



COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

November 2, 2009

The Community & Neighborhood Services Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 2, 2009 at 4:05 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dina Higgins, Chairwoman
Dennis Kavanaugh
Dave Richins

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Kari Kent
Alfred Smith

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make a recommendation on the Express Library Concept.

Library Director Heather Wolf introduced Assistant Library Director Kate Havris and stated that the proposed Express Library Concept is designed to provide service to an under-served area of the community. She displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**see Attachment 1**) to provide an overview of the proposal to operate a storefront library in southeast Mesa for three days a week utilizing existing staff. Ms. Wolf advised that Bond and Impact Fee funds would cover capital costs and Used Book Sale revenues would address operating expenses. She outlined the concept of the Express Library and the factors considered with regard to the population to be served and the location of the library (see Pages 2, 3 and 4 of Attachment 1). Ms. Wolf explained that Mesa defines a service area as a three mile radius from the library.

Ms. Wolf advised that a possible location for the Express Library has been identified in a shopping center at Guadalupe and Hawes Roads that is approximately 80 percent vacant. She noted that the traffic generated by the Express Library could encourage other businesses to open in that center. Ms. Wolf added that the proximity of the site to Sunland Village East would provide the library with an excellent source of patrons and volunteers.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Ms. Wolf advised that the available Bond and Impact Fee funds are restricted to the expansion of services and cannot be utilized to restore Library services that were reduced or eliminated. She explained that the State Legislature established the criteria regarding the expenditure of these funds.

Responding to comments by Chairwoman Higgins, Ms. Wolf confirmed that these funds could not be utilized to address the recent reductions to the Library's planned purchase of books and video materials.

Deputy City Manager Bryan Raines responded to comments by Committeemember Kavanaugh by confirming that development in East Mesa generated a substantial amount of the Library's Impact Fee revenues.

In response to a question from Committeemember Richins, Ms. Wolf advised that the Library presently has \$1.2 million in Impact Fees and \$482,000 in bond money.

Mr. Raines stated that the City is paying interest on bonds that the City has not yet invested in an asset. He stated the opinion that the subject proposal would be an appropriate use of these funds.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that the remaining dollar amount of these bonds is too small to implement a refund; that the bond funds would be utilized for items that can be capitalized as an asset, such as shelving, desks, chairs, etc.; and that amounts are paid off early to reflect assets with a shorter life span.

Committeemember Richins requested a copy of a schedule that would be a representative example of the repayment structure for assets.

Ms. Wolf advised that most of the items purchased for the Express Library would be transferable to another location. She said that \$55,000 of Used Book Sale revenues, which is a restricted fund for the Library, would be utilized for rent, utilities, and custodial services. Ms. Wolf noted that rental rates are reasonable at the present time due to the current economic conditions, and she stated the opinion that the fund, which generates approximately \$50,000 a year, would be sufficient to pay the Express Library's rent and utilities for several years to come.

In response to questions from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Ms. Wolf stated that reciprocal borrowing would be a side benefit of this project. She noted that approximately 9,000 Gilbert residents fall in the service area of the proposed Express Library. Ms. Wolf advised that presently 16,000 City of Mesa residents utilize the Gilbert libraries and therefore, Mesa is a "donor" city with respect to reciprocal borrowing dollars. She confirmed that the proposed Express Library could shift the balance in Mesa's favor.

Further discussion ensued regarding the fact that the Used Book Sale revenues were typically utilized for staff development or as matching funds for grants; and that two employees would be assigned to the Express Library location on a rotating basis.

Ms. Wolf responded to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh by advising that an Automated Materials Vending Machine, a system presently being used in Europe, is a new concept to the United States with only one currently in operation in California. She said that the vending machine would enable a continuation of service even though hours at the location are limited.

Ms. Wolf stated that volunteers would play an important role in the operation of the Express Library, and she added that the Library Board has approved the concept. Ms. Wolf said that success of the Express Library would be measured by accomplishing the following goals during the first year of operation:

- 1,200 library cards issued.
- 15,000 visits to the site.
- 35,000 items checked out.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh regarding any possible downsides or risks to the City, Deputy City Manager Kari Kent stated that staff is confident that the effort would prove to be successful. She noted that the Used Book Sale revenues have been consistent for many years, which facilitates a stable funding source for the location.

Committeemember Kavanaugh complimented the Library staff for their creative and innovative approach to this project.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Richins. to recommend to the Council that staff's proposal for a two-year "Express Library" pilot project be approved.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Richins, Ms. Wolf advised that only the Main Library has municipal security on site. She said that staff believes the location would operate safely without security as do the Dobson and Red Mountain locations.

In response to a question from Chairwoman Higgins, Ms. Wolf advised that the placement of the service circle also reflected the available retail sites in which to locate the Express Library. She added that as the DMB project progresses, the property allocated by DMB for a library would shift the service circle to Elliot and Ellsworth Roads.

Chairwoman Higgins called for the vote.

Carried unanimously.

Ms. Wolf confirmed that the City of Mesa receives reciprocal credit when County residents, including residents of County islands, utilize a City of Mesa Library.

Chairwoman Higgins thanked staff for the presentation.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Community & Neighborhood Services Committee meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Community & Neighborhood Services Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 2nd day of November, 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK