

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, January 13, 2025

4:00 PM

Location: City Council Chambers, 1400 Highland Avenue and Zoom

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Doll called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Bond, Braitman, Huber, Vice Chair Levitt, Chairperson Doll

Absent: None

Others Present: Senior Recreation Supervisor (SRS) Kari Bell; Senior Management Analyst (SMA) Linda Robb.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 12, 2024

Chair Doll called for changes; seeing none, it was moved and seconded (Bond/Braitman) to approve; motion carried 5-0.

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Doll expressed gratitude to MBFD, MBPD and all first responders to the fires in LA and extended thoughts and support to the many who have suffered loss. Vice Chair Levitt expressed thanks to the County Library for its response as a resource hub.

Chair Doll announced that Commissioner Millea has resigned from the Commission; the City Council will be appointing a new commissioner in the near future. The Chair and other commissioners thanked Commissioner Millea for his contributions.

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Librarian's Update

Library Manager Josh Murray announced that today until 5 pm, FEMA will be assisting victims of the fires at several County branch libraries.

Manager Murray detailed several library events and activities available to the public for all age groups through to early February. For more information on all of the announced activities and events, visit: www.lacountylibrary.org.

Manager Murray responded to Vice Chair Levitt that there isn't anything in particular that the Commission can do to assist the library in its response to the fires. He noted there has been, however, an uptick in new library card signups from the areas affected.

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. 2024 Work Plan Discussion

Ad-hoc committee assignments:

Chair Doll noted that on June 1st Commissioner Braitman will become Chair, and former Commissioner Millea's replacement (appointed January 21) will become Vice-Chair. Ahead of those changes, Chair Doll suggested that Commissioner Braitman join the core committees (Speaker Series, and as applicable, the Library Surplus).

Concerns about possible Brown Act violations were discussed relative to the number of committee members allowed on any one committee (Up to three members can form a committee when there are six total commissioners, but this reduces to two with five commissioners). This will affect current committees briefly, until January 21.

The Commission took the following action to reorganize committees to address Brown Act issues,

- Chair Doll moved, seconded by Vice Chair Levitt that Commissioner Braitman be added to the current Speaker Series committee with the caveat that he not attend a committee meeting until after January 21st or when the council appoints a sixth Commissioner. The motion passed by verbal vote, 5-0.
- Commissioner Bond agreed to come off the Speaker Committee; Chair Doll made a substitute motion, seconded by Vice Chair Levitt, that Commissioner Braitman replace Commissioner Bond (not be added cumulatively) to the Speaker Series Committee, leaving that committee with three members. The caveat remains that Commissioner Braitman not attend a Speaker Series meeting until after January 2. The substitute motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.
- Chair Doll moved that Commissioner Bond come off the Speaker Series committee and join the Library Appreciation Committee; no objection it was so ordered.

a) Library Appreciation Events (Commissioners Braitman, Huber, Bond)

The Commission discussed and agreed to continue rotating the task of providing bagels to the library staff on the day of the Commission meetings. Chair Doll noted that she brought bagels to the library on November 12; Commissioner Braitman volunteered to bring February 10, the next meeting.

Future efforts to show appreciation of school librarians was discussed. Past practice was discussed: prior to the end of the school year, one or more commissioners visited each school and presented a certificate and token of appreciation (in past couple years, a certificate and a book which was ordered and paid for by the City). SRS Bell advised that the city does not cover gift cards and that the wording on appreciation certificates should read as being bestowed by the City of Manhattan Beach, not the Library Commission.

Commissioner Bond volunteered to spearhead this effort; she will get contact names, and start school outreach in April, with the goal to complete prior to end of the school year.

It was suggested that this year they could give a signed copy of the book related to the Spring Speaker Series event, with perhaps a personal note to each librarian, special event invitation with reserved seats and recognition at the speaker event.

Commissioner Huber suggested that Mira Costa be involved in librarian recognition. Commissioner Levitt noted that April 6 – 12 is "National Library Week". It was suggested that the committee explore with the schools if the commission's recognition might be tied into National Library Week.

b) Speaker Series (Commissioners Bond, Doll, Levitt)

Chair Doll noted that the ad hoc committee met with the County speaker series planning team once since the November meeting and will meet again this Wednesday; it is hoped that a speaker and date will be decided.

