Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes
November 13th, 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. Sandoval, A. Keysar

Absent: Council Liaison, D. Marks

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
  Agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the October 17th, 2023 meeting

- Motion to approve the October meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
  Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma shared that, given Asbestos discovery in the Children's Room and resulting emergency repair work, we will have $37K as a buffer in the capital account to address capital improvement projects in our five-year plan.
- P. Desai spoke with D. Marks who connected her with a town grant writer so that the library can apply for available grants to subsidize any future building construction, repair or capital improvement needs. She will also be looking into Asbestos Mediation Grant availability from the EPA.
- The library does have the funds to fully cover the planned construction upstairs in addition to the Children's Room flooring repair and emergency Asbestos removal.
- Motion to approve the Bill list by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
  Bill List is approved.

6. Buildings & Grounds Committee

- E. Kass, D. Hayden and P. Desai shared the construction update and revised plan for the Children's RRoom floor repair.

- The Children's Room floor replacement project began on Monday, November 6th. As the team began removing the existing flooring, asbestos tiles beneath the flooring were discovered. Unfortunately, when the asbestos removal began, the asbestos tiles crumbled and became "friable asbestos". The Children's Room now requires a full abatement and containment process.
- E. Kass and P. Desai connected with Demarest town resident, Stephen Jaraczewski, to manage the asbestos remedial project along with the air quality testing mandated by the state. Mr. Jaraczewski has, in the past, volunteered his time to guide the Library Board and Director on air quality and other environmental issues (particularly during COVID-19 epidemic).
- This may impact the final cost of the new flooring depending on the results of the air quality testing.
- Quote for abatement and air quality testing came to $43,603.75. This will be added to the estimate of $31K for the original flooring replacement plan.
- The project has been expedited and should be completed by the end of this week.
- Stephen Jaraczewsk's quick response and guidance was the benefit of the board of trustees members doing outreach to connect with community members with expertise as advisors and volunteers. A special thanks to former Treasurer Ann Robbins for building this relationship.
- Permits for the upstairs construction have been received. One last measurement is needed and will be completed next week.
- P. Desai met with the electrician and will be receiving a quote for the light fixtures and LED bulb replacement throughout the building.

7. Communications Report

- H. Shimokawa presented the board with the wireframe of the redesigned Library Website.
- This project was led by Board Secretary H. Shimokawa, head of the Communications Subcommittee. It was developed entirely in-house and working within the functionality of the Library's existing software. As such, there were no costs incurred to execute this website overhaul. The project was led by the Information Services Librarian with support from the Youth Services Librarian and the entire library staff.
- The goals of this project were:
    - To simplify the website's UI (User Interface)
    - Increase the promotion of library programs and services.
    - Improve accessibility and User Experience (UX) while considering the range of patrons and their varying internet engagement styles.
    - We also created an "Our Community" section designed to promote all our partner Borough groups and websites. This also provides the library with an outlet for future editorial, press or event recap content in addition to a potential collaboration channel for TAB.
- Pending Board review, the website will go live in December and will be announced to the community in the Winter newsletter.

- Board also reviewed the plan to communicate the closure of the library for repairs and construction to the community. Announcements have been or will be placed on the library website, shared on all social channels and sent via email.

8. Director's Report

- Friends of the Library meeting will be next week. They had a table at Demarest Day and have already been successful in raising funds from the community and will be providing the Youth Services Department with a cricut machine.
- The Family Diwali program held on October 21st was a huge success with over 90 attendees. P. Desai worked with patron volunteers and the editorial team of Neighbors magazine on a feature article covering this event.
- Bill Ervolino comedy show was also well-received with over 60 attendees.
- Senior programming: the estate planning lecture was well-received, and the library is planning another elder law lecture for 2024.
- P. Desai received feedback from a regular patron acknowledging that library programming "has become very engaging."
- Staff Update- Bookkeeper started on 11/15. She is a Demarest resident
- P. Desai attended the BCCLLS System Council & New Director's training in addition to a webinar hosted by Public Library Association **Innovative Engagement for Libraries**.
- Director has introduced a new channel of staff communication- a weekly staff newsletter to review weekly staffing, programs, etc. This has created more team unity and preparedness for upcoming programs.

9. Old Business

- Children's Room Flooring update (reviewed during Bldg & Grounds Committee discussion)

10. New Business

- P. Desai received an email communication from a Demarest resident, asking the Library to remove the Racial Justice display.
- P. Desai sent an email, as reviewed with the Communication Committee, sharing the Library's mission and Collection Development Policy, both of which are clearly outlined on the Library website and aligned with BCCLS and the First Amendment of the US Constitution. The patron responded asking if the email was discussed with the board.
- The board reviewed the complaint, the decision-making process, and the next steps for response. P. Desai will share resources of the board for how to operate the board meeting in the event we have a patron who attends the board mtg to initiate conflict.
- Donor recognition: E. Kass suggested that we place the plaque by the doors (Door 6) that separate the quiet room.
  Board discussed the language for this plaque and P. Desai will present the following to the family of the donor:

  This quiet room was supported by a generous donation in loving memory of Barbra-Bar Nissim

- In the future, the Bldgs & Grounds committee would like the Board to create guidelines for donor recognition for future donations and perhaps a scale of donation opportunities or campaigns. The Friends group is also looking into other fundraising ideas that may be folded into this guideline.

- Ms. Carson pointed out that the agenda language requires an update.
- Motion to approve the clarification of the language in the agenda by H. Shimokawa. Seconded by E. Kass.
  Motion to update and clarify the language is approved.

11. President's Report

- S. Nankani shared that the recent letter from the patron and the unexpected asbestos abatement are examples of instances where the Library has been able to leverage the Communications and Building & Grounds committee for their input on these emerging issues. Subcommittees are very helpful.
- S. Nankani thanked P. Desai and E. Kass for all their hard work tackling these recent construction issues and for being proactive on all these scenarios.
- New bookkeeper is also a Demarest resident which further supports the Library's strategic goal of engaging support from the community.
- S. Nankani and P. Desai will be drafting a FAQ regarding closure for asbestos remediation. This is to provide the board, library staff and Borough members consistent messaging on all points.
- E. Kass and D. Hayden have responded that they would be willing to continue their service for another year. S. Nankani will also continue.
- Requested that the board add some trustee training house to fulfill our annual training requirements.

12. Meeting Open to the Public for Comment

- No public was present, so we moved to adjourn the meeting.

13. Meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Next Board Meeting will be Monday, December 11th at 7:00 pm.