Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 11th, 2023

1. Call to order at 7:05 pm

Secretary Shimokawa read the following:

This is a regular meeting of the Demarest Library Board of Trustees. The date, time and location of this meeting has been advertised in the Official Newspaper of the Borough, filed with the Borough Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. All notices of requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. Roll Call

Present: P. Desai; H. Shimokawa; L. Carson; E. Kass; S. Nankani; D. Hayden; L. Ma; A. Keysar; Mayor Bernstein; Dan Marks

Absent: A. Sandoval

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
  Agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the November 13th, 2023 meeting

- Motion to approve the November meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
  Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma updated that the bank balances have not changed as we are waiting for the bills from this last construction project.
- The payment schedule for the upstairs project is still pending- the architect will be able to provide that as soon as the materials have all been delivered.

  Motion to approve the Bill List made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
  Bill List is approved.

- Mayor Bernstein suggested that the board review process requirements and potentially add a vote for all our Bill List approval. P. Desai and S. Nankani will speak with the lawyer to review the Board process.

6. Buildings & Grounds Committee

- E. Kass updated that construction is slated to begin in early January. Ed Arcari is reviewing all materials orders to ensure that everything has been received before construction begins. Final measurements have been taken, millwork details approved by the Buildings & Grounds Committee and the necessary permits have been received.

Construction is estimated to take 90 days. P. Desai is waiting for a finalized construction schedule to determine if there are any closures that need to be accounted for.

- The team also confirmed that there is no asbestos upstairs.
- Children's Room Flooring project recap: When construction began on the Children's Room Flooring replacement, asbestos tiles were found. It was determined that the tiles were friable, and we needed to do a complete abatement and containment. The construction team added a stronger layer of moisture sealant on the new flooring as it was placed directly on the concrete. The library had a 3rd party environmental engineer do a complete review of the remediation project, in addition to testing the air quality as mandated by the state.
  The flooring has been replaced and the Children's Room reopened to the public on November 28th.
- Mayor Bernstein suggested that we should also check the boiler room for asbestos as well in case of future construction.
- P. Desai is working with the borough's grant writer vendor, Stephanie Gundermann, from Bruno & Associates to apply for available State & Federal grants for environmental repairs.
- Mayor Bernstein also suggested calling Falkenstern and Bruno & Associates to inquire about a grant from T. Mobile for remediation or repairs in buildings designed "for Public Gatherings".

7. Director's Report

- P. Desai will be purchasing 4 holiday gift cards for the library's 2 high school pages and 2 DPW associates, in addition to providing coffee and donuts for the entire DPW team as a token of our appreciation for their support of the library's maintenance..
- The library will renew its lawn service contract with TruGreen for 2024. It is recommended that we add aeration and seeding in the spring. This adds an additional 1-time $300 cost to our annual contract ($325).
- There was a great feature in *Neighbors* magazine on the library's Diwali program. P. Desai and a local patron worked with the editorial team to write and place this article. She also secured usage rights for the library to add this editorial to the updated Library Website once it goes live this month. The programming library assistant will continue to collaborate with the magazine to secure future event coverage.
- P. Desai reviewed some of the year's successful partnerships with Haworth and Cresskill Libraries. This has allowed the library to expand program offerings while maximizing funds. This was a key goal in the 2023 strategic plan.
- The library received an additional donation from the friends and family of Barbara -Bar Nissam for the upstairs construction.
- Mayor Bernstein asked if the library has a "donated by" program for study carrels, walkway bricks, etc. This is a project that P. Desai is working on with Friends of the Library. The Board recommended exploring a Giving Tree plaque for the main hall of the Library.
- The Friends of the Library will be working on a community awareness and fundraising campaign for 2024, developing a wish list, etc. P. Desai will be working with the

President of the Friends of the Library to do a community outreach effort to solicit ideas and suggestions from patrons and residents.

8. Old Business

a. Children's Room Flooring update: addressed in the Buildings & Grounds Committee discussion.

9. New Business

a. Appointment of Full Time Programming/Outreach Library Associate /vote
   - P. Desai has hired a full-time, Programming/Outreach Library Associate who is currently enrolled in Library school. The Fulltime Programming/Outreach Library Associate will be compensated at the NJLA minimum of $48K/yr plus benefits. The library will not need to replace the part-time position.

   Motion to approve the Full Time Programming/Outreach Library Associate made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
   All present vote yes.
   Full-time Programming/Outreach Library Associate position is approved.

b. 2024 Board Meeting Dates/vote
   - Mayor Bernstein requested changing the LBM to the 3rd Monday of the month so that it doesn't conflict with the Mayor & Council meeting. There are 3 dates that are exceptions due to school and federal holidays.