SRS Bell noted that Commissioner Huber has submitted some possible speakers which have been forwarded to the library team. The Commission briefly discussed, agreed that the list of possible speakers should have a wide range of audiences (including children and teens), especially for smaller events held at the Manhattan Beach branch.

Chair Doll commented that based on the great success of the inaugural November event (80 persons attendance), she believes it's possible in the future that the number of speaker events could increase with perhaps one large (1,000 + attendance at Mira Cost High School hall) and one or more smaller ones. The selection of the spring speaker will be by the County but with input from the City.

The question arose as to whether elected officials such as at county, state and federal levels should be invited to the May large venue speaker event; this will be raised at Wednesday's meeting.

c) StoryWalk (Commissioners Bond, Huber, Millea)

Commissioner Bond noted that she has installed some new backing in the 16 structures and plans to install a new book in about three weeks (end of January/early February). She also is planning to laminate pages from books she will choose for the remainder of 2025 so whoever takes on this project will have a head start after her term ends June 1. She is working to complete a "how to" document that can be passed on to the next committee chair, which could, as previously discussed, be spearheaded by the student commissioner with arrangements for assistance made with vetted volunteer groups. Ideally the book should be changed every three months as the pages fade if left in too long.

Commissioner Huber will look at school clubs for possible volunteers and will coordinate with Commissioner Bond. Commissioner Bond commented that her goal is to advance to where there is an established protocol to ensure the structures are regularly maintained including cleaning and new content.

d) Library Events/Programming (Commissioners Braitman, Levitt)

Commissioner Braitman spoke to Kelli McCabe, Friends of the Library President who emphasized ongoing need for volunteers. It was suggested, keeping within the scope of the council approved work plan, that the commissioners as individuals maintain memberships and volunteer with FOL and generally keep abreast of FOL happenings which can be announced and publicized at Commission meetings.

A discussion was held with Manager Murray regarding Brainfuse, the library's online tutoring program. The Commission is interested in whether data on Manhattan Beach resident use can be extracted. Manager Murray believes such user data is available only for the whole county system. He explained, for privacy, library cards are not linked to Brainfuse accounts and Brainfuse only checks to see that the user has a valid library card. He will pass the Commission's interest in teen tutoring to librarian Tim Olshevsky; who has been talking to the schools about library resources including tutoring. Chair Doll requested that Mr. Olshevsky provide a report about his efforts with the schools regarding tutoring at a future Commission meeting.

G. STAFF ITEMS

1. SMA Robb reported: January 21 the council will appoint a new commissioner to replace Mr. Millea.
2. SRS Bell advised that when looking for student volunteers (e.g. for StoryWalk), it is important that the commissioners coordinate with city staff. Once a group or club is selected, that information can be emailed to her and Kari will pass info on to the city's volunteer supervisor who will assist the students and make sure volunteer hours are properly credited.

Commissioner Bond commented on the need for commission seat candidates to have a clear expectation on serving on a commission including things like participating on committees and working on projects, acting as vice chair, chair etc. Discussion followed. It was noted that every commission is different, with varying time commitments there is no set "job description" for city commissioners. SRS Bell described the orientation that is typically given by staff to new commissioners upon appointment.

SRA Robb clarified that the new incoming commissioner will be filling a seat (no. 3) which has 18 or more months remaining on the initial term and therefore will complete the original term and be automatically reappointed to one succeeding three-year term.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS

Vice Chair Levitt asked about the next Work Plan. SMA Robb stated the Council is expected to schedule its annual Work Plan discussion for all Commissions in March. Chair Doll will reach out to Senior Recreation Manager Melissa McCollum for more information on current and prospective projects involving the Library Commission and suggested that the Work Plan be scheduled for the February agenda.

Commissioner Braitman inquired as to where the current Library Commission Work Plan can be viewed.

Commissioner Huber recalled Commission discussion as to how high school students could be encouraged to get library cards – she has some ideas (post QR codes with info or publicize applications available) and can reach out to campus clubs. Commissioner Huber was advised to reach out to teen librarian Tim Olshevsky through Manager Murray to discuss.

Manager Murray informed that the library conducts a County-wide library card campaign with giveaways annually. He will raise the issue of a targeted library card campaign with teen librarian Olshevsky.

Manager Murray noted the popularity of the study hall program during exam week. Recently over 200 study teams participated and study spaces were booked solid, including the community room.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded (Levitt/Braitman) to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 pm to February 10, 2025 in City Council chambers at City Hall.