

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, February 9, 2026

4:00 PM

Location: City Council Chamber, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue and Zoom
Teleconference by Commissioner Levitt (public Café Cornell University Tech Campus, 2
West Loop Rd, New York, New York)

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present (5): Commissioners Cullen, Doll, Ferris, Levitt (remote), Chair Braitman
Absent: (2) Commissioner Crabtree-Kampe, Vice Chair Chou
Others Present: Acting Senior Recreation Supervisor Michelle Ami-Cortez; Senior
Management Analyst (SMA) Linda Robb, Recording Secretary Rosemary Lackow

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 12, 2026

It was moved and seconded (Doll/Cullen) to approve as submitted. Motion carried by roll-call
vote: Ayes: 5 total (Doll, Cullen, Ferris, Levitt (remote), Chair Braitman; Noes: 0; Absent: 2
(Crabtree-Kampe, Vice Chair Chou)

E. LIBRARIAN’S REPORT

1. Library Manager Cassandra Sargent presented library statistics for January 2026 compared
to 2025 and reviewed programming January through early March.

	2026	2025
Programs	29 programs, 1,252 participants	18 programs, 770 participants
Visitors	16,117 (increase)	15,080
Circulation	22,956 (third highest LA County)	14,912
Library cards issued	336	
Holds	7,680 (most, LA County)	

Manager Sargent went over recurring programs for children (e.g. Circle Time, Smarty Pants Story time) and special activities between January and early March. In January these included, among others: Saturday Yoga, Evening Book Club, Embroidery for Beginners, Rudy’s Radical Science Show, Baby Band, Paying for College with Scholarships (Parts 1 & 2), and Trash Truck Story Time. In February these included, among others: Gardening for Kids, Evening Book Club, Paying for College with Scholarships (Part 3), Abstract Art Painting with Balloons, Planetarium: Journey Through Space, and Benita Bike, DanceArt modern dance performance. To celebrate Black History Month – two activities: Garrett Morgan, inventor of the modern traffic signal and Black History and the Winter Olympics. On March 4, Kirill Umrikhin will present Exploring the World of Whales through his camera lens as a global expedition wildlife photographer.

Programs including reservations as needed can be accessed on the library website:

<https://lacountylibrary.org/location/manhattan-beach-library/>

The Commission next received a presentation from Dr. Grace Eng Nadel, Arroyo Associates, Inc, and Dr. Jennifer King: “Manhattan Beach Library Community Needs Assessment: Strategic Priorities and Spatial Assessment”.

Grace Eng Nadel, Arroyo Associates, Inc. summarized: generally, the library is very well liked and utilized but the community would like more of a number of things: more books, programs, events, seating, study rooms, community meeting space. Also, comments were received about limited availability of parking, and an increasing interest in alternative spaces.

Ms. Eng Nadel highlighted:

- Research conducted: many interviews, four focus groups and community survey, yielding key themes of community needs.
- Four Strategic action-oriented priorities emerged from two design workshops, including: offer more programming, maintain library as a flagship; address parking limitations, and increase outreach to the community.
- Next steps: for each of the four priorities, actions were identified.

Dr. Jennifer King provided an assessment of the library physical space and how utilized, based on guidelines from LA County, as well as from the state libraries of Connecticut and Michigan as well as feedback acquired from their research. This aspect of the study supports the priority that the library be maintained as a “flagship”. The spatial assessment had three main findings:

- Collection size: +/- 35% below LA County Library guidelines. Users have access to the entire county collection and place a large number of holds and, per the county’s standard, shelves are intentionally only filled about 2/3.
- Public computer use: 37% below LA County Library guidelines - not so significant as many users bring own computers using library Wi-Fi, instead of those provided by library.
- Public seating: below Connecticut but meets minimum of Wisconsin guidelines (new furniture has added some seating and is being well utilized).

Dr. King noted, responding to Chair Braitman, that the study did not look at how Manhattan Beach compares to other county branches in these metrics; this can be looked into.

Dr. King emphasized that while the study shows more is wanted, having more programming, for example, may mean more staff and staff space would be needed, and currently physical space is very tight (some dedicated computer stations may be converted to general public space for a small gain). Aesthetic issues concern windows getting dirty and (from staff), the front desk. The front desk comments were that it is not very functional (no place to lay down books) and, at night there is some anxiety about safety in that, when staff levels are down, staff cannot see visitors coming in through the front entrance (back to the entrance).

In discussing, the Chair asked whether to address parking, some kind of shuttle service could be looked into. Commissioner Doll expressed concern about physical collection related to the children’s collection as adult readers have access to a large number of digital resources. She feels that the volume of children’s books has decreased compared to the former library and requested that this be addressed. Commissioner Doll also noted that, because in the beach area, outdoor use can be challenged by cold and windy conditions and suggests that any expanded

use of the outdoors should take into consideration needs for shade, warming devices and whether spaces might be semi-enclosed.

At 4:42 Commissioner Levitt left the meeting.

Ms. Eng Nadel noted that she and Dr. King will lead a walk-through in the library after this meeting for /interested Commissioners (three maximum commissioners per Brown Act).

Ms. Eng Nadel thanked the Commission and noted that the draft report may be finalized within a few weeks.

Chair Braitman asked whether there was any public comment; none received.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

2. 2024/2025 Work Plan Discussion

- a. Library Appreciation Events (Commissioners Cullen, Ferris) Commissioner Cullen updated: the library staff brunch will be on February 19. Library Manager Sargent indicated that the brunch can be done in combination with a planned morning staff meeting that will start around 9:00 a.m., no special food requirements. Details will be emailed from staff liaison Michelle Ami-Cortez.
- b. Speaker Series (Commissioners Braitman, Chou, Levitt) Chair Braitman updated: the date and speaker have been identified; more information is expected to be received in April.
- c. StoryWalk (Commissioners Chou, Cullen, Crabtree-Kampe) No further update - the new book has been installed.
- d. Library Needs Assessment (Commissioners Braitman, Doll, Levitt) – See E. Librarian Report for update and discussion.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Acting Senior Recreation Supervisor Ami-Cortez reported that a notice regarding the new StoryWalk book has been published in the Older Adults March newsletter and it informs that the city Dial-a-Ride service is available to transport to the park.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Chair Doll reminded: the committee for library appreciation will need to arrange, through the city liaison to obtain signed books related to the May speaker event which will be gifted to the school librarians before school is out for the summer.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:54 it was moved and seconded (Ferris/Cullen) to adjourn the meeting to March 9th at 4:00 pm; motion passed unanimously 4-0-3 (Levitt, Crabtree-Kampe, Chou absent).