

**Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees**  
**Wednesday, January 17, 2007 - Library Lecture Room**  
**07:00 PM - 08:45 PM**

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Board of Library Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as Authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

**Board Members Present:** Chairperson: David Edelstein, Vice-Chairperson: Faye Hill; Vicky Marshall

**Board Members Absent:** J. Robert Gordon

**Library Staff:** Pam Kiesner; Lizz Roberts; Gladys Fullford; Donna Grasdock; Sue Kenney; Helen Scholtz

**Others:** Mayor Tim Douglas, Council Members: Bob Ryan, Gene Knutson, Joan Beardsley, Barbara Ryan, Terry Bornemann, John Watts, Louise Bjornson, J. Lynne Walker, Legislative Coordinator, David Christensen, Bellingham Planning Group, Alan Kemble, Margaret Ziegler, Tom Glenn, Matt Nulle, Amory Peck, Janet Boyhan, Stan Snapp, John and Helen Campbell, Phyllis and Ken Weber, Dean Martin, Opal Mahoney, Lindsay Farmer, Larry Farr, Jack Weiss, Rachel Myers, Richard Scholtz, Pearl Follett, Don Duffy, Linda Lambert, Claude Hill, Kenn Kiesner, Carl Oekerman, and Sam Taylor, Bellingham Herald

**This is a Joint Work Session with the Board of Library Trustees and Bellingham City Council.**

**Called to Order:** Bob Ryan, Council President, called the meeting to order. David Edelstein, Library Board Chair welcomed everyone to the joint session. David introduced the Library Board, library staff, Friends of the Bellingham Library, Mayor Tim Douglas, past Library Board Chairman, and John Watts, City Council Liaison to the Library Board. John Watts introduced the City Council members. John mentioned this is the most deliberative board he has ever sat in on.

**Comprehensive Citywide Library Services & Library Board Planning Process:  
– Remarks by Pam Kiesner, Bellingham Public Library Director**

I want to add my word of welcome to each of you, and my thanks for taking this time to meet with us. We have an awful lot to share with you, and we look forward to your comments and questions about how we are proceeding.

I also want to express my thanks to a wonderful library staff who have worked hard to help provide you with the information you need to inform your decisions.

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We're here tonight to share with you

# Library Board activity leading up to a recommendation for building a new Central Library on this site.

On Monday night we'll be doing a formal, visual presentation and asking for your approval of the site.

This is simply one piece of the Board's activity in developing a plan to provide better, more comprehensive citywide library services – so that we are growing a library system at pace with the community's growth.

As you know the Library Board is a policy-setting Citizen's Board with duties and responsibilities specified in the RCW. They are appointed by the Mayor, with approval from you, the City Council.

You have done an outstanding job in approving these appointments, as this is an amazing Board of individuals who work together for the good of the community and its library and information needs.

This Board is dedicated, and I'm proud to work with them.

You can be very proud of the work they do on behalf of the citizens of Bellingham.

Barney Goltz, former State Senator, served on this Board back when site evaluation first began; Judith Wiseman as well; Tim Douglas, until just a couple of months ago served as Chairperson; Alan Kemble has just finished a 10-year term. I also want to mention someone, while not a Library Board member, through an earlier site review process was representing the Friends of the Bellingham Library, and that's Tom Glenn.

We have smart, long-time community members who are forward-looking. The Board has earned a reputation for being exceedingly deliberative – and this has served them, and the community, well.

It is true; we began this process back in 2001 with a focus really on a new Central Library.

Two years ago, when the Board began actively looking again at potential sites – we took the time necessary to deliberate how the Bellingham Public Library is - or should be - present in the entire community, and not just downtown.

We have one branch library, 3 drop boxes in area Haggen stores, 29 outlets receiving personalized outreach services – in addition to the Central Library. It's important to recognize all the ways we are present in the community.

First, branch libraries.

