Columbia Library District
Minutes, Meeting of March 13, 2008

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

Also present were Melissa Carr, Director; and Elinor Barrett, Kris Farris, Jim Smith, and Lauren Williams, DBRL staff. Steve Smith of Williams-Keepers was present for the first portion of the meeting. DBRL staff member Pat Kopp was present for the last half of the meeting.

Call to Order

Richards called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. in the Virginia Young Room of the Columbia Public Library.

Approval of Minutes

Hostetler moved, McDonald seconded, approval of the minutes from February 14, 2008. The motion passed.

Communications

There were no communications.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

2007 Audit Pre-Conference

Steve Smith of Williams-Keepers said that he met with the Finance Committee the previous week to see if they had any questions or input for the 2007 audit process. He said that if the Columbia Library District (CLD) Board members have concerns, particularly with issues specific to the Columbia building, this is the right time to raise those issues. He said that the auditors would be on site next week and present the final report at the May meeting. He explained the new audit standards related to risk assessment, which required them to obtain additional documentation on procedures. Steve Smith said that the audit will include the financial statements for the Building Fund and the Capital Project Fund, and he added that he did not have any specific concerns.
Columbia Library District
Minutes, Meeting of March 13, 2008

regarding either of those funds. He asked the board members to contact him or Jim Smith with any questions.

Director’s Report

Carr said that the newspapers have been reporting on a “Safe Routes to School” program in conjunction with PedNet, and that board members may have heard about the “Walking School Bus” program recently begun at West Boulevard Elementary. She reported on a conversation she had with Jack Jensen of Columbia Public Schools (CPS), and he confirmed that CPS is working with the City of Columbia to apply for a grant to hold a charrette process about improving traffic and safety during drop-off and pick-up times for Grant students. She said Jensen assured her that the library would be asked to participate in the process.


Smith said that page six shows the debt service payment made in February. In response to a question, Smith said that if the construction work approved at the last meeting costs the amount estimated, then there will be approximately $45,000 remaining in the Capital Project Fund. In response to a question, Smith said that it is his understanding that after the board finishes the work related to the parking lot, whatever funds are left in the Capital Project Fund will be moved to the Debt Service Fund, and the Capital Project Fund will be closed. Carr added that maintenance of the Columbia facility is now part of the DBRL Operating Budget. She explained that the Building Fund, for which the board receives a report on a quarterly basis, has a balance of approximately $100,000, to be used at this board’s discretion and which is not part of the Operating Budget.

In response to a question, Carr said that the tax rate on the Building Fund was $0.05 during the 90s and had been $0.10 prior to that. Richards said that in terms of long range planning, one opportunity the board has after making the last debt service payment in 2018 is to consider a modest building fund tax to provide funding for maintenance.

2008 Budget for Friends of CPL Donation

Carr explained the reasons why the proposed budget for the 2008 Friends donation is more than the $70,000 given to the library last month. She explained that some of the items ordered with the 2007 Friends donation cost less than anticipated, so the library has $1,463 in donated funds carried over from the previous year, and those funds are included in this budget. She said that the budget proposes spending half of the donation on books and materials, and she said that the Collection Development group is exploring spending some of those funds on a pilot project of circulating “Playaway” devices. The Playaway consists of both an audiobook and a portable device, similar to an iPod or MP3 player, for playing the audiobook and costs slightly more than a traditional book on CD or cassette. The programs line on the budget includes funds for summer reading performers for the Columbia facility and for the One Read program, including the author visit and some funds to record some of the One Read events for rebroadcast. She explained that in 2007
money from the Friends donation sent the book cart drill team to MLA, and this year’s Friends donation budget also includes money for the team to travel to MLA in 2008. She explained some of the projects that might be funded with the money in the “other” category, including new book carts for the Friends, computers for the children’s areas, and a possible rewards program to recognize staff providing great customer service. In response to a question, Carr and Smith explained that because this is a pilot project and because the rewards might be food, t-shirts, or similar items, staff members felt they should fund it with a portion of the Friends donation.

Glaze moved to approve the Columbia Friends donation budget for calendar year 2008. Breyfogle seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Parking Lot Improvements Update**

Richards distributed and reviewed a handout listing dates and summarizing action taken during the meetings at which the board discussed parking lot and traffic issues during the past year. Richards reviewed the initial meeting he and Hostetler had with the mayor after the election, when the board was gathering community input regarding the failed tax levy. At that meeting, the mayor brought up safety concerns for patrons and pedestrians in the library’s south lot. Richards then reviewed the discussion and action taken at each subsequent board meeting and work session, including the involvement of the traffic engineers and architect. He said that if the board wants to revisit any issues or review past discussions, now is the time so that the board and staff can move forward and the board can get the project fund closed out. He reminded the board that the parking lot improvements are modifications to the original project design, so it is appropriate to use remaining Capital Project funds on this project.

