

DETROIT LIBRARY COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

REGULAR MEETING

November 15, 2011

President Thomas called the Regular Meeting of the Detroit Library Commission to order at 1:46 p.m.

Present: President Thomas, Commissioners Bellant, Hicks, Jackson, Kinloch, Quarterman, and Annie Carter, Representative for Ex-Officio Tyrone Winfrey

Administrative Staff: Executive Director Mondowney, Cromer, Machie, Moore and Norfolk

Present Also: Mylika Adorno, Jamil` Allah, Ben Baker, Janet Batchelder, Benita Beckles, Lamar Bolding, Joan Brand, Lou Brock, Margaret Bruni, Ronald Bryant, J. Randolph Call, Lurine Carter, Franklin Clements, Gary L. Cooper, Linda Cooper, Jared Davis, Maggie DeSantis, Cherylita Feagin, Valerie Glenn, J.W. Henderson, Sandy Howard, Jessica Howell, Shannon Jon, Versandra Kennebrew, Ashley Lewis, Romondo Locke, Barb Martin, Mike McElgunn, Patrice Merritt, Trinee Moore, Carolyn Mosley, Uzo Onyemaechie, Rosemary Patterson, Lawrence Porter, Cledos Powell, David Rambeau, Yvette Rice, Jeffery Robinson, Issac Robinson, Anna Savvides, Alma Simmons, Cully Sommers, Laurie Stuart, Brenda Taylor, Viola Taylor, Steve Teeri, Harvey Turner, Jerome Wade, Doreen White, April Williams, Frances Worthy, Tracey Wyatt, and others.

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 18, 2011 were approved with any necessary corrections to be made.

The agenda for the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2011 was approved with one addition, the Report of the Audit Committee under New Business.

President Thomas stated at the October 18th meeting, the Commission indicated at the November 15th meeting they would review proposals from community groups relative to the branches being considered for closure.

The Commission received two alternative proposals. One represents Mark Twain Annex and the other represents Monteith Branch. Frances Worthy is

speaking on behalf of Monteith and Pastor Jeffery R. Robinson is speaking on behalf of Mark Twain.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sheila Jackson, Lifelong resident of Detroit, said she had letters of support from various community leaders to keep Monteith open. She said the demographics had increased in the area and she was concerned about the basis of putting Monteith on the closure list. She requested documentation from the Commission supporting the rationale of closing Monteith.

Linda Cooper said she had letters of support from various community leaders and organizations that would aid in obtaining grants to keep the libraries open.

Valerie Glenn said she is very active in the Democratic Party and she is concerned that citizens of Detroit will be losing a basic civil right if the library closes, which is the ability to learn. The community does not understand the decision to close libraries.

Commissioner Kinloch said he understood the community's concerns, however, he could not believe members of the Detroit City Council, members of the Legislature and /or members of the United States Congress were unaware of the Detroit Public Library's financial issues. Members of the Legislature have the ability to introduce or have discussion on a bill to change the paradigm for funding public libraries.

Jessica Howell said she was a former lifelong educator and a supporter of the community library. The community depends on the services the library provides. She said she visits the library at least three times a week and it is always crowded. She asked to reconsider closing Monteith Branch. She asked for information to be provided to the community in a more transparent manner so it is understood why hard decisions have to be made.

Maggie DeSantis said her biggest fear of closing four branches would be the beginning of branch closures and more would follow. She felt there has to be a new paradigm on how libraries are funded. She asked the Commission to think more strategically and creatively on how to provide branch services with less funding. She distributed a draft proposal from the Warren/Conner Association proposing a new paradigm for providing library services on the eastside of Detroit.

Jared Davis, Principal, Finney High School, said the key to a quality lifestyle is education. Currently ninth grade students are reading below their grade level. He is very upset that the only community resource that supports education is closing.

Commissioner Quarterman asked Mr. Davis what is the status of library services in Finney High School? Mr. Davis replied the school does have a Media Specialist, however, when the old Finney High School closed for reconstruction, most of the reading materials did not make it to the new temporary location.

Commissioner Quarterman said she is very interested in the Detroit Public School system and the Detroit Public Library system working together to better benefit all of the residents of Detroit, particularly the students.

Lamont Boulding, spoke on behalf of Lincoln Branch Library. He said most of the residents in the Lincoln Branch area walk to the library. He complimented the staff saying they were well liked and really cared about the customers. He liked the fact that the staff gives back to the community. He also complimented Ms. Karen Johnson, Manager, Lincoln Branch, as she makes customers feel important. He urged the Commission to reconsider closing Lincoln Branch.

David Rambeau attends the Commission meetings monthly. He said the members of the Commission should not expect people to trust them. He suggested the library retrieve the nine million dollars the city took from them. He also suggested the Commission move to separate the library from the City of Detroit.

PROPOSALS

Lincoln Branch – *Harvey Jones* presented ideas to keep all the libraries open. He suggested a new proposition for the upcoming library millage. He said there were three upcoming elections, February, August and November. He said a proposal should be prepared immediately to be placed on the August ballot for voters. If the communities start advertising now, the libraries could possibly receive the additional funds needed to keep them open.

Mark Twain Annex – *Jeffery Robertson, Pastor, Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church*, said the libraries have been pitted against each other for survival. He said the Mark Twain Annex has been housed at Mt. Calvary for thirteen years. Marcus Garvey Middle School is currently hosting supplemental educational services at the Mark Twain Annex. It is essential to address the literacy issue. He proposed the Commission reconfigure the current library hours and switch to part-time hours. He said having the services available at reduced hours would be better than having the services disappear.

Monteith Branch – *Francis Worthy* presented a strategy for Monteith to remain open and vital to the community. She proposed to have a meeting with Roy Roberts, Detroit Public Schools Emergency Financial Manager, the Detroit Library Commission, the City of Detroit official liaison and all of the Monteith Branch stakeholders. It is proposed that all stakeholders have the same information and work on plans beneficial to all parties. Make Monteith a

depository or specialized library making it eligible to receive various government and private non-profit funds.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mrs. Mondowney was asked to go over the rationale used to identify branches for closure. Mrs. Mondowney reported that a comprehensive document was presented to Commission to help make these difficult choices. In March 2011, staff proposed as many closings as 18 branches based on financial information available at that time. The Commission tasked the staff to go back and review the information thereafter resulting in a recommendation for four branch closures. The document detailing the recommended branch closures is listed below. ↻

Proposal to Reduce Service Locations to Accommodate March 2011 Reduction in Work Force (Dated October, 2011)

The Reduction in Workforce (RIF), implemented by DPL on March 17, 2011, has had a significant impact on library services. Branch Libraries (and Main) are significantly understaffed for both librarians and support staff. The current staffing level places an undue burden on staff and is negatively affecting customer service.

- Sporadic Branch closures have happened since then due to the inadequacy of staffing to accommodate service hours.
- Inadequate staffing levels at most locations to support service
- Inability of staff to conduct outreach at schools and community events

The following recommendations are offered to realign library services to the current staffing levels:

- 1) *Close four branches and reassign staff to other branches and Main Library, where support is desperately needed.*
- 2) *Reconfigure services at the Douglass Branch, replacing the stand-alone Children's Library with a Technology Center.*

Other reasons to proceed with closing four branches include:

- 1) Community residents have an expectation that branch closures will be necessary to compensate for population shifts and declining revenue. This is supported by feedback received during the library's community forums and surveys, conducted in May, 2011.
- 2) Employees, especially union members, have a high expectation that branches will close to compensate for the March 17th reduction in workforce.
- 3) Closing branches will enable the library to redirect resources, to effectively support the libraries that will remain open.

Facilities Recommended for Closure

The selection of branches to be closed was based on an analysis of multiple factors, including:

- Population density
- Size of the building
- Condition of the building
- Geographic balance
- Proximity to other library locations
- Service utilization rates
- Community input

Based on these factors, we recommend closing the following branches:

Lincoln

The Lincoln Branch, located on 7 Mile Rd. at I-75, serves the northeast area of the city. At 6,070 square feet, it is one of DPL's smallest libraries. It was built in 1951.

The recommendation to close the Lincoln Branch is based on a balance of several factors. While the State Fair community located to the west of the branch has been truly decimated by population loss (-51.4%), the Pershing community to its east has fared better (-19%) and has maintained an above average population density. The branch's usage statistics place Lincoln in the lower half of DPL's branches according to circulation. The problem for Lincoln is that it is weak on all of these fronts: population density, size, and usage. The building is not ADA compliant and is not well-suited to be renovated or expanded. All of these factors, coupled with the fact that Sherwood Forest and Wilder branches are within 3 miles of Lincoln traveling either way on 7 Mile Rd., and Knapp Branch is less than 3 miles to Lincoln's south, put Lincoln at the top of the closure list.

Mark Twain Annex

Opened in 1998 as a temporary location, the Mark Twain Annex Library at Iroquois and Forest is DPL's smallest facility. Located in the basement of the Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, the branch is only 2,200 square feet. It is not handicap-accessible, nor does it have air-conditioning. In part because of its small size and basement location, the branch consistently ranks near the very bottom for circulation and computer usage.

Except for several pockets along Jefferson, the lower eastside of Detroit is sparsely populated. With access via Jefferson, the strong Elmwood Park and Skillman branches can easily provide service to this region.

Looking forward, as capital funding becomes available, DPL would seek to advance its strategy for a new branch along the Detroit River, near Belle Isle. Such a facility would be more centrally located to serve the Elmwood, Mark Twain and Montieth communities.

Monteith

The Monteith Branch, located on Kercheval at Eastlawn, serves the far southeast corner of the city. At 17,400 square feet, it is one of DPL's largest and most

distinctive facilities. In recent years, it has been the beneficiary of generous support from the Junior League of Detroit, which has provided interior updates and sponsors tutoring and other children's programs at the site.

The greatest challenge for the Monteith Branch is that its community has undergone tremendous change over the years. The branch is located in what is one of the most sparsely populated areas of the city. According to the 2010 census data, its neighborhood lost more than 40% of its population in the past 10 years alone. Monteith's low usage statistics reflect the lack of population density in its service area.

Another challenge facing the branch is the age and condition of its facility. While at first glance, the branch seems solid and appealing, its sheer size, age and lack of air conditioning, ADA access, and the presence of asbestos in the basement, make the property prohibitively expensive to update and maintain.

Residents of the Monteith community will continue to have access to library services at the Jefferson and Chandler Park branches, both within 3 miles of the Monteith Branch. The Junior League of Detroit has responded to the fact that the library is considering closing the Monteith facility with understanding and sympathy. They have expressed interest in working with the library to explore creative solutions.

Richard

Richard Branch, located on Grand River at Stoepel, serves the northwest area of Detroit. Opened in 1923, it is DPL's fourth oldest building. Because of its age, it is not handicap accessible nor does it have air conditioning. At 6,554 square feet, it is DPL's seventh smallest facility.

The Richard Branch community is challenged by low and declining population density. While it has traditionally maintained strong usage statistics, it has lost many users with the recent closure of St. Cecilia's school and the migration of its computer users to the Parkman Branch, which is two miles away.

Given its age, size, low population density and proximity to the Parkman Branch, the Richard Branch is recommended for closure.

Community Reaction Considered

Looking at population density, the size and condition of the building, and usage statistics, an argument can be made to close a number of other DPL facilities. It is most difficult to recommend a branch for closure, given the community's affinity to their libraries. Unfortunately, DPL's resources at this time can no longer support services at 24 library locations.

Mrs. Mondowney's regular monthly report was accepted as written:

Administrative Cabinet Retreat

Mrs. Mondowney reported that members of the Administrative Cabinet met for a day and an half retreat to review and discuss our current strategic directions that included funding, physical infrastructure, programs and services, technology, human resources, internal relations, as well as marketing and community relations. We also discussed our core services, mission and vision, how we work as a team and organizational change. The retreat was facilitated by Lynda Jeffries for the Leadership Group.

Community Outreach

On November 3, as the invited speaker for the Sorosis Literary and Art Club of Detroit, Mrs. Mondowney had the opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the Library; and to engage in a lively question and answer session that gave insight into the issues and concerns the group had about our future. The club is celebrating its 90th anniversary and includes women who are interested literature and art.

Mrs. Mondowney participated in the Detroit Housing Commission's event entitled "100 Leaders Who Cook: Nourishing Our Future" that was held on November 13th. The event brought together community and business leaders throughout Metro Detroit to share food and more importantly, to talk with young people about the careers of their dreams.

Knight Foundation Program Report

The final report for the Knight Foundation funded program at the Parkman Branch was submitted to the Knight Foundation on October 31. The program exceeded its anticipated outcomes in three out of four program areas. The fourth program area—to increase library hours is still under evaluation to ensure that the library has the capacity to sustain the increase. Remaining grant funds will enable the library to maintain current service levels through December 2012.

SPECIAL UPCOMING EVENTS

Automotive Authors Day

The sixth annual *Automotive Authors Day*, sponsored by the Friends of the National Automotive History Collection, will be held on Saturday, November 19th, from 2 – 5 p.m. at the Skillman Branch. Automotive historians and car collectors will gather to meet over 20 authors who write about automotive history, cars and the industry.

Noel Night

The 39th annual Noel Night will be on Saturday, December 3rd. Main Library will offer holiday activities throughout the building as well as a marching band outside. A variety of musical performances, free cider and donuts, and the very

popular photos with Santa are a few of the festivities planned. Also, there will be a holiday book sale to benefit the summer reading program.

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Human Resources Office Report

Commissioner Kinloch reported that the Human Resources Office Report indicates personnel actions for new hires, separations, and retirements. These actions were approved by administration.

SEPARATIONS

Oneka Samet, effective November 4, 2011

Commission Action

On the motion of Commissioner Kinloch and seconded by Commissioner Bellant, the personnel action report was unanimously adopted.

Authorization to Close Four Library Branches

Commissioner Kinloch noted that the proposal to reduce service locations was given at the last meeting as well as read today by the Executive Director.

Commissioner Kinloch reported the Reduction in Workforce (RIF), implemented by DPL on March 17, 2011, has had a significant impact on library services. Branch Libraries (and Main) are significantly understaffed for both librarians and support staff. The current staffing level places an undue burden on staff and is negatively affecting customer service:

- Sporadic Branch closures have happened since then due to the inadequacy of staffing to accommodate service hours.
- Inadequate staffing levels at most locations to support service
- Inability of staff to conduct outreach at schools and community events

The following recommendations were proposed:

Close the following four (4) branch locations proposed to be effective November 23, 2011:

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------------------|
| Lincoln | - | 1221 E. Seven Mile/Russell |
| Mark Twain | - | 4741 Iroquois |
| Monteith | - | 14100 Kercheval/Eastlawn |
| Richard | - | 9876 Grand River/Stoepel |

Close the children's library at the Douglass branch and replace it with a Technology, Literacy & Career Center.

Develop a plan to adjust library service hours at libraries close to the ones recommended for closure, to help alleviate the impact.

- A detailed description and profile for each branch recommended for closure was provided.
- A timeline for actions leading up to and immediately following the branch closures was provided.

Discussion

Commissioner Hicks asked to seek an amendment to take Mark Twain Branch off the closure list as we could seek an amendment to the Mark Twain lease agreement first and then determine what financial impact would be realized from that action. Commissioner Kinloch disagreed; he explained that at any point in time, discussion and modifications to the closures could be discussed. Commissioner Kinloch supported the motion as it is. President Thomas said the request is denied to amend the motion.

Commissioner Quarterman asked if the motion to close is a permanent solution. Commissioner Kinloch stated that if the financial condition changes and he hopes that it does, we do have the ability to re-open those libraries. He felt Commission should consider suggestions by the public presented at today's meeting and forward them to the Committee on Administration.

Commissioner Hicks felt consideration to suggestions and partnerships should be given first before taking action because it is very hard to re-open after closing.

Commissioner Bellant voiced his concern in considering changing this motion. He too agreed with Mr. Turner that the soonest we could see a millage proposal on the ballot would be August and then it would be a year before funds are generated. During this time, staff would have to continue working under conditions that would adversely affect services throughout the City. He understands and has heard from staff as well as patrons that branches are already unofficially closing due to staffing issues. He felt it was important to act now based on the information we currently have.

Commissioner Kinloch mentioned that tomorrow evening, Mayor Bing will address the City about its financial crisis. He noted at the meeting with the City officials that he attended, it was indicated to the Library that we could expect a 20% decline in revenue. After that meeting, staff then developed a plan to close 18 branches. A short time later the City said the 20% reduction was not correct. Now the Mayor is saying the City could run out of money by spring. Commissioner Kinloch said that when Commission voted on DPL's budget, it was likely to be a need to make additional cuts and close more branches.

Commission Action

Commissioner Kinloch moved that the Executive Director's recommendation to close four branches be adopted. Commissioner Bellant seconded the motion; the motion carried with four yes votes and two no votes.

Mrs. Mondowney said the dates for closures would be adjusted and the information will be posted to DPL's website.

Commission Action

Commissioner Kinloch moved to forward the recommendations from Ms. DeSantis, Ms. Worthy, and Mr. Turner to the Committee on Administration. Commissioner Bellant seconded; the motion carried.

Commissioner Kinloch noted that the information on a supplemental millage and amending the Mark Twain lease could be discussed at a Committee on Finance meeting.

Authorization to Adjust Skillman Library Hours

Commissioner Kinloch reported the workforce reduction was implemented in March, 2011, resulting in staff shortages at all library locations. As a result, the Skillman Branch Library is no longer able to operate a six-day work week. All other branches are currently open five days a week, eight hours per day.

Following a review of four months of service transactions from Skillman Library for January – April 2011, it was determined that service traffic for Saturdays was equal and sometimes greater than service traffic for Fridays.

Commission Action

Commissioner Kinloch moved to return Skillman Branch to the same schedule as other branch libraries. Commissioner Bellant supported; the motion carried.

When adequate staffing is available, it would be ideal to continue to operate the Skillman Library on a six-day schedule. The Skillman Library will continue to operate a 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. schedule for all days of operation.

Discussion

Commissioner Jackson asked why Skillman was open six days. Mrs. Mondowney stated that the National Automotive History Collection was housed there. Commissioner Jackson questioned reducing their hours when the auto show was in town. Mrs. Mondowney said we could have extra staff there during the auto show if needed. The Friends help sponsor programs during that time.

Approval to Close Children's Library at the Frederick Douglass Branch

President Thomas said this recommendation was part of the proposal to close four branches but was not mentioned. For clarification, Commissioner Quarterman suggested voting on it separately. President Thomas also noted that a provision in the write-up was for a plan to be developed to adjust library service hours at libraries close to the ones recommended for closure which would help alleviate the impact.

Commissioner Kinloch reported the Children's Library located within the Frederick Douglass Branch will be replaced by a Technology Center. The Library on Wheels and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will remain open for service.

Commission Action

Commissioner Kinloch moved to accept closing the Children's Library at Frederick Douglass Branch; to develop a plan to adjust service hours at libraries near the closed branches to alleviate the impact of the closures; and to accept the timeline for actions.

Mrs. Mondowney noted that original closure dates were dependent on approval of the closures at the October meeting; the dates would be adjusted based on today's approval. Commissioner Kinloch stated that part of this motion is to modify dates and post on DPL's website by tomorrow. Commissioner Bellant seconded the motion.

Discussion

Commissioner Quarterman asked what would happen to the service for those children that use Douglass Branch. Mrs. Mondowney explained that the new center will meet all the needs of both adults and children. The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped would not close but would continue to serve the handicapped children. Ms. Laurie Stuart, Acting Coordinator, Frederick Douglass Branch for Specialized Services, said the children's section was underutilized. Currently, Douglass Branch provides service through the bookmobile and interlibrary loan service and in the future it would become a technology center for children, young adults and adults.

Commissioner Quarterman asked if those same services such as interlibrary loan and the bookmobile would be available to the communities near the branches that are to close. Mrs. Mondowney said the interlibrary loan service is available at all branches. The bookmobile has selected sites.

Commissioner Quarterman asked if there would be any cost savings. Mrs. Mondowney indicated no because staff would still be needed to support all of those services. Commissioner Kinloch suggested discussing the bookmobile stops report at a Committee on Administration meeting.

Commission Action Continued

President Thomas noted the motion was made to close the Children’s Library at Frederick Douglass Branch and to replace it with a Technology Center. Commission Bellant seconded the motion. The motion carried with one no vote.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Routine Reports on Finance

Commissioner Kinloch reported that the following accounts have been examined and found correct by the staff of the Financial and Business Operations and ratification of payment is recommended.

November 2011	
<u>PUBLIC FUNDS</u>	
Total Payroll & Benefits	\$ 1,723,343.31
Total Vouchers 176 - 300	<u>\$ 911,143.92</u>
Grand Total	<u>\$2,634,487.23</u>

Summary of Expenditures September and October 2011	
<u>Restricted/Designated Funds</u>	
Branch & Main Checking – Checks 1853 -1861	\$ 6,303.78
Burton Endowment Fund Checking – Checks 8169 - 8178	\$ 1,592.88
Knight Foundation grant – Checks 1291 - 1312	\$ 11,627.66
Louise Webber O’Brien Fund – Checks 4194 - 4198	\$ 2,415.50
Programs & Gifts Checking – Checks 1516 - 1521	<u>\$ 4,455.34</u>
Grand Total	<u>\$ 26,395.16</u>

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Commission Action

On motion of Commissioner Kinloch, the recommendation of the Committee on Finance as set forth above was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Quarterman reported that the Audit Committee received and reviewed a draft audit report for the Fiscal year ended June 30, 2011 from Abraham and Gaffney. Commissioner Kinloch thanked the chair of the Audit Committee and the Executive Director for speaking with the attorneys and the

accountant on the chargeback issue to cover all bases and not to compromise our position disagreeing with the City on the chargeback issue.

Commission Action

Commissioner Quarterman moved to accept the draft audit report. Commissioner Kinloch seconded the motion; the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.