   Motion to approve the revised Board Meeting Schedule for 2024 by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
   All Present vote yes.
   2024 Board Meeting Schedule is approved.

c. Resolution to use the donation funds towards library renovation project/vote

   Motion to approve the resolution to utilize the donation funds towards the upstairs Building Renovation made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
   All present vote yes.
   Resolution is approved.

d. Strategic plan update/ 2023 objectives and goals achieved.
   - Optimizing available space in the community to meet evolving needs
     - Edited & updated the collection.
     - Invested in infant & toddler books, VOX collection
     - Expanded our e-Book collection (OverDrive Advantage Plus)
   - Build a foundation to strengthen the library's role within the community
     - Established the Friends of the Demarest Library group to expand the library's fundraising capacity

        - Collaborated with local institutions to share resources and expand audience for library events
        - Increased community engagement with Library and staff participation in community events
    - Increase community awareness of library services & programs
        - Expanded children's & family programs with excellent attendance and community reception.
        - Experimented with a range of adult/senior programs including lectures, a speaker series, movie matinees, etc.
        - Engaged local teen community with TAB fundraiser and events
        - Partnered with local agencies, neighboring libraries and local media to advertise and promote library events.
        - Social media engagement has increased (Facebook by 29%; Instagram by 65%)

- Mayor Bernstein raised that the Council would like to see an expansion of senior programming. D. Marks shared that people have inquired to the City Council about a Senior Club in town. P. Desai has been collaborating with D. Marks to ideate how the library can explore adding to the library's existing roster of adult programming. Board President noted that recent events such as the concert, Bill Ervolino event and estate planning lectures were primarily attended by seniors.
- The new electronic sign in the town center should be installed in January and the Borough can help to advertise these adult programs. Mayor Bernstein asked P. Desai to collaborate with the Borough Administrator to ensure that programs are promoted.
- P. Desai has been speaking with D. Marks about having the Train Station building cleaned. The building is managed by the Borough and Mayor Bernstein and D. Marks confirmed that they will ensure that the Train Station building is cleaned and maintained.
- Mayor Bernstein shared that there may be another building that might become available in the future for auxiliary library programs.
- Mayor Bernstein inquired about the status of the patron request re: the Racial Justice Display. P. Desai has responded with the Collection Development policy. The Patron has not responded to her last communication.

10. President's Report

- S. Nankani shared that the new NJLA salary guide has been released. It recommends a 4% increase across the board; it also outlines the NJLA recommended salaries by role. P. Desai has been conducting staff reviews and evaluations. D. Hayden and S. Nankani will be conducting the Director's review this month as well. The Director's evaluation will include a 360 degree anonymous review by trustees and staff as well. A survey will go out to the Board and Staff by the end of this week; they will be due on 12/22. S. Nankani and D. Hayden will meet with P. Desai in January and then will be able to discuss at the January board meeting.
- S. Nankani and E. Kass met with Ed Arcari to review paint colors for the upstairs project.

- S. Nankani and P. Desai reviewed the Circulation and Free Speech protocol deck. There is a valuable 2nd page with resources covering the American Library Assoc policies on the Bill of Rights, 1st Amendment in addition to a very informative video documenting a Supreme Court Case addressing book banning.
- S. Nankani is also looking into having Steven Picoo do a presentation for the board or BCCLS to discuss this issue further. A. Keysar suggested inviting the school librarians (CRS/LLE) to that presentation if it is scheduled.
- The Friends of the Library is organizing a book drop as a fundraising opportunity. The proposed location for this book drop is either by the Train Station or by the DPW. 50% of the proceeds would support the Friends Group and 50% will go to the vendor.
- Mayor Bernstein expressed concern that if the vendor does not collect all the books that are donated, there may be a lot of leftovers. There is a concern that this would create an issue to be managed by either the library or the Borough. He suggested a reassessment of the location. S. Nankani suggested that the Friends group reach out to the church to see if that may be a potential location.
- This project is managed by the Friends of the Library. P. Desai will raise this concern with the Friends board, and they will confirm the process for donation pickup and disposal before making any commitments.
- Mayor Bernstein raised a concern about a low-hanging cable on Insley St. He will send the images to P. Desai so that the service provider can be contacted to look into it.

11. Meeting Open to the Public for Comment

- Motion to open the meeting to the public made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden. The meeting is open to the public.

- A local resident asked if the library has adopted an anti-book ban policy and expressed desire for the library to support the American Library Association Freedom to Read initiative. P. Desai shared the Collection Development Policy which was adopted in October 2023. This was written to clearly define the Library's policy.

- P. Desai would also like to explore working on a resolution designating the Library as a Book Sanctuary. This resolution would be discussed with the Board and then, if passed, would be sent to the Mayor and Council for approval. Mayor Bernstein suggested that P. Desai also discuss this process and the Collection Development Policy with the Library attorney.

  Motion to adjourn the meeting made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden. Meeting is adjourned at 8:29 pm.

12. Meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Next Board Meeting will be Monday, January 8th at 7:00 pm.