In response to a question, Richards clarified that in December, KCI provided a cost estimate for the revision of the exit ramp and the first parking aisle so that the board could get a general idea of the cost. He added that because of the library’s existing relationship with KCI, they could have done the work under the existing contract with the library. KCI provided the pricing information as a courtesy to the library but due to the small size of the project and their current workload, KCI was not interested in bidding on the project. Barrett clarified that when the board directed staff to get cost estimates on several revisions to the lot, the word “estimates” was plural because staff needed to contact different vendors for things such as the cost of the signage, the landscaping, and so on. Richards said that he wanted the board to have this meeting summary so it could feel comfortable that it had deliberated the issues, consulted outside expertise, and to remind the board that the primary purpose of making changes to the lot is to improve safety. He added that because the library has been such a wonderful success and is immensely popular, the increased traffic in the lot needs to be addressed.

Richards reviewed the changes approved at the board’s previous meeting, and asked if everyone felt comfortable with the reasons why the board was widening the exit ramp. He said that increasing use of that exit should relieve some of the congestion at the lot’s main entrance. He also explained that the revision to aisle one will eliminate the wide
expanse of concrete, discouraging drivers from making an immediate left-hand turn upon entering the lot and instead causing them to come farther into the lot before turning. He reminded the board that this is a compromise solution and a practical alternative to the traffic engineers’ recommendation to close off that aisle completely so that drivers entering the lot could not turn left into the aisle. He added that as a side benefit of this change, the library creates more green space. McDonald said that he wasn’t convinced that the change to aisle one would work in the intended way, and Richards explained that no one change to the lot is going to solve the problem, but each should help. Barrett said that the changes may generate some new issues, and some patrons will see it as less convenient. The intention is that collectively these changes will make enough difference to alleviate some of the traffic issues and improve safety.

Barrett informed the board of parking lot-related activity accomplished since the last meeting. She said that the bid documents for the work at the east end of the lot were issued and that the library advertised in the newspapers and sent the project information to contractors that do this sort of flat work. She predicted that the bids will come in at a cost lower than that estimated by KCI because KCI’s numbers included landscaping work that has been removed from the scope of work of the flatwork contractor. As discussed at the previous meeting, the library will contract for the landscaping work directly rather than paying a third party markup. Barrett explained that staff created the bid documents based on the original project instead of spending funds from the professional fees budget to have the documents created by an outside party. Bids are due March 26, and Barrett stated that at the last meeting the board authorized the work to go forward as long as the total cost does not exceed $25,000, which follows the guidelines outlined in the library’s procurement policy. She said that staff has purchased the additional handrails for the ramp, and the sign permit application has been submitted, reviewed, and rejected by the City of Columbia, as was expected. She distributed the written response from the city. She said that the library’s attorney can now move forward with obtaining a sign variance for the banners, and she said that Marjorie Lewis would represent the library at the Board of Adjustment hearing. The board discussed the benefits of obtaining a variance to the sign ordinance as opposed to getting the ordinance amended, particularly the considerably shorter amount of time it would take to get the variance.

Barrett distributed both the original “parking scheme 2” for which the board previously approved developing and gathering cost estimates, as well as a conceptual layout of an alternate location for the crosswalk to the bottom of the ramp. She said that the “parking scheme 2” drawing shows the placement of the crosswalk and plaza area that was originally accepted by the board; however, she said she has been bothered by the additional loss of parking spaces required by this scheme. She said that she and Carr have been observing how pedestrians actually approach the ramp, or where they turn to enter the parking lot after exiting the library using the ramp. She reported that people are using the wide striped buffer area between two van handicapped parking spaces, noted in blue on the conceptual layout, because this area is closest to the bottom of the ramp. She said that the board could take advantage of the route pedestrians are already using, and she added that there is an existing pole in this area to which a banner is proposed to be attached. She explained that the architects and engineers had originally proposed a plaza
area and driveway crosswalk further west to line up with the center of parking aisle three. In response to a question, Barrett said that this would not require steps up to the ramp, but that this proposed crossing is at the end of the ramp where it meets the level of the parking lot. Barrett said that we could simply add a striped crossing at this area pedestrians are already using, with staff doing most of the work, or if the board is interested in pursuing some sort of landscaped plaza with pavers, like the image that was sent out in the packet, perhaps that plaza could be created in this area. Barrett said that in this alternative layout, the moving of one or two handicapped spaces would create enough space to add a bench and a planter with a tree at edge of the created walkway. In response to a question, Barrett said that staff was not rejecting the landscaping or paver idea, it simply was proposing this concept as a less expensive scheme to consider.

