The board noted that in the recent *August 2025 Assessment Report* prepared by Fivedot, it was concluded that a minimum of 12,000 sq ft was needed to allow the essential expansions required for the new building. The maximum size considered in that report was 18,000 sq ft, although the site could potentially allow for even more.
- A question was asked regarding when in the design process the board would make a decision on pursuing an affordable housing project on the property or not. Board members responded that there is not a timeline set for that decision yet, as it will evolve from design considerations, and future discussion with community stakeholders. The board noted that even with an 18,000 sq ft facility, there would be room for a portion of the property to be used for affordable housing.
- A question asked about a timeline for completion of the project. The board explained that the next step after gathering public input in these community meetings is to discuss an estimated timeline with our consultants, and that they hope to have a rough timeline to share along with the conceptual design to be presented early next year.
- A question was asked regarding plans for the current building. Board members noted it would likely be sold.
- A question asked about what kind of outreach the board was planning to do to get input from children and teens on what they want out of a new library. Board members noted that the steering committee is currently working out the best ways to gather that information.

### Funding

- A question asked how the board plans to raise sufficient funds for the project. Board members noted that the focus is on private fundraising and grants, and that producing the conceptual design is part of beginning that process, recognizing that we need a clear plan to approach potential donors with.
- A question asked if a new levy lid lift would be needed to fund operations in the new library. The board noted that the levy lid lift passed in 2024 is expected to last us for ten years, and that as we consider potential expansions to services with the new building, we will also be considering what our budget allows, because we do not plan on pursuing a new levy lid lift before then.
- A question was submitted asking what would happen if private and public fundraising isn't sufficient. Board members noted that ultimately, if they cannot secure funding, there will not be a new building.

### Operations

- A question asked if current programs will be continued in the new building, and if any would be discontinued. Staff noted that our intention is to continue providing current services, and moderately expand services if possible.
- A question was asked regarding our current programming overlapping with Island Rec activities. Staff noted that we already partner with Island Rec for some

programming, and don't consider there to be much overlap in what both organizations are providing. Board members added that a new library could potentially allow for strengthening our current partnerships and collaborations with other organizations.

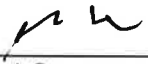
- A question was asked regarding the school libraries, and if taxpayers are paying for services that are duplicated. Staff noted that while the schools do have libraries, they are small and not sufficient for the current number of students, and that we currently work closely with the schools to share resources. Staff explained the new Student Access Accounts that give all high schoolers access to library resources as one example of how we collaborate with the schools.
- A question asked how libraries navigate the shift to digital resources. Staff noted that while digital resource use is increasing, the majority of our checkouts are still for physical items.

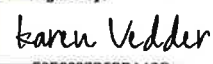
Before closing the meeting, board members invited the community to attend the next set of meetings on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, which will be held in two sessions at Brickworks from 12-2pm and 6-8pm. The next meetings will take the form of a design workshop session, with the aim of translating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

### 5) Adjournment

**MSC** John Aschoff moved and Boyd Pratt seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 pm. Carried.

Respectfully submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by: Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
F8E682F058DA43CD...  
Board President

Approved: