



City/School Liaison Committee Minutes



City/School Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 23, 2008

8:15 AM to 9:30 AM
City of Palo Alto Civic Center
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Ave
Palo Alto

In Attendance:

City of Palo Alto

Pat Burt, Council Member, Chair of Committee
Kelly Morariu, Assistant to the City Manager
Diane Jennings, Library Director
Melinda Wing, Supervising Librarian
Katie Whitley, Administrative Assistant

Palo Alto Unified School District

Camille Townsend, Board Member
Melissa Baten Caswell, Board Member
Bob Golton, District Co-Chief Business Officer
Mary Scigliano, IT Manager

Handouts: **All handouts can be viewed in the City Manager's office at 250 Hamilton Ave**

Meeting convened at 8:25am

1. Oral Communications: None

2. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2008

Board Member Baten Caswell moved to approve; Board Member Townsend seconded. Minutes were approved 3-0. Mayor Larry Klein absent

Chair Burt said the primary topics on the agenda were update on library programs and facility needs/school bond. He asked Ms. Baten Caswell if there was any further discussion needed about the school bond and Ms. Baten Caswell answered no.

3. Update on Joint Library Programs

Diane Jennings said the presentation would cover an update about the joint efforts of the libraries going on between the City and PAUSD over the past year.

Chair Burt said to let the record know that Board Member Townsend joined the meeting at 8:29 am.

Ms. Jennings introduced Melinda Wing, manager of youth services and manager of the children's library. She announced that Maya Spector would not be joining the meeting due to vacation but was responsible for a lot of the collaboration between PAUSD and the City.

Ms. Wing said Ms. Spector had a busy year continuing to work with the PTA and PTA Council. Some of the things she has been working on this year are:

- making Spanish speaking presentations on library services to JLS parents
- part of a PTA Council writing program that judged a writing contest called Reflections
- met with Palo Alto Child Community Care (PACCC) directors for a tour
- started a "week at a school" that involves her spending a week at each school and she visits every class and talks about reading and books
- promotes summer reading programs at all the schools
- library card campaigning

Ms. Wing said Ms. Spector has been working with middle schools on book discussion groups. It has been well received with the students.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked what kids attend the book club. She wanted to know if the kids were voracious readers at home or kids that were less inclined to read and were encouraged by teachers. Ms. Wing answered she was unsure of the level of teacher involvement but said some give extra credit.

Ms. Wing said Ms. Spector worked with staff to educate them on the resources as well. Ms. Spector is involved in the district's English language committee, gives new teacher orientations at the beginning of the year and online data base presentations.

Ms. Scigliano said Ms. Spector attends the new teacher trainings prior to the start of the school year and presents what databases are available to incorporate from the City of Palo Alto Libraries and gives them library cards.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if there was a meeting between PAUSD and the City to discuss what databases are used. Ms. Scigliano said the committee meets in May

and will discuss what databases are used, how much use each is getting, potential alternatives and what the City is using so nothing gets duplicated.

Ms. Wing said in order to access the databases online, a library card is needed which is why Ms. Spector works hard on the campaign.

Ms. Jennings said the City recently enabled the option to get a library card online.

Chair Burt asked if you are under 14 whether you can still get a card online. Ms. Wing said the child could sign up but would have to still come into the library with a parent to sign.

Ms. Jennings said the City sends new residents post cards about library services.

Ms. Wing said this year for the first time Ms. Spector made a presentation to the PAUSD principals and got a number of them set up for library cards. She worked on a program to have Anastasia Goodstein do a presentation on what teens and tweens are really doing online. It was an author lecture for parents, teachers and the general public.

Ms. Wing said new things Ms. Spector worked on this year include:

- Nights at the Children's Library for elementary schools
- PACCC night at the Children's Library
- Teacher's drawings online through the website she hosts on the library website for any teacher that reaches her through the website- prizes are given

Ms. Wing said upcoming activities include author visits and continuing to work with PAUSD for curriculum support for the staff.

Ms. Scigliano said Ms. Spector attends the Library media meetings monthly.

Ms. Baten Caswell said the district wants to have high literacy across all the schools and there are some children that are not reading at grade level. The district wants to encourage children to read in their spare time but one of the challenges is that some families do not have books readily available. She said the libraries have made it very easy to get the library cards but asked what is being done to get the materials in their hands and then to return them.

Ms. Wing said for the children that are having difficulty keeping up with grade level reading, the summer literacy program helps. Having the nights at the Children's Library is the biggest way to get families into the libraries even if they do not live in the area.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if the libraries have been successful in bringing families from East Palo Alto. Ms. Wing said somewhat.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if there was a relationship between the East Palo Alto libraries where if a book is checked out in Palo Alto, it can be returned in East Palo Alto. Ms. Jennings said there was a delivery van between San Mateo and Santa Clara County Libraries.

Chair Burt asked that given there was a van for delivery, if it was clear in East Palo Alto this service was available. Ms. Jennings said it was not heavily promoted because of workload/cost implications and it is more for casual returns.

Chair Burt said if the delivery was already occurring, he was unclear on the incremental cost increase if the van delivers one book versus ten. Ms. Jennings said the system only has a certain amount of money to fund it and has never been encouraged to put out signs because that could potentially increase the cost.

Chair Burt suggested exploring the cost of using the delivery van more instead of assuming the cost would increase without data to support this.