In 2006 we commissioned a Condition Assessment of the 102-year old Fairhaven Branch Library. The results are just in, and we have our jobs cut out for us to preserve this building, retain its historical integrity, and continue our library services to the many folks who use it. Thanks to Public Works for working with us on getting the study done.

We are working on prioritizing the identified needs with PW – what can/should be done now? What projects can be accomplished over the next few years? Which can be done through capital requests; which might be better accomplished through bonding?

This branch serves us well on the South side, with really only 3,300 square feet of library specific space. Approximately 6,600 s.f. are available as community meeting space - an essential service the library provides both at Fairhaven and the Central Library.

So, why don't we just build more branches?

First, what is a branch? By definition, a branch library is a subset of a larger system, providing a sampling of the services available at the larger main facility.

Like a branch of a bank; a convenience store rather than a Super Grocery store – the services, materials, staff, and hours are a fraction of what you might expect at a Full Service Facility.

Add to this traditional branch system, the relatively new phenomenon of how people access library materials and information these days.

It doesn't sound glamorous, but it has changed the way libraries operate and of course, it started with the computer.

Folks in communities across the country are seeing the materials we own, or can get for them, on their computers – from home, office, school.

They place a ‘hold’ on what they want, indicating the place they want to pick it up most convenient to them; we notify the customer via email or a telephone notification system; they stop in, pick it up off our holds shelf, check it out themselves, and are on their way.

Because our materials are in motion at all times, we need to pay particular attention to efficiency and effectiveness in our delivery system of those materials and our customers’ needs even more so today, in our convenience-driven society.

Given how libraries are used now, and how we anticipate they will be used in the future, the question of branches is one of the most asked – and the most complex to answer – as we study citywide library services.

We study this carefully because library services are so popular that once we provide a library service, we don’t want to have to backtrack because we can’t sustain it. We need to make certain that whatever is provided is included in our operating costs for years to come – it’s a big part of the equation, and one we must take into consideration.

For the past year, the staff and Board of Trustees have studied the potential for a greater library presence in Northern Bellingham.

We have received expertise from the City’s Planning Department staff, and we thank them for the maps and advice we’ve received.

At its most basic level, we reviewed which areas of the community are not currently served, using library industry benchmarks?

To help in our study process, this year we formed a task force which included a representative from the Guide Meridian/Cordata neighborhood. The group was tasked with clearly identifying which services we currently offer citywide, reviewing available city data including population projections, researching additional information, including industry benchmarks, standards, and state and national data, which would help us with the question of branches.

What we have found is contained in the report you were provided in your packet. It’s online, and extra copies are on the table in the back of the room.

Now, we realize that the following data does not take into account traffic congestion, stop lights, or time of day – but it is one accessibility measure:

In brief, the data shows that the majority of city residents live within 5 minutes drive time of a library facility (Central or Fairhaven); and all residents of the City of Bellingham have access within 10 minutes

By another standard of library service delivery, most residents of the city have access within a 3-mile radius from Central or Fairhaven except for the northernmost portion of the Guide Meridian and Mt. Baker neighborhoods and the easternmost portion of Silver Beach.

Though these findings show ‘adequate’ coverage and delivery of library services to most citizens, there are some innovative and convenient ways we might improve service delivery to these parts of the city; those are detailed in the report.

While another branch library for the City of Bellingham system is not supported by our research at this time, there is the potential for a greater library presence, including a branch library on the north side in the future.

For the immediate future, we believe we should work actively on partnership opportunities to provide more convenience to the residents of these neighborhoods.

We've had a preliminary discussion with Whatcom Community College and look forward to working out, this year, a unique public library presence in partnership with the college library. This will also provide us a good pilot opportunity in the northern part of the community – to assess future library services.

What makes the most sense for the Bellingham community, knowing what we do about population projections, and the unique character of Bellingham? We are still working on the answers to this complex question.

Two questions we hear:

1. Why do we need a Central Library
2. Why do we need a NEW Central Library

This Central Library serves several critical functions; I'll name two:

# That of a downtown library, serving the downtown population as well as the entire city; as we know, population projections for the downtown area, as well as the northern part of town, are expected to increase dramatically in the years to come.

