

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, April 08, 2024

4:00 PM

Location: City Manager’s Conference Room and Zoom, with teleconference by
Commissioners Bond and Levitt (per Government Code §54953(b))
Cornell Tech Campus, Bloomberg Center Campus Café
2 West Loop Road, New York, NY 1004

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Levitt called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Bond, Vice Chair Doll, Jester, Jones, Chairperson Levitt

Absent: Millea

Others Present: Senior Recreation Manager (SRM) Melissa McCollum, Senior Recreation Supervisor (SRS) Kari Bell; Senior Management Analyst (SMA) Linda Robb, Recording Secretary Rosemary Lackow.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 8, 2024

Chair Levitt called for any changes. It was moved and seconded (Jones/Doll) to approve, subject to change requested by Commissioner Jones on page 3, Commission items, second paragraph, first sentence: strike “table” and replace with “spreadsheet”.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Commissioners Bond, Doll, Jester, Jones, Chairperson Levitt

Noes: None

Absent: Millea

Abstain: None

Chair Levitt announced the motion passed 5-0-1

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Librarian’s Update—Library Manager Josh Murray made the following announcements; pre-registration for programs, where available, may be accessed at the library website: www.lacountylibrary.org

- The Manhattan Beach Library eclipse viewing was a fantastic success, being named by the LA Times as one of the top 6 places to view in the LA area.
- Recurring children’s programs: Tuesday mornings, Baby Playdate continuing on Tuesday: April 9, 30 and May 7, 10:15-10:45 am.; Wednesday mornings continuing Baby Rhyme Time—for non-walkers April 10, 10:15 – 10:30; and Thursday April 11: Smarty Pants Story Time for 0-5 years, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m.

- Recurring adult programs: Adult Book Club, April 9, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, will discuss “American Sirens” by Kevin Hazzard, about the Freedom House EMS, Pittsburgh, black men who started our nation’s first paramedics corps.
- Special program, Adult/Teens: May 4 (Sat) 2-3 p.m. Sushi Demonstration with Chef Andy Matsuda, Sushi Chef Institute —pre-registration available.
- Special program, Adults: April 20 (Sat), 1-2:00 pm: Succulent propagation: April 23 (Tues), 6-7:15 pm: How to write and publish a book 8, 1-2 p.m.; May 9, 1-2 pm: How to make a woven paper basket;
- Childrens 5-12 yrs. old, special programs (registration available): April 17, 3-3:45 Outdoor Bubble Extravaganza; April 24, 3:00 - 3:30 pm Celebrate Dia de Los Ninos Food & Family Fun, stories about desserts; May 8, 3:00 – 3:45 pm: Dino Magic Show.

Manager Murray responded to questions:

- The Library/USC Speaker proposal is being evaluated by the university.
- The Library can consider an annual showcase of local authors in some way, such as a StoryWalk, if a children’s author, or a featured book through a library program.
- Bookmarks at the library: The library still has a supply of the city bookmarks and puts out for the public along with bookmarks from other entities/organizations.

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

2. 2024 Work Plan Updates

Senior Recreation Manager McCollum provided an overview of the Library Commission’s 2024 Work Plan, as approved by City Council on March 19.

Programs approved: City run programs StoryWalk and Library Appreciation Events, and expanded LA County Library programming using \$46,000 of the library surplus: One Book One County Program (\$8,500); Quarterly Speaker/Music Series (\$37,500). Also approved for the 2024 Plan include: digitization of the city’s historic collection and hiring a contract archivist, and a feasibility study for a new Cultural Library, with consideration of a community Maker Lab.

Programs removed or discontinued: Learning at the Library, Poetry event, Entertainment Series; Photo Op Day (as a standalone event), Library Commission Book Giveaways and a Library Awareness Program.

It was emphasized that realignment of the Commission’s mission and activities as well as use of the library surplus for expanded library programming represent a huge positive step. The City Council also encouraged the Library Commission to “think bigger” regarding using surplus funding.

Senior Recreation Manager McCollum acknowledged some Library Commissioners being upset regarding recent news coverage of the meeting. Using the Library/City MOU as reference, SRM McCollum reviewed the purpose and the process for use of the library surplus funds (now at \$11 million), and pointed out that the City Council has considered various proposals such as conserving the city historic collection as well as conducting a cultural library feasibility study, in the past, citing a public meeting October 17, 2023 which can be reviewed on the City’s website.

Going forward, the Library Commission subcommittee (Chair Levitt, Vice Chair Doll) will meet regularly and report back to the full Commission monthly; SRM McCollum will assist the subcommittee as staff liaison.

SRM McCollum noted that the Library's 10th anniversary is coming up on May 1, 2025, and is an opportunity to plan something significant.

A discussion followed around the following points/issues:

- 1) SRM McCollum reviewed how the surplus is created from resident property taxes and the constraints on using the funds.
 - 2) Vice Chair Doll asked for clarification as to whether there was a consensus on City Council regarding spending surplus money for a speaker series. She feels this is important as this year is a program test. Chair Levitt agreed that the speaker series should be looked at carefully as a test program.
 - 3) Commissioner Bond noted the positive situation that financial resources are available to the City.
 - 4) Vice Chair Doll added that the commission had not previously been encouraged to spend surplus funds due to the possibility of a new facility. Also that surplus funds are to be used for county library related matters.
 - 5) SRM McCollum stated that the City will not provide a formal rebuttal statement to the Easy Reader article covering the City Council March 19th meeting; rather, the city record (approved meeting minutes) for the council and commissions should act as a guide. Chair Levitt emphasized that the main issue is “what is good for the library, not library commission,” and emphasized the executive/advisor roles, respectively, of the City Council and Commission.
 - 6) Chair Levitt concluded: it's very positive that the commission's work will be talked about more and the community will be more excited about the library and the city's role in building literacy.
- a. One Book, One County Program. Chair Levitt updated: the County has decided that Manhattan Beach will host the concluding (not launch) event on Sunday, July 28 at the Manhattan Beach library. She is concerned that she has not heard of any publicity for the program. More information is forthcoming.

b. Library Appreciation Events

Commissioner Jones reported that an invite will go out to the library staff May 1st. Commissioner Jester has emailed all the schools and plans to drop off the books (LA Weather of the One Book One County program) on May 22nd and 23rd. Senior Recreation Supervisor Bell will procure the books once she knows the quantity needed. Chair Levitt noted that she would like to join in dropping off on the day they go to Pennekamp; per Commissioner Jester, all elementary schools may be scheduled for May 22nd.

c. StoryWalk

Commissioner Bond updated: the “Little Blue Truck” has been installed. SRS Bell is working on a flyer for publicity. Commissioner Bond stated she has observed many people stopping to look at the book. Chair Levitt asked if any Commissioners would like to do a “read aloud” of the StoryWalk book prior to the entertainment for the concerts in the park in the summer (with the commissioners perhaps walking in the vicinity of concertgoers in advance with signs publicizing the story time); the idea was met with interest. Commissioner Jones suggested that the origination of StoryWalk be clarified—that, contrary to a perception that the project originated with a local scout, it was the Commission that came up with the idea and searched

for an eagle scout in the community who might implement it as a project. With a lot of hard work by Commissioner Bond, Henry Johnson, working on his eagle scout level, stepped forward as a volunteer to install it.

SRS Bell suggested and it was positively received, that, for the Sunday (June 22nd) Juneteenth festival at Polliwog, the book be switched out to another with a Juneteenth theme or message. Commissioner Bond will contact Manager Murray for an appropriate book. It was noted that otherwise, the current book would be scheduled to be changed at the end of June. It was also suggested that there could be some StoryWalk publicity at the library such as: a flyer on a bulletin board or made available at the Farmer’s Market story time, or a Library Commissioner could announce after a library story time activity. Two other suggestions to distribute the flyer were (Chair Levitt) to place it in the LA Weather books given to the school staff and, from resident Brooke Castor, provide to all PTA presidents.

Ms. Castor also commented regarding the recent press that has been discussed—that she did not take the article negatively, feeling that responsibility for the matter does not rest on any one person or entity; she felt generally that the article raised questions for the community.

d. Juneteenth Celebration

SRS Bell noted: on June 19th there will be a quiet one-hour morning event at Bruce’s Beach to start the celebration and on June 22nd, a festival will culminate at Polliwog Park from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The Commission is invited to participate.

e. Library Surplus

Chair Levitt called for any additional comments beyond that already discussed. No additional comments were made.

f. Photo Op Day

Commissioner Jones reported changes: instead of a live band there will be recorded music (e.g. Spotify or Pandora) played for 90 minutes through an amplification system. The photo Op activity will be from 11:30 to 1:30. The flyer is being developed (same template as past 2 events). They have a new photographer and everything is organized but volunteers are needed. For sign up it was suggested that a QR code be created that would tie into a Google doc form that would record data on a spreadsheet. Chair Levitt will be the “QR Committee” accordingly and will devise the system with a backup and will demonstrate in advance.

G. STAFF ITEMS

SRS Bell stated that staff is continuing to develop flyers for scheduled events.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS — None

I. ADJOURNMENT check recording for vote

At 5:00 p.m. it was moved and seconded (Chair Levitt/Jones) moved to adjourn to May 13, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. The motion passed 5-1 (Millea absent).