

**Escondido Public Library Board of Trustees
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 2:00 p.m.
Library Turrentine Room**

CALL TO ORDER: Trustee Gorny called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Mirek Gorny, Elmer Cameron, Ron Guiles, Gary Knight, Mayra Salazar

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Graham Mitchell, City Manager; Loretta McKinney, Director of Library & Community Services; Cynthia Smith, Assistant Library Director; Joanna Axelrod, Principal Librarian; Misty Breymeyer, Division Coordinator; Viktor Sjöberg, Adult Services Senior Librarian; John Donel, Technology and Support Services Senior Librarian; Lalitha Nataraj, Interim Literacy & Youth Services Senior Librarian

Presenters: Ken Erickson Group: Ken Erickson, Local Architect; Steve Nelson, Local Attorney; Brad Burke, Local Architect

Guests: Marta Palmerton, Escondido Library Foundation Secretary; Linda Atkinson, Friends of the Library Director; Eula Stephens, Friends of the Library Director and Shop Coordinator; Georgia Chonko, Friends of the Library Director; Joan Neumann, Friends of Literacy Services President; Marlene Hoover, Friends of the Library Director, Bob Will, Pioneer Room Friends President; Teddy Borja, Pioneer Room Friends Vice President; Robin Fox, Pioneer Room Friends Treasurer; Alexa Clausen, Pioneer Room Friends Board Member; Lucy Berk, Pioneer Room Friends Board Member Emeritus

Written/Oral Communications: None

Agenda Item #1: Approval of minutes: September 13, 2016 meeting

Motion by Trustee Cameron and seconded by Trustee Guiles to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Current Business

Item #2: Update on Grape Day Park New Library Task Force

Director McKinney welcomed and introduced the presenters. Mr. Erickson, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Burke started a grassroots movement called People to the Park which has been discussing Library and other community issues for more than 15 years. The group is made up of members of the community who are very passionate about seeing Escondido become a positive and attractive place for families and generations to come. Mr. Nelson started the presentation with an idea-scape and vision of the direction they would like to see the community move towards. He said the presentation was not a means of selling the idea, but rather encouraged the public to join in dreaming about the

future of Escondido. The goal is to have additional walking points in the downtown area. The Library is an important part of this community vision.

Mr. Nelson gave a brief timeline history of both Grape Day Park and the Library. Historically, Grape Day Park was a centerpiece for Escondido culture and events, and the Carnegie Library was a partnership with the community. Development trends show community gathering places being situated in downtown areas, drawing people into the core of each city. The idea is to attract more people in the park for all types of activities, including commercial, social, business, and residential living. The plan for expanding Grape Day Park and moving the Library to a new location has been reenergized by Council Member Masson and City Manager, Graham Mitchell.

Mr. Erickson added, in 2005 the economy was better and there became a new interest in living and working in downtown. Grape Day Park was discussed as becoming a new community hotspot surrounded by suburban development, the Center for the Arts, and City Hall. At that time, Mr. Erickson's group did an informal study where they analyzed the downtown zoning and density as part of the process to grow this idea, and to see if it was feasible. The current master plan shows growth in both commercial businesses and residential properties in the downtown area, but the issue is the limited open space.

Mr. Burke expanded on this idea by showing what the current downtown area looks like. The map included areas zoned for commercial, mixed-use, and housing incorporated in, and surrounding, the current allotted open space. By expanding the open space of the park, and adding amenities that would appeal to all, the park would become a source of pride, the core of the City. This type of project elevates the quality of life which has been seen in other areas around the County. This idea allows for great potential and opportunity for economic development within the City.

Mr. Burke reviewed six way cities use parks to grow the local economy:

- Real property values are positively affected.
- Municipal revenues are increased as a result of tax base.
- Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
- "Knowledge" workers and talents are attracted to live and work in the downtown areas.
- Home buyers are attracted to purchase homes.
- Area around the park begins to attract small businesses.

Mr. Erickson shared the suggested plan to expand the park to Washington Avenue. A rendering showed a mix of community centers, a new pool, a new parking garage, residential housing, mixed-use facilities, and a new library facility with a café. Facilities and amenities are grouped based on types of activities to not conflict with the harmony of the park, but to still activate the park with patrons and visitors. There would be revenue generating possibilities through leased space, potentially even within the new library itself. The group imagines a new library would have 4-5 stories, and the top floors could be leased, possibly to a school much like San Diego Public Library has done in their new facility. New revenue could be used to offset the cost of the development and ongoing maintenance.

To engage with the community, the group met with the Escondido Creek Conservancy about the idea, and they discussed reverting to a more natural look for the channel. Also, a new tree-lined median is suggested for Broadway to add to the overall park-like feel along the large street, adding ambiance to the area.

Mr. Nelson opened up discussion to answer questions from the attendees. Teddy Borja said the Escondido Creek was once a nice space that included a stage for community performances. He went on to ask what the security plan was for this project. He was concerned about the current homeless situation the park faces. City Manager Mitchell responded that this issue will not vanish, and that the greatest cure for this issue is people. People in the park area, doing normal business, creates a situation where the homeless population finds another location to hang out. He gave the example of the recent *Pokemon Go* craze in which the City saw a higher number of people in the park and a decrease in the number of homeless. Mr. Erickson added, we use the word activate, but in this case it would be "reactivate," to bring all walks of life into the park. In larger cities the homeless coexist with other visitors, or they leave. The vision includes mixed-use amenities, which means there will be a 24 hour presence by adding residential properties in and around the park which is expected to help much of the problem.

Mr. Borja asked about the financing plan for such a project. City Manager Mitchell said staff have only been asked to review the feasibility of the bringing the Library to Grape Day Park. The thought is there could be a mix of public and private partnerships as well as Federal funding opportunities. Comparatively, the costs associated with renovating and expanding on the existing site are very similar to those of moving the Library to the park.

Trustee Guiles voiced his support for the proposed plan and said the citizens need to be at the forefront of the community. His concern is by expanding the project to Washington Avenue, there could be a delay in the project development and construction of the Library as a result of legal issues with the businesses that would be affected. City Manager Mitchell responded that the staff report to be presented to City Council will have two suggested sites; site one will have the Library placed on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Escondido Boulevard; and the second site will have the Library placed on the corner of Washington Avenue and Escondido Boulevard. He feels the Library will be the catalyst for the overall expansion of the park. If people get behind this idea, it may create the best possible chance for the greater vision.

Ms. Alexa Clausen asked what the plan would be for the current Library property, if it would be sold and developed. City Manager Mitchell said the idea includes selling the current property for mixed-use development as part of funding the new Library. Ms. Clausen also voiced her concerns that a need for branch libraries might be greater to provide better access for individuals in heavily populated areas of the City. The suggested plan doesn't address these corridors of Escondido where services have been diminished in recent years. City Manager Mitchell stated the past model of library services through branches was a 20th century idea, and we no longer live in economic times that support this model. There has been a structural shift in how money is allocated, we may not be in position to have this option again. The idea is to

concentrate resources into one library that creates economic creativity and viability. A center where people can come and bounce ideas off one another.

Ms. Marlene Hoover asked if there was a transportation plan for getting people to the Library downtown. City Manager Mitchell said that a project like this could provide a level of critical mass which would call for improving transportation to the downtown area. Currently Escondido's downtown is not big enough to justify this change.

Trustee Knight asked what kind of focus or energy can be created to make a connection between the Library and education, and a civic cultural component that will drive people to Grape Day Park. Something tying all the facilities together and creating a synergy through focused branding. Mr. Erickson responded that combining a new library, recreation center, and a cultural center in one area creates a regional hub. If you were to add Grand Avenue businesses to that, you would have a full-service area. Escondido is unique in that it doesn't have a specific resource or beach from which to draw people in, or create their identity. We need to self-determine who we want to be and create a focal point that draws people in to make it a viable place to live.

Mr. Bob Will gave his compliments to the group for coming up with this concept and felt a master plan like this is essential. He questioned how the other civic functions would be attractive to drawing in people. City Manager Mitchell said the East Valley Community Center's gymnasium is at capacity and the new recreation center would serve the overflow needs. There is also a great need in our community for a new pool that can service high schools throughout the year. These would bring civic uses to the downtown area.

Mr. Erickson explained that City Manager Mitchell has reached out to local schools to see if they would be interested in becoming tenants within a new library facility. Mr. Will commented that the master plan should include direction on what kind of agency should be included. City Manager Mitchell followed up by saying setting the bar high will add value to the downtown area.

Ms. Lucy Berk said the vision is much more appealing and exciting than fitting the library into the current existing Grape Day Park. The Library would become the jewel of Escondido.

Trustee Knight suggested reaching out to explore unusual funding sources; technology or Hollywood companies that might be interested in contributing. He added identifying funding sources can define the resources.

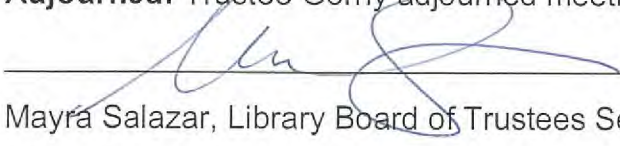
City Manager Mitchell let all in attendance know the Task Force's staff report will be presented to the City Council on Wednesday, October, 19, 2016, at 4:30 p.m. He encouraged all to attend the meeting to express their opinions on the project.

Other Reports

Item #3: Director of Library & Community Services

Assistant Director Smith reviewed the list of Library programs and events included in the agenda.

Adjourned: Trustee Gorny adjourned meeting at 3:06 p.m.



Mayra Salazar, Library Board of Trustees Secretary/mb