

**HOWELL CARNEGIE DISTRICT LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

Vice-President Lyn Hewitt called the regular meeting of the Howell Carnegie District Library to order at 7:00 pm.

Members present: Jennifer Earl, Bob Ellis, Lyn Hewitt, Tony Kandt, Susan Pominville, and Maria Stuart. Library Director Holly Ward Lamb and Greg Clum from Bredernitz, Wagner & Co., P.C., were also present. Additionally, four members of the public were present.

Members absent: Kathryn Tuck.

Maria Stuart moved to approve the vacation absence of Kathryn Tuck. Susan Pominville supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

Susan Pominville moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bob Ellis supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

ACTION ITEMS:

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Library Accountant Greg Clum reviewed the financial audit for the fiscal year 2022-2023 with the trustees. Mr. Clum departed the meeting at 7:24 pm.

Bob Ellis moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, including Item A, Minutes of October 10, 2023, and Item B, Bills and Payrolls. Susan Pominville supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

There was no president's report in the absence of Kathryn Tuck.

Each board member received the Treasurer's Report for October 2023 electronically. Treasurer Bob Ellis briefly reviewed the report with the board.

Bob Ellis moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Susan Pominville supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

The unapproved minutes of the October 10, 2023, policy committee meeting were provided to the board members via the board packet. The policy committee recommends board approval of the updated Paid Leave Policy. The committee recommended sending revised versions of the Collection Development Policy and Procedure and the Internet and Computer Acceptable Use Policy to our attorney for review.

Director Holly Ward Lamb thanked board members for attending the Livingston County Trustee and Director's Dinner on November 1st. She asked them to send her ideas for a topic or speaker for next year's event. Additionally, she stated:

"Kathleen Murray and I attended the Library Marketing and Communications Conference last week. I'm going to share some information from a session on how to say the hard things. The question isn't so much how you respond but why you respond. And the 3 C's of Crisis Communication - Clarify, Connect, and Conflict. I believe this is very relevant to the ongoing dealing with the City and City Council and the frustration that is felt by some board members. I don't believe this is necessarily new information, but I like the format.

Clarify - what you respond to as well as what you say.

I have two timelines related to the library lot. I am reading them into the minutes to address the concern that the history is not fully represented.

Connect - I acknowledge that there are two parties involved, both who believe they are doing what is best for the governmental unit they represent.

Conflict - I acknowledge that I need to sit in conflict, and that my words will not necessarily change everyone's mind to my point of view. And that the two parties have conflicting goals.

Timeline and costs Library Lot 2003-2020

August 2003- board approved library providing funds for parking study - notes show \$2,000 contributed towards \$6,000 total cost

May 2005 - Parking Study Final Report

April 2006 Resolution 06-07 – closed on purchase of property (lots 121,122, 123 and 124 on corner of Wetmore, Center and Clinton Streets)

May 2006 Librarian’s Report – PM Environmental completed the Category-N BEA and associated Section 7a Compliance Analysis

November 2006 Librarian’s Report – Boss Engineering proposal to design a parking lot accepted

January 19, 2007 – Boss Engineering – drawings for site plan approval

February 2007 Librarian’s Report – Paperwork and preliminary site plan submitted for Planning Commission

March 8, 2007 – letter from City of Howell Community Development staff team meeting to evaluate submission

March 2007 Librarian’s Report – March 14 meeting with City of Howell staff

April 2007 Librarian’s Report – March 27 meeting with Shea Charles, Mayor Geri Moen and City of Howell staff to “discuss creative ideas for parking in this northwest quadrant of downtown”

May 2007 Librarian’s Report – first mention of commuter rail from Howell to Ann Arbor – wait for additional information begins

June 2007 – Sept 2009 Librarian’s Report – waiting to see impact of commuter rail from Howell to Ann Arbor

Note – June 2009 Librarian’s Report “evidently there is a future plan for a 5 story parking garage for the library according to the local paper.”

