

Library Advisory Board Minutes

October 21, 2014

Present – Linda Eastman, Colleen Jones-Turner, Bradley Rau, Lynne Joys, Jessica Walker, Julie Kingsley

Absent - Aimee Turner

Minutes from September 16, 2014 meeting unanimously accepted as written.

Director's Report: September: Main Library down .8%, Branch Library down 5.6% in number of items checked out, compared to September of 2013. No particular reason for decreases is evident in detailed numbers. Analysis of usage numbers across Minerva shows our business to be in line with – of not better – than other area libraries as well as similarly sized libraries across the state.

Wednesday evenings are building in business, since the addition of hours in July. Parking still an issue, particularly with after hours concerts and evening events, due to the continued use of the library parking lot by employees of Otto. Library visitors have also made comments about the presence of Otto employees taking smoking breaks on the library lawn. As of yet, there has been no follow through with the commitment to plant landscaping to screen the view between the library and Otto. Library staff reported a perceived negative impact on this year's book sale due to the library's parking lot being full from church users on the final day of the sale (Saturday afternoon). Traffic in the library noticeably decreases on Saturday afternoons, during the Saturday service, when there is little to no parking available in the library lot for library visitors. Jessica conveyed to the group the understanding among some churchgoers that the lot is, officially, a 'shared' lot between the church and the library.

Library and Rec department continue to adjust custodial partnership arrangement.

Library Cataloger continues to be out on maternity leave, which is stressing the library's ability to keep up with operations.

October calendar included with packet. Close to 200 people came for Star Wars Reads Day, a joint program we hosted with the Thomas Memorial Library. Artsy Afternoons programs for adults are routinely filled to capacity. An afternoon story time has been added to the Branch Library on Sundays, the first programming added to the Branch since the hours of operation were cut back. After Hours programs continue to be large draws with the recent Bellamy Jazz Band concert filling the library to capacity.

Old Business: Book sale update: The recent book sale was an experiment, very different to the sale of years past, and Linda considered to be a success. As the Friends transition to a new model book sale – the book sale room – there was a need to get rid of surplus books. The sale was run for two days only, and was set up in a few hours with a handful of volunteers. Much less labor intensive than in years past. Sale was run as a "pay what you want" sale. All books were gotten rid of, and new potential volunteers were recruited to help with ongoing efforts. Book sale efforts continue to be an evolving activity, and it is hoped that the book sale room can be opened in the Spring.

While the experience of the sale was generally positive, Kevin noted overhearing a Friends volunteer and an unknown book sale shopper openly complaining, within earshot of other shoppers in the sale room, about the way this years sale was promoted and structured. Julie asked whether or not there was a “code of ethics” which applied to volunteers, which outlined appropriate behavior for volunteers as de facto representatives of the library. Kevin said that there is no such guidelines in place, but thought that the establishment of such a code may be in order.

Linda stressed that the book sale room will be a work in progress and that the Friends will experiment with different approaches to displaying and selling books. The hope is that the ongoing presence of the book sale room will raise the profile of the Friends organization and will help to recruit new volunteers and active members.

Jessica asked about the purpose of the Friends. Kevin explained that, though there has been little Friends activity other than the book sale in the past several years, it is Friends support that makes all library programming possible. There is no money provided in the library’s annual municipal budget for programming activities, so all funding for performers, presenters and supplies comes from the Friends. With programming becoming an ever increasing portion of the library’s business, funding to support programming is essential, and is not being provided by the city, thus the continuation of the Friends is essential. However, participation in the Friends has been diminishing, and it is increasingly difficult to find active volunteers, which is why the book sale room – an other efforts to raise the profile of the group – is important.

Strategic planning – next steps: There was discussion of a sort of ‘visioning workshop’ to discuss ideas for the library’s future, including this group, as well as members of the public. While there was a feeling that such a meeting would be extremely valuable, it may be too early in the process for this. Linda suggested some surveying of the community, with Jessica and Brad suggesting that we probably should work on deciding what sort of information we would be looking for, and develop a survey around that.

Consensus of the group would be that we would continue to meet, since we felt some momentum around this issue.

New Business: None

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: November 18, 2014

Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted by Kevin M. Davis