# Another critical function of the Central Library is that of a centralized HUB housing all functions of materials ordering, processing, distributing and the administrative functions of a busy library system. It serves as the primary materials and resource center from which we draw. Right now we house approximately 300,000 items; according to population projections a collection double this size is more appropriate in the coming years.

The importance of a Central facility has become even more apparent when we examine how materials are being accessed as I mentioned above.

In any library system, the importance of a strong Central collection, of an efficient centralized hub for materials handling is paramount.

This current Central Library serves as such – but we, citywide, have outgrown it in size, structure, and function.

The Library Board has actively discussed and reviewed all these issues, factors, and facts – and has confirmed again the critical need for a new Central Library – even as we confirm community growth and the potential for a north side library presence.

The need for a new Central Library was identified back in 2001 when the City completed a citywide Capital Improvement Needs Assessment – the library was one of the most vital capital projects sought by this community.

Six years have passed since this need was identified; the need has only grown and intensified:

**BAR CHART SHOWN**

Some key steps the Library staff and Board have taken in recent years:

- # The Board issued an RFP for available property in 2006
- # Contacted property owners
- # Invited public input
- # Commissioned geo-tech and structural studies
- # Commissioned and reviewed volumetric studies
- # Evaluated over 20 other potential sites
- # Held a variety of meetings and work sessions in the last two years
- # Researched the historical significance of the current building

Some key findings from the information we've received and reviewed:

# We cannot add another floor to the existing library; the pilings were not designed to hold another level. This severely restricts our capacity for growth.

# The building does not meet today's seismic codes; would cost up to \$1 million to retrofit the building.

# We've also considered adding on horizontally, but that takes up an awful lot of the block, and we would still be working with a building that is programmatically and structurally difficult – it was built back in 1951 – back before the age of computers and all the electronic resources we use today.

So, what can people anticipate in a new building?

We have a vision for a new Central Library

# That includes constructing the size facility that will house a collection to meet our citywide library needs: 20% of our materials are currently not accessible to the public; virtually in storage.

# That will be designed to provide the necessary space for efficient materials handling as they are processed, re-shelved, and prepared for delivery to all our outlets, including eventual library services on the north side.

# That is beautiful, functional, and cost-effective – and that invites the community in.

# That is easy to find, with a place to park, and accessible for all ages and abilities.

# That has a variety of meeting room spaces to meet the varied needs of this community, spaces that are busy every hour of the day, including:

1 on 1 tutoring

Small group book discussion around a fireplace

Poetry readings

Current issues forums; issues of local, state, regional and national interest

Large group public lectures and performances

Puppet shows, children's creative drama presentations

Early learning workshops for parents and childcare workers

Club meetings

Spaces such as a coffee shop and perhaps some small retail spaces

Indoor as well as outdoor spaces; recreating the wonderful 'library lawn' on the sunny side of the block;

Public plaza with seating, lawn, and a direct pedestrian connection to the new children's and art museum

# that is flexible to meet the needs of a growing community that can expand or contract as we change and grow

# That the library remains and becomes stronger as a cornerstone of the community, a centerpiece of the civic and cultural district, and that invites all to lifelong learning and discovery.

I now want to turn the next topic over to Board members Faye Hill and Vicky Marshall, who will share the Library Board's site evaluation process with you.

**Library Board Site Evaluation Process:** Faye Hill presented a brief history up to the final four sites. Fifty-six years ago in 1951 this building was opened to the public. It has been a great library for the following 30 years, but it does have some needs. In the early 1980s, the library staff, board and director felt that there needed to be some expansion and renovation to the Central Library and Fairhaven Branch. A bond measure was voted for a renovation and expansion of this building and some improvements to Fairhaven Branch. Soon after the 1983 improvements, many events quickly impacted the economic and demographic aspects of Bellingham. From page 2 of the Facilities Needs Report, Faye read the things that happened:

# Bellis Fair Mall opened, a major new retail complex.

# Vancouver's Expo 86 exposed the world to this region.

# Economic development initiatives successfully revived the stagnant local economy, producing more than 3,000 new manufacturing jobs in Bellingham and Whatcom County.

# Annexations added both significant commercial and residential acreage to the City of Bellingham.

# Infill strategies required by the State's Growth Management Act changed Bellingham's density, shape, and service area.

# Population growth was invigorated by several national magazines publicizing the high quality of life in Bellingham.

Our population in 1983 was 46,000. By 1998 the Library Board was well aware of the need for a larger library. A community forum was held. It was composed of a cross section of people in the community. It was confirmed that we needed to look at the possibility of either expanding this facility or having a new facility.

The Board was ready to do this in 2001. Six people were appointed to study the possible sites for a new library. They first drew up the criteria for site evaluations. This criteria list never changed. In 2005 the Board approved the list of 30 criteria again.

## Site Evaluation Criteria

### **General**

Potential for visibility and identity as a library landmark

Appropriate use of site

### **Location**

Site is congruent with City development goals

Library would contribute to Civic Center and Downtown, and complement existing cultural facilities

Library would enhance nearby structures and proposed projects

Current zoning

### **Accessibility**

Perception of accessibility of site

Impact on traffic in the area and access to traffic arteries

Parking availability on or near site

Proximity to WTA Bellingham Station

Ease of pedestrian access and walking distance from major activities

Ease of ADA compliance on site

### **Size and shape**

Minimum site size of 65,000 square feet

Site would allow needed floor space

Site flexibility: building orientation and configuration

Expansion capacity

### **Economic issues**

Assessed value and ease of land acquisition

Design and construction costs of site

Operating costs of library on site

Philanthropic appeal of site

Siting could stimulate economic development of adjacent sites

### **Environmental issues**

Physical site problems

Potential nuisance elements

View considerations

Opportunities for green space and landscaping

### **Social/perceptual issues**

Site could generate public support

Site could change or expand who uses library

Site could enhance the way the library is used, including performances, joint programming, exhibits, etc.

Library on site could be a community center where everyone wants to be

Library on site could provide opportunities to improve the cultural and intellectual life of the community

How would site anticipate changes to Bellingham in 10, 20, or 50 years

Faye commended the committee for their work. They did a terrific job. There were two Board Members, two Friends of BPL, and two members of staff. During 2001 and 2002 the Site Evaluation Task Force reviewed 13 properties. The process was put on hold when then Director, Julie Carterson resigned the position.

In 2004 the Board was ready to go again. The seismic study was done. It was learned that we could not add floors to the top of this building for a library. There was a misunderstanding that we could not build on the Lee Park area. That misunderstanding has been cleared up. David Edelstein added that the common knowledge was that there were covenants and restrictions put on the Lee property, which is the grassy area between the library and City Hall. A review of the title showed that the common knowledge was incorrect. That was a significant change in the Board's thinking.

In August of 2005 the Board invited the Bellingham Planning Group composed of four Bellingham architects to draw volumetric designs of how buildings might be placed on this site.

Several of the site properties were privately owned. That required special and careful negotiation by the City and private party. Most of these sites were discussed in Executive Session, which is allowed to be closed to the public so that the terms of the real estate transactions would not be jeopardized. No action was taken on any of those sites. There was a Request for Proposal (RFP), but no owners came forward who wanted to sell their property.

In June of 2006 Faye and Pam attended the Project for Public Spaces. That changed the way of looking at spaces and buildings for Faye. Vicky and Faye attended the community version, and came back with the same sense. It became a way in which we look at places.

All of the sites are in the Site Evaluation Book, which is available for the City Council members to look at. Each site was evaluated according to the 31 criteria.

Vicky Marshall said the Board selected their top four sites in 2006. On August 29, the Board and community went on a walking tour of the four sites. The sites were the Maritime Heritage Park, ReStore, Municipal Court, and the Library. One of the Board members spoke to each site, presenting the pros and cons. The public commented on their thoughts. Based on the walking tour and discussion it was decided to remove the ReStore site from consideration. After further discussion on September 6th, the Board decided to remove the current library site. At that time the favorite site was Municipal Court. It was decided to do a site evaluation on the Maritime Heritage Park. One of our board members said at the time if this site (the Library Block) were vacated, it would be a wonderful place to build a library.

Pam presented her thoughts about using the entire library block based on discussion with City staff. Much credit should be given to the place-making workshops, which changed the way to view what is a place where people are comfortable.

One of the Board Members had a whole new idea for a whole new possibility for the site, so the Board put this site back on the table of places to look at.

In October all of the previous site information was reviewed, and Pam shared additional site selection information from [Library Facilities Siting and Location Handbook](#) and [The Wisconsin Library Building Project Handbook](#).

The Maritime Heritage Park had a lot of issues that we may not be able to deal with, such as deed restrictions, land parceling, possible methane gas considerations, and possible instability of the area. The Board voted to remove that site from consideration. The Board wanted to see if it was possible to build a new library behind the present library building. The Bellingham Planning Group was commissioned to do volumetric studies on that concept. The two questions were, do we keep the current building and build around it, or do we demolish it and use the entire space. It was decided the library block was the preferred site, and the Board decided to remove the Municipal Court site from consideration and to recommend this site to the City Council. On December 19th the Board voted to recommend that the current building be demolished and use the entire space as our new site for development.

**Volumetric Studies on Library Block:** Pam introduced David Christensen, who is part of the Bellingham Planning Group Architects along with Terry Moore, Jim Zervas and Bob Ross. David explained they were part of RU/DAT, Regional Urban Design Assistance Team, sponsored by the American Institute of Architects.

In 1982 the group did the RU/DAT study, concentrating on how the City Center could be redeveloped. It was determined the City Center could be the heart of the community, and some day would connect with the waterfront. In his involvement with other communities on the West Coast, it was amazing how many times the library was the heart of the community.

In 2003 the group was commissioned to do a design charette for the library with library staff, administrator, key stakeholders. They came up with square footage needed: in the 65,000 to 75,000 square foot range. Program needs were determined based on staff and user input.

In 2005 the group was asked to determine how this site could be used. They initially evaluated the existing site based on important issues, such as the location of City Hall, the current library, and County Courthouse, creating a sense of place, respecting symmetry of the City Hall façade, save and protect existing trees, retain relationship with main public entries, consider converting Lottie Street to pedestrian or partial use of parking, possibility of underground parking, consider sun angles range, maintain as much green space as possible, and consider impact of proposed building scale. They went through several scenarios to see how it would work, doing it around the existing library, next to the existing library, behind the existing library, and on top of the library. They drew up about eight schemes to show that it was possible to get 65,000 square feet on the site, but ideally most of the 65,000 square feet in the



charette was in two stories, some could be on a third story. Keeping the existing library on the site, it had to be three stories.

In 2006 they looked at the site again to see if it was possible to put 70,000 square feet on the site, and keep this library functioning. The drawings show it is possible going edge to edge right up to the edge of the parking and 20 feet from this building. However, it would be a three-story building right up next to City Hall. It would be 50 feet high, and would cast a shadow on City Hall. An aerial photo shows from the top of City Hall lines right up with the alley and the new Children's Museum. It's possible, then take this building down, extend the underground parking, a plaza above and finish an expansion on the new building. The planner's opinion is that it would seriously compromise the possibilities of the site. It's possible, but probably not the best solution. With the whole site it would be a more flexible usable site, more the heart of the City. The analysis that makes most economical sense is to use the whole site at once. It could be a far more important structure for long term planning.

