Columbia Library District  
Minutes, Meeting of July 12, 2007

Board members present were Tom Richards, President; Rosie Gerding; Marie Glaze; David McDonald; and MaryEllen Sievert. Lynn Hostetler and Jim Loveless arrived after roll call. Susan Breyfogle and David Webber were absent.

Also present were Elinor Barrett, Kris Farris, Russell Niermeyer, Jim Smith, and Lauren Williams, DBRL staff; and Brian Harrington of Allstate Consultants. Melissa Carr, DBRL Director, was present for the first portion of the meeting.

Call to Order

Richards called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Virginia Young Room of the Columbia Public Library.

Approval of Minutes

Gerding moved, Glaze seconded, to approve the June 14, 2007 minutes. The motion passed.

Communications

There were no items to be communicated.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Director’s Report

Carr reported that the Missouri Attorney General and his staff would be holding a press conference at 11:00 a.m. in the Friends Room of Columbia Public Library on July 13 to announce a just-released publication on adoption in Missouri. She said that the library was chosen as the location for this press conference because the publication tied in with the Missouri Heart Gallery exhibit on display through July 14.

Carr followed up on an email she had sent to the board about the death of Helene Holroyd, a great friend to the library. Holroyd had served on the DBRL Board and had been president of the Columbia Library District (CLD) Board. She also served ten years as the Treasurer of the Friends of the CPL. Carr said that her family had asked that donations be made to the Friends, but because of the relationship between the library and the Friends organization we are prohibited from donating to the Friends. Instead, Carr sent a note to her family on behalf of the board and staff saying that some books would be purchased in her honor. Carr reported that books in the fields of art and history would be added to the collection at her family’s request.
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Carr encouraged board members to walk through the building and enjoy the excitement and energy generated by the summer reading and One Read programs.

Financial Reports of the Columbia Library District Capital Project Fund and Quarterly Building Fund Report

There were no questions for Smith on the financial reports for the Capital Project and Building Funds.

Old Business

Richards moved to the old business portion of the agenda while the board waited for the arrival of the traffic engineer.

Barrett reported that on June 29 the Citizen’s Art Advisory Committee reviewed a proposed gift of five small prints by Frank Stack. The committee passed a motion to recommend to the CLD Board grateful acceptance of this gift. Sievert moved, McDonald seconded, to accept the recommendation of the Citizen’s Art Advisory Committee. The motion passed.

Barrett reported that after the last meeting staff took the opportunity to move the sculpture “Q” to one of the shelves in the reference area where it gets a lot of light and is viewable by the public. In response to a question Niermeyer said that he recently discovered that one of the Bussabarger lights is still faulty. All three failed initially because they weren’t wired properly by the manufacturer, and only two were repaired correctly. Niermeyer said that he has contacted Meyer Electric to schedule the repair.

Niermeyer said that the new exterior book drops have been installed and are working properly, sorting the returned items into separate bins for books and audio/video.

Barrett reported that architect Nestor Bottino had been in town on July 2 and 3 for other business, so she took the opportunity to have him look at the day-lighting level in the reading room. He identified the glass block panels as the source of sunlight that at certain times of day seems overly bright. She said Bottino discussed adding mechanized shades that can be raised and lowered and she has contacted a vendor who will review the issue and put together a cost proposal for addressing the problem.

Facility Update

Barrett introduced Brian Harrington of Allstate Consultants, the engineer with whom she had discussed the parking lot traffic and safety issues. Harrington said that he had done an informal review of the lot, discussed with staff past incidents and traffic problems, and had some preliminary recommendations and ideas based on this initial study of the problem. He first addressed the addition of a marked crosswalk from the bottom of the steps at the south entrance across the parking drive, saying that he did not recommend a crosswalk in this location. He said this crosswalk would terminate in the middle of a parking aisle, which is dangerous for pedestrians, and added that it would encourage people to cross too close to the intersection of the
lot entrance and Garth. He said that over-marking this area might cause a false sense of security for pedestrians and might also cause drivers to incorrectly assume pedestrians won’t cross in other unmarked areas.

Harrington then said that he did not recommend adding additional bicycle parking on the south side of the building. He said that the library already has pedestrian/vehicle conflicts in this area, and adding one more mode of transportation to the lot would only exacerbate the existing problem. He felt that the current bicycle parking location on the north side of the building was reasonable and has the capacity to add additional bicycle racks should they become needed.

Harrington then defined the parking lot problem saying that there is a high level of pedestrian and vehicle congestion right at the entrance to the lot. He said that drivers have too many decisions they have to make immediately upon entering the lot, and his recommendation is to figure out a way to minimize the number of decision points pedestrians and drivers have to make or to space out or separate these decision points.

