



CITY OF FULLERTON

Fullerton Public Library

Maureen Gebelein, Director

MEETING DATE: February 25, 2016

TO: LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FROM: LIBRARY DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: HUNT BRANCH LIBRARY

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Library Board of Trustees review the current status of the Hunt Branch Library property and provide direction to the Library Director and City Manager.

DISCUSSION

The Library Ad Hoc Committee was created at the direction of the City Council to examine library services, assets and properties. It consisted of five Library Board Members, one representative of the Friends of the Library, one representative of the Library Foundation, one representative of the Parks and Recreation Commission, one representative of the City Manager's office, and an additional four members designated by the Library Board who would represent the Fullerton community. Library Director Gebelein was appointed as an Ex Officio member of the Ad Hoc Committee. The meetings commenced on January 19, 2012, and continued monthly until recommendations were approved on October 22, 2012.

Starting in October, 2012, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee were reviewed and further discussed by the Library Board of Trustees at subsequent meetings. Due to turnover in the composition of the Library Board of Trustees, discussion was postponed at various times to give new Board members time to become familiar with the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee.

In general, the Library Board of Trustees supported the Ad Hoc Committee on many points and they were approved (with minor changes) at the April 25, 2013 Library Board of Trustees meeting. The written recommendations and discussion are briefly characterized as follows for the four major library assets that were discussed (Main Library, the Bastanchury property, the Bookmobile and Hunt Branch Library). The purpose of this agenda letter is to provide background information as the Board of Trustees considers potential actions and recommendations to the City Council for the Hunt Branch Library property.

The following is a summary of the past several years as it relates to major Library assets.

THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY

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Main Library

The Main Library has lost over \$1,000,000 in funding in the past 8 years and has adapted at various times by reducing hours and being closed one day a week. Since that time we have also completed a very successful renovation and expansion project, reopening in July, 2011. Since that time, the Main Library has been open seven days a week, for a total of 63 hours per week.

- The Library Board of Trustees concurred with the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations relating to the Main Library, specifically that the Main Library should be the anchor for delivery of library services in Fullerton and that the Main Library should be open seven days a week.

Bastanchury Property

In 1996, the Fullerton Public Library (FPL) Foundation purchased the Bastanchury property with the intent that it be used as a future branch library site. In 1999, the Foundation deeded the property to the City of Fullerton with the proviso that the property be used solely for public library purposes. In the intervening years, it became apparent that ongoing city budget constraints would preclude the building and operation of another full-staffed branch library in the foreseeable future. This has also been impacted by the way libraries are now able to deliver more virtual services on a 24/7 basis. Fullerton Main Library is very centrally located.

- The Library Board of Trustees concurred that all avenues for monetizing and maximizing value from the Bastanchury site be explored. The Ad Hoc Committee voted to approve the steps 1-3 of "Draft Working Approach for Maximizing Value from the Bastanchury Site."

The City Council authorized the sale of the property. City staff is in meetings with a potential buyer.

Bookmobile

The current Bookmobile was purchased in 1999 and began service in Fullerton in 2000. The Bookmobile has an abbreviated schedule since 2004 and was written out of the Library's budget in 2011. It is currently not in compliance with AQMD standards. It has been back in temporary service to cover Southwest Fullerton but is not currently in the 2013/14, 2014/15 budget. Service will cease by June 30, 2013.

- The Ad Hoc Committee felt that the Bookmobile, as it stands now is a fairly antiquated service delivery model and keeping it in service as it is currently outfitted may not be the best way to deliver services. However, they did feel that the decision should be made in conjunction with the outcomes of decisions for the Main Library and Hunt Branch. The Bookmobile has been out of regular service due to non-compliance with AQMD standards and Board does recommend that the Bookmobile be brought up to compliance if it is to resume regular service.
- At their May 23, 2013 meeting, the Library Board of Trustees voted to discontinue operations on the Bookmobile by June 30, 2013 and that the Library should begin taking steps to sell the asset. The Bookmobile was temporarily lent to the Orange County Public Library system and is currently being readied for auction.

Hunt Branch

Built in 1962, the Hunt Branch Library was built with funds donated by the Hunt Foods and Industries Foundation. This building has recently become eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Recently the Library Board of Trustees wrote a letter in support of this nomination. The Hunt Branch has had varied hours over the past 50 years, with a major reduction in July 2011 when the Main Library reopened.

- The consensus of the Ad Hoc Committee was that the status quo at the Hunt Branch is not a viable option for delivery of library services to Southwest Fullerton. The Library Board of Trustees concurred that if adequate funding cannot be provided to keep Hunt open on a full schedule, there is no choice but to shutter the facility for a limited period of time while options were explored. This would allow city staff, library staff and the Board time to explore a new mission for the branch and building. The Library Board of Trustees has had discussions with City Manager Felz about the possibility of seeking a temporary lessee during this "time out" period, which would allow for some revenue.

In 2012, the Ad Hoc Committee directed the City Manager to meet with the neighboring property owner/church to explore the potential lease of the Hunt Branch Library property on a short-term basis. The intention of a potential lease was to provide limited occupancy of the building, primarily for building security purposes, while long-range strategic planning and funding options could be developed for the Library. Following this direction, staff met with representatives from Grace Ministries International (GMI) who confirmed that they have a need for office space during the upcoming major renovation project of their office building, located adjacent to the Hunt Library site (west).

On June 4, 2013, the City Council reviewed and approved the Library Ad Hoc Committee recommendations regarding the Main Library, Bastanchury property, and the Bookmobile; and to support the proposed GMI lease of the Hunt Branch Library on a temporary basis. Council further directed staff to negotiate with GMI on lease terms for the Library.

On August 20, 2013, the City Council was presented with an agenda item to consider a short-term lease agreement with GMI, as well as to consider a redesign process for the Hunt Branch Library and surrounding facilities. At that time, the item was tabled and the City Council sought more details on the lease terms, as well as additional input from the Fullerton Library Board of Trustees.

On October 15, 2013 the lease of the Hunt Branch Library was approved by the City Council at their regular meeting. The term of the lease is now nearing the end of the term and we request direction for the use/disposition of the Hunt Branch Library. The lease continues on a month-to-month basis until the Library Board of Trustees and City Council provide further direction.