**The Library Block is Recommended:** David Edelstein thanked staff for the exhibits that show photos and story lines of our library beginning in 1892. We've taken a circuitous path in our deliberations and the Board's vote to build a new Central Library on the library block. David acknowledged the importance of the discussion about branch libraries. The Library Board has a responsibility for the on-going operations of the Central and Fairhaven Branch. The planning has to have a long view, 50 to 100 years: comprehensive city-wide services planning. David recommends reading the Bellingham Public Library Facility Needs and the City-wide Services Study. These two documents explain the facts behind the long range plan and thinking. The Library Board voted unanimously to build a new central library here. Our community has a large investment in the Arts District across Central Avenue: Museum, Children's Museum, and Mt. Baker Theatre. This location is in and adjacent to the Arts District. The Civic Center is a wonderful neighborhood for a library. The site is centrally located and on the edge of downtown. As the transit system grows, it will bring more people downtown. Downtown zoning permits unlimited building heights and density. Downtown will grow at a very rapid pace. Downtown has improved because of encouraged housing brings people and businesses. The Board looked at many other sites. They wanted to continue the tradition of a library connecting to a park. The Library block is city-owned. The privately owned sites that were looked at had leasehold, zoning and title problems. Floors cannot be added to the current building because piling is at 95% of capacity. An addition is do-able, but it seemed ill-advised to add to a building that is coming to the end of its life. This site will lend itself to underground parking. A Request for Proposal was advertised if any owner has a site that could serve the library purposes to come forward. We did not receive any responses. Feedback, comments, and questions are encouraged.

**The Question of Parking:** John Watts presented information on Parking:  
**New BPL - A Parking-centric View**

### **Parking Talking Points:**

Growth is a change with cumulative effects that happen over time.

Nearly everyone agrees something needs to be done about parking.

There is no denial of the need for adequate and conveniently located parking. Parking is not free.

Citizens have voted to voluntarily tax themselves for more green space, but not for more parking.

Parking is what it is - currently an accommodation to conventional transportation, primarily private motorized vehicles.

Parking is not likely to become either cheaper or easier to provide.

Fees, collected from meters, do not begin to cover the costs of land strictly dedicated to parking, and if they do, they won't for long.

A parking plan for specific, concentrated public areas should be much simpler to develop, implement and use.

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**Civic Center Talking Points:**

City and County governments are concentrated in one fairly compact area

The publicly owned Mt Baker Theater and Whatcom Museum are attracting more people and the type of regional economic development envisioned and enabled by the Public Facilities District.

A new Children's Museum is also being constructed

All of these activities are expected to have the effect of making this area much more of a truly 'people place', much more of the time

This is a scenario designed to create a greater need for both alternate transportation and parking

As a microcosm of parking related problems, the civic center and the adjacent cultural district deserve our immediate attention, energy and action

It is doubtful that anyone disagrees that much better parking solutions should be provided in the civic center and cultural district

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**Library Talking Points:**

Now, the time for investment in another well-used public facility in this same area is drawing near - the Bellingham Public Library. Planning for the next 50 years means that a larger and more modern building to provide the library and public meeting facilities is needed soon. Fortunately, the block on which the current library stands is already owned by the City and can provide sufficient space for the new facility, as well as structured, underground parking for a significant number of vehicles that typically visit the civic center.

The Bellingham Public Library is the Power of Information, Discovery of Ideas, Joy of Reading! It is about books, learning, thinking and community activities, with success measured by the number of satisfied patrons it continuously attracts. As the number of patrons grows, parking needs also will grow, and this must also be considered as part of its long range planning.

The Library has occupied its current site in the very midst of the civic center for over 50 years. Patrons have become used to sharing parking in the area with other users, but competition for space continues to increase. Already a publicly owned and an established destination, this site is now the preferred location for an expanded facility to serve at least another 50 years.

With anticipated growth will come the need for new facilities and services, both in terms of size and configuration as well as in content and use type. Examples include:

- o Additional public meeting spaces
- o Better Audio/Visual equipment
- o Modern Internet capability of greater capacity
- o Expanded space for Internet activities
- o More study areas
- o Better outreach to the Community
- o Space for all-weather gatherings

o More efficient systems for reserving materials, checking them out, delivery, returns, ordering new items, re-shelving, collection of fees, membership, etc. for more patrons.