Harrington reviewed three preliminary conceptual schemes for addressing the problem, noting that they would require further study to determine feasibility. Barrett added that each of these schemes involves the loss of three short-term parking spaces. The first scheme showed a landscaped barrier across the first parking aisle, preventing drivers from turning immediately left upon entering the lot. A crosswalk would create a path farther west from the lot entrance to a median, and the first three or four short-term parking spaces would need to be eliminated to prevent vehicles from backing up across the crosswalk. Barrett said that the creation of the barrier across the first parking aisle matches what the security officers were doing with traffic cones on afternoons during the school year. Hostetler pointed out that the landscaped barrier might also eliminate the two spaces closest to it, as those spaces are already hard to exit. Harrington confirmed that further study might indeed indicate the loss of other parking spots.

The second scheme included a landscaped median barrier at the lot’s entrance and a crosswalk creating a path farther from the lot entrance. The parking lot drive and outer ring would be converted to one-way traffic only. Harrington said he was not sure there was physically enough space in the drive to make this scheme work, especially considering the large delivery trucks, school buses and bookmobiles that would have to use the outer ring to exit.

Harrington explained the third scheme showing a sidewalk protected with a landscaped barrier along the parking aisles and a crosswalk to the ramp entrance. Harrington felt that this scheme was not a very good option as pedestrians would most likely ignore the crosswalk, and the sidewalk would block the existing book drops. Harrington said that in his opinion the first option is best.

In response to a board member’s question, Harrington said that all of these schemes necessitated losing 3 short-term parking spaces because the back-half of those spaces would be included in the new pedestrian crosswalk. He also said that cars backing out of these spaces exacerbate the problem of automobiles stopping in front of the steps and traffic backing up onto Garth.

In response to a question, Harrington said that in his opinion he felt it would be reasonable for the board to address the problem based on his initial observations, but whether the problem is
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urgent enough to require the immediate implementation of a solution would require further study on his part.

Barrett introduced the idea of having some sort of forum with the school, the library, and the neighborhood association to talk about the parking capacity, the current traffic and use problems, and encourage use of the north lot in the interest of safety. Harrington said he felt the challenge will be getting drivers to use the parking facilities in the way they are intended to be used, and the only way to fix the problem is to get the strong support of the school for whatever solution the board decides to implement. Barrett said that at times when the meeting rooms are being heavily used, the number of people using the building exceeds the capacity of the south lot. In response to a board member’s question, Barrett said that the north lot was seldom completely full and that the library needs to encourage use of the north lot. She added that some of the comments that came out of the post-election listening sessions said that we needed to provide additional parking for this building. The board discussed making face-to-face educational efforts in addition to the current signs posted to remind patrons to use the north lot.

Loveless asked that if each of Harrington’s proposals addresses the automobile traffic/pedestrian conflict at the base of steps, should the board consider eliminating the steps entirely. Barrett discussed the reasons the architects had to divert from their original plan of having the main entrance farther away from the lot entrance, including the reuse of the existing garage area. Richards commented on the heavy usage of the stairs even during wintry conditions and noted that the board spent project funds to rebuild the steps in order to add a snow melt system, not that this should keep them from considering all possible solutions. He added that no matter what solution the board chooses, there probably will be a lot of scrutiny from the public. Loveless said that putting out two or three proposals for public comment would show the board’s concern for public safety, allow the public to give input, and inform the community that this is an issue we plan to address.

In response to a question, Barrett said that her goal for this meeting was to outline the issues, present the engineer’s preliminary ideas, and see if the board was interested in pursuing further study of any of these ideas. Richards suggested involving the library’s architect since the solution might involve aesthetic changes to the outside of the building. Barrett said that she could arrange a work session with Bottino and the engineer on this issue, but she needed to know whether the board wanted to address the issue in a way other than using the security officer in the lot and setting up the orange cones in the afternoons to redirect traffic.

Richards said that he would like the board to further study the issue and come up with a list of viable options and their concrete pros and cons. He said that the community has raised concerns about the lot, the mayor has made specific suggestions, and it deserves a thoughtful process by the board. Barrett said she needed direction from the board to seek proposals from the engineer and Bottino to perform additional work on this topic. The consensus of the board was to move forward and gather this information for report at the next meeting.

Old Business

Barrett reported that Bottino had done some work on the issue of controlling the periodic wind tunnel effect happening in the lobby and had looked at the option for using screening on both the
 interiors and the exteriors of the vestibules. In lieu of revolving doors he investigated using stiffened panels that are fastened at the base and a friction-mount at the top so that they would be moveable. Barrett distributed an image of a mock-up of what the screens might look like. She said that Bottino had looked at a recycled material called eco-resin and received pricing of $73,000 – $86,000 to create the screens. This is about half the price of using revolving doors, but she and Bottino are continuing to investigate alternative materials that may be even more economical.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Miscellaneous**

Richards said that he will email the board with their committee assignments.

**Adjournment**

Hostetler moved to adjourn and Richards adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Lauren Williams, Executive Assistant.

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Board Secretary