Richards said he felt it would be hard for the board to justify spending $35,000 on a crosswalk and plaza of brick pavers. Barrett said that staff can explore painted striping or staining as an alternative. Richards added that if the plaza and crossing were created as shown on the original scheme 2, the library would have to shift the handicapped spaces at a considerable cost because of having to move the bollards. Gerding expressed concern that moving the plaza area to the end of the ramp where people are already crossing into the lot would not leave enough room for a shelter and landscaping as previously discussed and would be a much scaled back version of what the board had been considering. Barrett said that the trade off for creating enough room for a shelter would be the loss of more parking spaces.

The board discussed ADA requirements for handicapped spaces. In response to a question, Barrett said that an option was to remove the ten-minute parking signs to reduce turn-over in the spaces right next to the stairs. In response to a question, Barrett said that the total loss of parking spaces in the original plan was 7. Barrett added that the city does not have an ordinance that requires the library to have a particular number of parking spaces, but during the library’s expansion, the city advised the library to maintain a comparable ratio of parking spaces to building square footage as originally provided on the library’s site. Carr stated that the changes the board approved for the lot’s exit and parking aisle one already result in the loss of two spaces.

Richards summarized the discussion, saying that the more the board can do to make the area at the end of the ramp recognizable as a plaza area, the more successful they will be in getting patrons to use the ramp as an entrance. The question is how can the board accomplish this without being perceived as extravagant? Barrett said that since patrons are already using the buffer area between handicapped parking spaces to enter and exit the ramp, she felt widening that space gave the library its greatest chance of success. She added that the board can opt to take a bare-bones approach with striping, or enhance the area with landscaping, brick work, and so on. In response to a question, Barrett said she would not recommend reducing the number of handicapped spaces, and she verified that at least two have to be van-accessible. Barrett confirmed she would need the engineers to measure the grade of the lot to make sure any new handicapped spaces met the legal restrictions for slope.
Columbia Library District  
Minutes, Meeting of March 13, 2008

The board discussed donated funds that might be used for part of this project. Carr explained that the Foundation manages two accounts containing funds that are designated for use by the CLD Board. Smith confirmed that the CLD Allee and CLD Sides funds can only be expended at the direction of the CLD Board of Trustees, and he estimated that the Sides fund contains approximately $100,000. Smith said he would have to verify the amount in the other fund.

Richards said that the board needs to decide if it approves of the new proposed location of the crossing and creating a smaller plaza area directly at the end of the ramp; exploring moving two handicapped spaces to make room for the plaza; and exploring using the pavers to create the crossing instead of simple striping. The board discussed the compromise of using pavers to create the plaza area but simply using paint to stripe the crossing. Barrett confirmed that she would need to have the engineers from Allstate review the new plan and talk to the City of Columbia about the new plan, and then she would contact the landscaper to have them modify the plaza proposal.

Loveless moved to direct staff to ask the landscaper and engineers to create modified proposals for the plaza area and crossing based on the new proposed location at the end of the ramp, as well as consult with the library’s attorney to obtain the sign variance for the banners. Hostetler seconded the motion. The board clarified that it would like to see cost estimates for alternatives for the plaza and crossing, including simple pavers versus staining and striping. The motion passed with seven in favor and one against. Gerding stated that she preferred the original plaza location and proposed crosswalk and landscaping design.

Richards said that the board’s goal for the next meeting is to make a decision on this project so that the construction projects can all happen at once and be completed in the shortest amount of time and with the least amount of disruption as possible. This will also allow the board to explain the changes to the public all at once.

New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

Miscellaneous

Barrett informed the board that the library has received a new proposal for a clay tile mural that would be installed in the hallway next to the children’s programming room. The artist, Heinrich Leonhard, would partner with Grant Elementary School students to create the mural, which would have a Missouri history theme. Barrett explained that the proposal will go to the Art Committee for their review, and if that committee approves of the proposal they will make a recommendation for its acceptance to the CLD Board. She said the proposed cost is $5,000, which would be paid for with donated funds. Richards informed the board that Glaze is the liaison to the Art Committee.
Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Richards adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Lauren Williams, Executive Assistant.

___________________________________
Board Secretary