- o More efficient HVAC and lighting systems
- o Accommodating additional transport and parking demand
- o Meeting seismic codes and standards

Funding for any new Library must come from a publicly voted bond measure, which would typically include provision for only a limited amount of parking directly associated with Library operations. Wouldn't it make sense to consider in its planning, the use of all the available underground space to provide significantly more parking than the Library requires or should be expected to finance? Would it also make fiscal sense to construct any parking beyond that needed by the Library at the time the new Library is built? Preliminary estimates are that up to about 250 parking spaces could be provided under the existing Library land. Structural supports for parking could also provide an essential part of the foundation for a new Library facility. Most of this parking space could be used for City & County civic use during business hours, and cultural events parking afterwards as well. New underground parking would be easily accessible to the adjacent streets. It could be paid for by charging the various users for permitted parking, a normally preferred way of repaying a Council-manic bond, which could be passed separately to cover only the costs of parking. This also would not unnecessarily burden any publicly voted bond issue for a new Library facility with extra costs for parking.

Since our City and County governments are such near neighbors and also need more parking, they will likely see the wisdom of helping to provide such parking in the civic center area underneath a new Library facility. If the governments do decide to help provide parking, this needs to be done in a timely fashion. Any parking plan developed for the civic center area needs to be fiscally sensible, and with adequate input from citizens. The Library's current and future needs are as real as the parking problems in the immediate civic center area. The Library is already on City-owned land that it plans to use for its expanded future facility. Simultaneous consideration of both the new Library and parking issues can result in highly synergistic benefit to both city and county governments, the Library, area businesses and institutions, and most all, the citizen users. Better efficiency in space planning and use combined with fiscal responsibility seems a worthy goal to pursue.

**The Next Steps:** Pam shared the next steps. The Board will present the recommendation for constructing a new central library on this site. The Board is also recommending that this building be taken down prior to constructing that building. The Board wants to take the time to make sure they do a very thorough job in this process. We will need assistance and expertise. We need to find a campaign chair, a committee, and determine which election would be more likely to succeed: a general election, an off-year election, or a special election. The time line is in a draft form and is evolving. We first wanted to get City Council's approval on this site, and then go forward. We do have some REET funds from 2006 budget to reallocate to 2007. We would hope to determine what the design process will be, whether it will be a design competition or flat out hiring an architect to work on it. We want lots of community input into the design and vision of this library. We had hoped we would have a preliminary design before a bond election to share with the public. We will be hiring a facilities planning consultant. We will confirm the Fairhaven Branch phases and costs involved in the Fairhaven Branch improvements. We will confirm our North Side service options. We will confirm the preliminary designs for the Central Library. We will seek and confirm a campaign chair. We will confirm the bond time frame, amount and the language. We will take into consideration other campaigns in the community.

**Comments:** David commented on the suitability of building a multi-level steel and/or concrete building between the existing library and City Hall. Most any multi-level steel and/or concrete building in this area would need piling. The Board commissioned an engineering study for the suitability of adding a floor on this building. The piles under this building are at their maximum capacity. We also commissioned a geo-technical study that showed a pile foundation is not only do-able, but not in any way extreme in this location. We would probably need piling for any multi-level civic building in this area and probably in most parts of our community.

Gene Knutson thanked the Board for their hard work. Being deliberative and slow is not a bad thing. Getting it right is what it is all about. Gene said he was excited about this, and this is the right place for the library. Gene asked where this facility will go if the building is torn down. David Edelstein answered that it is yet to be determined. We will have some place to go before we knock this building down. Gene said he looks forward to the presentation on Monday night.

Barbara Ryan echoed Gene's thanks to everyone. She said she was particularly interested in performance space. She has talked about the value of meeting room spaces. Barbara asked what percentage of 70,000 square feet would be for current library functions. Pam answered that we do not have a definite building program statement yet, but we certainly are building into our program the need for community meeting space. We know we want to provide public meeting space, and we can be very synergistic with City Hall. David added that with a very long view, we would hope to charge the architects with the concept of having space that we could expand into and possibly contract from. This location with City Hall and County Courthouse close by will always be the most wonderful location for a library and civic use for the City of Bellingham.

