

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 2004

Library Director Report and Highlights

October, 2004

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Strategic Planning

The Library Board of Directors had a productive strategic planning work session yesterday. It was great to have all board members present, bringing fresh perspective and energy. While we look backwards briefly to see “where we’ve been”, we also look forward, building momentum for the future of this great library – in a wonderful community! A friend of mine recently commented that BPL is an “unpolished gem!” This literate community so deeply enjoys its library – we will be working hard to make this gem shine.

Director’s Goals

Know the library staff, and become knowledgeable about library operations:

Effective communication is so crucial; I’m hearing feedback from staff about how important it is for them to know what is going on, and for their opinions and ideas to be heard. A communication tool in place at the library – an all staff meeting that follows within a day or two of every board meeting – is a great opportunity to share with the assembled staff members the issues that are a priority for the board. It’s also a good chance to exchange information on other topics.

Other communication methods include a weekly e-mail message to all staff; continued individual meetings with staff members; twice monthly management team meetings (a great group of good thinkers); and, I attended the board meeting of the Friends of the Fairhaven branch library. This group is unstoppable, and they are superb library supporters.

Know the community and begin to develop an active library presence in the community through individual relationship building:

While I will not always list my “comings and goings”, it is important that you know that the Library Director is actively working on becoming connected to people, organizations, and events in the community. The library is so much more than a building – it is an information network made up of all those components, and we should be an active participant in the community fabric.

It has been a pleasure to become more familiar with Bellingham by attending:

- # Around the Corporate Campfire author talk at Village Books
- # Growth Management Forum at Bellingham High School
- # Open House at the Museum to hear their design competition plans
- # Literacy Council Breakfast featuring Janet Ott speaking about “The Power of Dreams: the Call to Social Artistry”
- # Tour and lunch with Patricia Decker, of the PFD and Director of the Waterfront Futures Group
- # Taylor Avenue Dock Grand Opening
- # Open House for the new Downtown Renaissance Network Director Kirsten Shelton

Actively participate in city-related groups and introduce myself to key city leaders and departments

Museum Director, Tom Livesay, and I met with his Development Director to talk about a possible joint IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant. Tom gave me a tour of the museum facilities, including the Children's Museum which is full of activity as they prepare for their new "Gimme Shelter" exhibit. We talked about possible museum-library cooperation in that area also.

I have met individually with the Director of Human Resources, Jo Zeimet, and Finance Director Therese Holm. In addition, Gladys, Gayle and I met with Ed, our accountant in Finance and Mike, who monitors possible audit issues.

Review our facility development status, and formulate strategy for immediate action:

The seismic and geo-technical study for the current library site is well on its way with unanimous passage by the Public Works Committee and two subsequent City Council meetings: "An ordinance relating to the 2004 budget and appropriating \$60,000 in existing reserves in the facilities administration fund to provide funding for a seismic and geotechnical study for the main library."

At its strategic planning work session, the library board reviewed a draft document that chronicles the many community and library studies that are "on the books" over the past several years. It was an important step for us to gather all available documents into one place. The chronology serves simply as a tool to help us determine where we've been, how we've been viewed, and who has been involved. Once assembled, it was amazing to see all the work that has preceded current efforts – and, it was important for us to recognize this as we make plans for the future.

As a result of our first work session, we are drafting a work plan and timetable. It will be reviewed at the October Library Board meeting.