Sept 2009 board meeting – Shea Charles presents the new Howell Downtown Master Plan

Direct Costs related to library lot:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Property | \$541,894 |
| Lot Study | 2,000 |
| Site Assessment Fee | 6,280 |
| Site Plans | 9,481 |
| Total | \$559,655 |

Additional Timeline information:

Conversation with Kathleen Zaenger:

2007

The initial costs for the parking lot were much higher than anticipated. The library did not have the funds to immediately proceed with the plan.

Followed by potential for rail service between Howell and Ann Arbor (WALLY) and then the economic downturn.

Shea Charles asked the library to hold off on any parking lot plans.

2013

Library campaign for additional millage. The parking lot was not included in the ask to the public because Shea Charles asked the library to hold off on including it. The City was looking at the NW quadrant and was interested in working with the Library.

2020

City asked the Library to participate in listing the entire block as it was identified for redevelopment and the City had obtained Redevelopment Ready Community status. The Library participated with the understanding that library parking concerns needed to be addressed to the satisfaction of the Board before any offer would be considered.

Timeline of Events Related to the Library Lot in 2023

Monday, January 23, 2023

Meeting with Erv Suida, City Manager; Kate Litwin, DDA/ Main Street; Rick Scofield, Library Trustee; Kathleen Murray, Communications Coordinator; and Holly Ward Lamb, Director

Erv Suida and Kate Litwin presented the public gathering space idea, including professional drawings and video. The City's ask of the library involved the library giving the City the library lot in exchange for additional angled parking spots on Center St (21 spots) signed "Library Only" parking during library hours. And then adding "Library Only" parking to 8 spots in City Lot # 2 (the "Pit" lot). Rick Scofield received this information before this meeting. Erv was unclear about how the signage would be enforced.

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Erv Suida and Kate Litwin presented the same information from the January 23 meeting to the entire library board at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Special board meeting to discuss the Letter of Intent from the City of Howell, which described the library giving the City the library lot in exchange for additional angle parking spots on Center St. (21 spots) signed "Library Only" parking during library hours. Also, add "Library Only" parking to 8 spots in City Lot # 2 (the "Pit" lot). Per our attorney, this would not be a legal use of library funds.

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Kathleen Murray and Holly Ward Lamb met with Erv Suida at City Hall to present the idea of the library leasing a portion of the library lot to the City for the construction of the ice rink. The library offered to be part of the grant application if needed.

This idea was never taken to the City Council for consideration. On Thursday, March 9, Holly Ward Lamb received an email from Erv Suida stating that the City would proceed with its original plan.

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

At the regularly scheduled library board meeting, Holly Ward Lamb was tasked by the board with obtaining a current appraisal of the library lot.

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Library board meeting. The appraisal of the library lot was presented to the board for review.

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Library board meeting. The City presented a proposed purchase agreement for the library lot with no provision for library parking. Erv Suida attended the meeting to discuss the proposed purchase agreement. The board tasked Holly Ward Lamb with sending the proposed purchase agreement to the library's attorney for review.

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

Library board meeting. Erv Suida and Kathleen Zaenger, Former Library Director (1980-2017), attended the meeting to discuss the history of the

library's purchase and subsequent inactivity on the library's lot and the current proposal. The motion to approve the Purchase Agreement from the City of Howell failed. The board tasked Holly Ward Lamb with continuing to work with the City to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Jan Lobur, City of Howell, Mayor Pro Tem, emailed library trustees about the library lot, encouraging them to sell the vacant lot to the City of Howell.

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Library board meeting. There was a discussion about needing an independent subject matter expert/parking consultant.

Thursday, September 28, 2023

Erv Suida and Holly Ward Lamb met at City Hall. Erv presented an option for dedicated line-of-sight parking (30 angle spots) on the library lot. They discussed this parking option, the project as a whole, and ways for the library and the city to work together.

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

Library board meeting. There was a discussion of Holly Ward Lamb's meeting with Erv Suida and Holly's proposal, including the dedicated line-of-sight parking (30 angle spots) on the library lot. The board tasked Holly Ward Lamb to work with the library attorney to develop a lease agreement.