Barbara also asked if other amenities in public libraries such as coffee shops are a part of the plan. Pam answered yes, and will share that in a very visual presentation Monday night.

Joan Beardsley said one good thing about being deliberative is that it leaves people like her speechless. She said the Library Board's work has been fabulous. She is delighted with what the Board has talked about tonight. She brought the Herald editorial and thought all the questions raised were answered. Joan said she has had the honor of helping in the planning of two of Bellingham's High Schools building efforts: Squalicum High and the remodel of Bellingham High. Joan hopes that when we get to that stage that the Board can do as much as possible with local architects and local builders. Squalicum High was not designed or built by local people. Bellingham High demonstrates the pride of local craftsmanship. Joan suggests having a good public process and using local designers and builders as much as possible.

Louise Bjornson thanked the Board for all their work. She commented that it is quite amazing to listen to the whole process, and believes the community will appreciate that process. Louise also appreciated the thoughts about this being a gathering place.

Terry Bornemann also appreciated all the hard work and the decision to remain on this site and in the city core. He noted that if the site is approved there will be a lot of logistics to work through. The concept is wonderful.

John Watts suggested that if there is anything Council would like answered in Chambers, the Monday meeting will be televised and it would be interesting to have that input.

Barbara mentioned that some questions cannot be answered yet because we don't have the design. She suggested talking a little about the general outline of funding. Not necessarily how much, but what is the mechanism to raise the money.

Joan said this comes at a good time when some quite famous libraries have been remodeled. She worries that it was a lot easier in 1951 to plan a building that would still be reasonably useful when 56 years old. It is hard now to see what is going to be needed and how life is going to be. Technology and transportation methods are a question mark. Joan asked in the presentation to share what we are studying for looking to the future, and be specific about how to make the design flexible to be responsive to what stands for the unknown.

Bob Ryan commented that it was obvious the library and library trustees have put a lot of work into this process. The City needs to put some more time into it in figuring out the parking requirements and office space needs for the City and also the County and how that can be integrated with the library, developing

a design that can work for both of us. It needs to be done in a timely fashion to move forward without delays.

John added that having a facility that has really good audio/visual capabilities enhances the flexibility and usability of any space. John mentioned the Alameda Library in California doesn't get quite the use we get, but they have upgraded to 75 computer terminals with 25 of them reserved for the training room. The entire building is WIFI. This is what excites people and expands the capability and might even reduce the footprint.

John appreciated the remarks about the necessity of having a strong central branch. What you build into the hub enables all the other branches. It could be fantastic what you can do with fiber optics. A drop box or store front could become a library. It would be exciting to hear about the electronic breakthroughs.

Mayor Tim Douglas commented he has put a lot of energy into the question of a new Central Library. He underscored a few things. This library is consistently among the top five most heavily used libraries in the entire United States for a community our size. The reality is the people of Bellingham and Whatcom County that we serve are information-oriented, active thinkers. A lot of young people coming forward need our investment in their future so they have every opportunity to be successful in this world. An adequate library is critical not just to the community, but to the future of everybody that is living here now, particularly young people. There is a sense of urgency despite all the careful time that has been taken, is to present to the community a really viable kind of project.

As we move to the next step, which Tim hopes the Council will approve, is to do some really serious design work, the visions and real clear pictures of what this kind of library can offer. This wonderful building with all its inadequacies is no longer up to the task. Tim hopes we are able to move ahead in the coming few months with the project. He feels confident that the people of Bellingham will see this is a wise investment when they are given a wise design and thoughtful presentation as we've seen tonight.

Bob Ryan said when the presentation is made to the City Council Monday night, he'll try to make some time available for questions from City Hall. Bob adjourned for City Council.

David Edelstein adjourned for the Library Board.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – January 23, 2007** will begin at 1:30 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned** at 8:45 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees