

Board of Library Commissioners

October 13, 2004: MINUTES

Barbara Garvey, Chair, called the meeting of the Springfield Library Board of Commissioners to order at 5:30 p.m.

Library Commissioners Present:

- Helen Boyle
- Janet Edwards
- Barbara Garvey
- Vera O'Connor
- Rudy Ruggeri
- Bettye Webb

Library Staff Present :

- Emily Bader, Library Director
- Lee Fogarty, Assistant Library Director

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2004 and September 15, 2004 Library Commission Meetings passed unanimously. Minutes of the September 28th Finance Committee were approved.

Library Commission Committee Reports:

Planning and Program: Ms. Webb discussed the meeting held with the Mason Square Advisory Committee at the Mason Square Branch on Monday September 27, 2004 to discuss possible improvements to the Branch. The purpose of the meeting was to look at the Branch and develop strategies to improve use and circulation. As a result of that meeting recommendations presented to the Commission included: redesigning the space to create seating, computer and program areas; increased emphasis on Children's and Young Adult Collections and services; a small rotating collection of adult popular fiction and best sellers, as well as media. Ms. Boyle suggested that library signage should be a priority, as well as publicity. Ms. O'Connor stated that many people won't go there and are in fact boycotting the Branch. Ms. Webb also addressed facilities issues (bathroom) and staff requests. Strategies for promoting library services to the neighborhood schools and the community will be developed and a list of volunteer activities will be developed. After some discussion it was the consensus of the Commission to address the signage and staff needs as soon as possible. Ms. Bader will contact Mr. Thomas to discuss signage issues. A request will be made to hang the Mason Square Branch Banner that was removed by the Urban League. It was also agreed that the library space should be re-designed. A plan and budget will be developed and presented to the Commission at a later date. It was also the general consensus of the Commission that these are all temporary solutions until a full Branch can be restored and that the Commission will be working toward a permanent plan for a Branch in the Mason Square neighborhood.

Finance: Ms Garvey discussed highlights of the September 28th Finance Committee meeting which included: a FY05 budget update including a \$50,000 increase in State Aid to Public Libraries, discussion of position vacancies, a

discussion of several disputed Trusts & Endowments, and approval of an expenditure to purchase CPU unit upgrades to accommodate CWMars network enhancements. The Library will not be meeting the FY05 Municipal Appropriation Requirement and will have to apply for a waiver from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Since, there was no reduction in the FY05 municipal appropriation, the library is eligible for a waiver.

Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Ruggeri discussed the Elevator Lift project at Forest Park Branch. The committee has selected Reinhardt Associates. A contract is in process for design and overseeing the project. The project includes a paved walkway, additional lighting and a new entrance with a canopy. The project should be complete by May. Bishop McDonnell has given permission to create parking on Diocese property adjacent to the Central Library for Central Library patrons. This parking will include Handicapped accessible parking. Ms. Bader will meet with Mr. Chwalek to discuss this matter in more detail. There was concern among those present that the entrance and exit to the new Liberty parking lot will be on Liberty St. which is a very busy street. Ms. Bader will address these concerns with Mr. Chwalek. Attorney Puppolo has researched ownership of the property. The Springfield Library & Museums Association purchased it in 1998 for \$175,000. Ms. Rivest expressed concern about zoning issues for the property. Attorney Puppolo will research the issues and get back to the Commission.

Ms. Bader reported on the joint meeting of the Friends of the Library, Library Advisory Committees and Library Commission held on September 22. It was the general consensus of the Commissioners to have this meeting after some discussion at the August 18th meeting on the impact of fundraising by Branch Advisory Committees on Friends of the Library fund raising. It was a very positive meeting and another meeting will be scheduled for sometime in November. Ms. Garvey addressed the meeting and recommended that Branch Advisory Committees review the Library Action Plan, review Branch Library budgets, support programming, and assist Friends in fundraising efforts. Ms. Garvey recommended that every Branch budget should have some money allocated for Advisory Committee efforts. The Advisory Committees will review branch Budgets for FY06.

There was some discussion on how Advisory Committees could revitalize their libraries. The Sixteen Acres Advisory Committee is hosting a Halloween party. As a result of this meeting the Sabis PTO will donate \$4000 to the Friends fund raising efforts .

Directors Report: Ms Bader reported that we are in the process of hiring new staff to fill 14 out of 19 current vacancies. The position postings closed on October 12. The Library Administration will be reviewing applications and contacting individuals for interviews.

The Library recently received a grant totaling \$54,800 from the MassMutual Financial Group as part of the company's continuing support of Step Up Springfield, an initiative to help all Springfield students achieve academic proficiency. The Springfield City Library is also a partner in the Step Up Springfield campaign. With the grant, the Library will offer a series of A+ Sundays programs at the Central Library. The funding will allow the library to provide professional assistance to Central Library Branch users on Sundays, offer Making the Grade computer workshops, and sponsor family programming on Sundays between now and Memorial Day. The first family program is scheduled for October 31.

Advisory Committee Reports :

Mason Square: The Mason Square Advisory Committee discussed and approved improvements recommended by the Commissioners to the current Mason Square Branch. However, they strongly stated that these are temporary solutions that do not address the needs of the Mason Square residents and that they are working toward a permanent solution, which includes the reinstatement of the Mason Square Branch in the Urban League building.

Liberty: The Liberty Branch Advisory Committee reiterated their concern about the entrance and exit to the new parking lot on Liberty Street adjacent to the Library and was pleased that Ms. Bader will be following up on that issue.

Sixteen Acres: Ms. Boyle commented on the Dedication event held at the Sixteen Acres Branch on October 9 in memory of Constance Bynum. Approximately 40 family members and friends attended the event. Ms. Boyle and Ms. O'Connor represented the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Rudy Ruggeri
Secretary

Approved: November 17, 2004