Friday, October 27, 2023

Tony Kandt, library trustee appointed by the City of Howell, received a letter informing him of "complaints of inappropriate conduct at the October 10, 2023 library board meeting." It also stated that a "fact-finding investigation by City Manager and City Attorney" was conducted. As advised in the letter, should Tony Kandt choose to continue his "role as a Howell City Council-appointed representative to the Library Board, the City Council will conduct a hearing on this matter at the November 13, 2023, City Council meeting." Holly Ward Lamb forwarded the communication to the library's attorney. Under Michigan Law, only the Governor can remove an appointed library trustee.

Monday, October 30 - Monday, November 6, 2023

Various emails and phone calls between Holly Ward Lamb and Anne Seurnyck, library attorney. Anne Seurnyck communicated with Dennis

Perkins, city attorney, that only the Governor can remove an appointed library trustee, questioned him about the “fact-finding investigation,” and discussed First Amendment protection.

Thursday, November 9, 2023

Erv Suida emailed a pdf of a letter dated November 8, 2023 informing Tony Kandt that “as a result of yesterday’s election and the re-swearing -in of the Mayor and members of the City Council, the agenda item concerning your conduct will be postponed from November 13, 2023, until the November 27, 2023, council meeting.””

ACTION ITEMS

NEW BUSINESS, continued:

2. Bob Ellis moved to approve the 2024 closing dates. Susan Pominville supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.
3. Susan Pominville moved to change the start time for the December 12, 2023 library board meeting to 6:00 pm. Maria Stuart supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.
4. Bob Ellis moved to approve the purchase agreement with Dell for \$19,969.18. Maria Stuart supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.
5. Jennifer Earl moved to update the Paid Leave Policy. Bob Ellis supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION

6. The trustees discussed recent communications from the City of Howell and its attorney about a library trustee. Bob Ellis stated that, at the very least, “we can all agree there was a breach of decorum” at the October 10th meeting. He said that it would be helpful if we do a better job following Robert’s Rules to maintain decorum and that any debates must be confined to the merits of a pending question. He circulated a handout of Robert’s Rules. He believes the situation may have been de-escalated if someone had pointed out that a trustee was “out of order” and “should maintain a civil tone.” He reminded trustees that any one of them, not just the chair, can call a member to order. He also suggested that library board meetings be recorded in the future so that if there is controversy, they can just “be listened to.” Maria Stuart stated she believed the discussion at the October 10 meeting was “organic” and was handled adequately by the board. She said she had her own interpretation of what happened and assumed that everyone attending the meeting did as

well, and that some board members are really invested and passionate in their beliefs. She thought it was “taken care of” and “nobody left with hurt feelings.” She stated she thought the board had been on a “really good path to having a really good project downtown” but that she “did not appreciate all the other stuff that went on.” She questioned the City’s “investigation” because “How can you do an investigation without talking to people who were involved?” and that no one had contacted her about the discussion. She said, “We took care of it.”

There was further discussion about future recordings of board meetings and what that would entail. Bob Ellis moved that Director Holly Ward Lamb investigate the possibility of recording library board meetings. Maria Stuart supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously agreed. Holly Ward Lamb stated that because of other demands on her time, she would be unable to complete this task by the December 2023 trustee meeting.

7. Holly Ward Lamb stated: “A library trustee represents the residents of the library district. It is the responsibility of a library trustee to put the best interests of the library and its patrons first in their decision-making process. As I continue to stress, the library originally purchased the lot with the intent of dedicated library parking. Only by retaining ownership of the lot will that goal ever be achieved. The proposed plan by the City does not enhance library services. From the City’s perspective, their plan enhances city services. This is where the conflict occurs and as I stated earlier, sometimes we have to sit in conflict.” She then shared and reviewed a proposed lease agreement prepared by library attorneys concerning our ownership and potential lease of the library’s vacant property. She asked board members to email her with questions or comments on the agreement by Tuesday, November 21. She anticipates returning the lease agreement to the board as an action item in December.
8. The board members discussed a proposed change to our pay structure, considering upcoming changes to the Michigan minimum wage.
9. Our annual appeal mailing was delivered to the Howell Post Office on November 13.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS OF BOARD MEMBERS

None.

Susan Pominville moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm. Bob Ellis supported, and a quorum of the board unanimously approved.

Kathleen Murray, Recording Secretary