Ms. Townsend asked about formal relationships between the District, City and Library services. Ms. Wing said there was no formal written policy.

Chair Burt said he heard consensus that the Committee is impressed with the work Ms. Spector is doing and it is much more than people realize. He said he also heard it is dependent on the outstanding effort from Ms. Spector. The question of whether we codify this long term is important if the programs and projects are highly valued. Ms. Morariu said the City would look at that as part of budget discussions but there are no plans to get rid of that position or program currently.

Ms. Jennings said she wanted to turn to the infrastructure discussion. She said one thing that happened over the last year is all the schools and City libraries have connected to I-Net, the high speed network.

Ms. Scigliano said the fiber that runs between the schools is the primary source of connection to the internet and the T1 lines are now redundant. She said as she understands from the media center, there is the capability to connect to other districts as well as other cities if there are some joint activities they are interested in.

Ms. Jennings said the media center is a resource that hasn't been heavily evaluated.

Ms. Townsend asked how the libraries would use the media center. Ms. Jennings answered they could record author discussions or trainings and replay them.

Ms. Jennings said the City libraries are in the process of looking at technical needs and the media center is one aspect of that.

Chair Burt asked if the media center in a way could become a 21st century library. Ms. Scigliano said it is becoming an extension of the District. She said the District is now looking into video conferencing. Next school year, the district is really going to tap into the bandwidth that's available.

Ms. Jennings continued the discussion about the library infrastructure. She said there are a lot of existing library facilities in Palo Alto and the City has developed a budget plan to upgrade the facilities. Below is a list of actions related to City Library facility upgrades:

- Library Advisory Commission's recommendations approved by City Council
- City Auditor's report confirmed need to improve library facilities
- 5-branch system to be maintained
- Children's Library renovated & expanded
- College Terrace branch renovation funded
- Designs underway for Mitchell Park, Main, and Downtown libraries

Ms. Jennings said the Library is looking to address longstanding needs for those facilities. She said Mitchell Park needs to be enlarged to serve current and future needs because it is the most heavily branch used now. Some of the other needs include:

- Spaces to support lifelong learning for all ages
- Room to grow book and media collections
- Libraries brought up to current building codes
- Replacement of end-of-life mechanical, electrical, and lighting systems

Ms. Jennings said specifically the City plans to tear down the existing Mitchell Park Community Center and Library and replace them with one facility that will be larger, more functional and a green building. The Main Library will have a small expansion adding a community meeting room and group study spaces but be completely renovated. Ms. Jennings said the Downtown Library will not be expanded but renovated.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked while the renovations at Mitchell Park Library/Community Center are taking place where are the facilities and folks in it going to reside. Ms. Jennings said it was being looked at now and there might be a possibility to use the Jewish Community Center trailers.

Ms. Morariu said there was a budget for temporary facilities in the planning process.

Ms. Jennings said there are many benefits to the community from these projects and they include:

- Larger children's room at Mitchell Park
- Coordinated service to youth at Mitchell Park

- Site plan for Mitchell Park enhances safety for kids walking and biking from schools
- Dedicated teen rooms at Mitchell and Main
- Group study spaces
- Improved collections and support for technology

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if there was money in the bond for collections or technology. Ms. Jennings said no unless the technology was part of the facility infrastructure.

Mr. Burt asked if the library foundation was already targeting major fundraising for the furnishings. Ms. Jennings said yes. Mr. Burt said awareness in the community of some of the things that Ms. Spector or the Library Foundation are doing may help the City in getting the bond passed.

Ms. Jennings said once Council approves what goes on the bond the Library Foundation will kick off the fundraising campaign to fund the furnishings and equipment for the 3 library projects as well as funds to enhance the collection at Mitchell Park Library.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked about the timeline of when the City is going to promote the Library Bond. Ms. Morariu said the key message from the City at this point is the needs of the facilities since the City Council has not made any formal decisions about a bond measure and timing.

Ms. Jennings said Council is now considering a construction bond measure for November. The City will need 2/3 voter approval to pass.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked when that would be placed on the Council Agenda. Ms. Jennings said there would be presentations made to Council about cost for the projects in May. In June, there will be discussion by Council about the projects and what to put on the measure with a deadline of July to make a decision.

Mr. Golton asked if there was a projected number for the cost. Ms. Morariu said the total project was estimated at \$81 million. Ms. Jennings said the bond would be less because not all of that cost is bondable. This would be about \$76 million.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked what the cost would be to a community member. Ms. Jennings answered it would be about \$170 a year for the averaged home in Palo Alto based on the assessed evaluation.

4. This Item was tied into Item # 3 on the agenda

5. Future Items and Agendas

Ms. Townsend asked if the Committee could talk about the next meeting. Chair Burt said the future meeting is May 28.

Ms. Baten Caswell suggested the District present the Strategic Plan at the May 28 Committee meeting.

Ms. Townsend asked if on the future minutes there could be a listing of the next couple meeting dates scheduled and if there could be a reminder agenda sent out to the group the day before.

Chair Burt wanted to follow up to ensure that Ms. Spector's efforts get recognized by the community and gain participation. Ms. Baten Caswell said if Ms. Spector could let Erwin know it could go out in E-News.

Chair Burt said there is a great relationship between the District and the City's library programs and the community doesn't know it exists. He wanted to know how to get this information out to the school's community on how it benefits everyone. Ms. Baten Caswell suggested getting a PR effort together.

Meeting Adjourned 9:35am