

LAB Meeting: 7.31.18

Attendees: Colleen Jones- Turner, Deborah Schofield, Emilio Rodriguez, Jessica Walker, Jana Karlis

Absent: Vacant seat, Aimee Turner

1. Welcome to our newest member, Jana! Introductions all around, happy to have her on *board* (hehe, get it?) with us!
2. Acceptance of May 2018 meeting
  - a. Linda Eastman has stepped down from the LAB effective last month. She wanted to focus her energy and attention on the Friends Bookshop and act as a liaison between both boards. Linda has been as part of the board since its inception and will be missed!
  - b. May minutes motioned and accepted.
3. Directors report:
  - a. City has changed its process and has asked each department to produce a written monthly report (due at end of the first week of the month for the previous month)
  - b. Nothing formal as numbers haven't closed for the month yet, summer is busy with patrons and programs.
  - c. City has hired a building maintenance manager for the first time and he's pulling things together across the various buildings and getting things coordinated, which should help with the facility needs at the two buildings, especially the Main library.
  - d. Huge event at the Main library tonight bringing in lots of traffic and attention, should be a big success! Kudos to Kim, our talented Children's librarian for bringing this together.
  - e. No numbers for June right now, Kevin will look and report back next month.
  - f. The library patron sharing program with the neighboring libraries is also a big success a year in, and SoPo has become the largest library in terms of traffic. Program is expanding, 2 in each direction. The group who spearheaded the program has received great feedback and has been nominated for statewide recognition!
4. Public comment- none
5. New Business
  - a. Art in the Park - the City has set aside space for us again this year. Great exposure last year! Kevin will send a note to the Friends board to see what they want to do, and talk to the staff too. Once we have an idea of numbers we'll send a note out to determine shifts. Thanks to all!
  - b. Health & Safety Policy
    - i. A need arose to update the policy due to the recent discovery of bed bugs in books recently returned by a patron. Staff isolated affected materials, withdrew the books from the collection, and addressed it with the patron. Library has purchased a heat treatment device to be used on materials found to be contaminated, per accepted standards. Looking into ways to have the building "swept" monthly going forward.
    - ii. Kevin discovered that neither the library nor the city has a health and safety policy that helps to address things from the patron side. This would be an addition to the general policy manual.
    - iii. Reviewed policy as a group, good feedback- Kevin will circulate the draft with the staff and come back to us with future drafts.

6. Old Business:

- a. Memo- Colleen sent the email out and received three responses back (copied at end of this document)
  - i. Kevin also reported that the City Manager recently gave him a very positive performance evaluation.
  - ii. Our work will continue on our strategic planning once our regular schedules are resumed.

7. Next meeting:

- a. Attendance requirements are going to start being enforced by the city- Kevin will get us more details going forward
- b. Moved our regular meetings to the second Tuesday of every month- next one will be on 9/11/18 at 6:30pm.



DRAFT

## Memo from Library Advisory Board to City Council

June 14, 2018

To: Scott Morelli, City Manager, Mayor Cohen & members of the City Council  
From: South Portland Public Library Advisory Board, Colleen Jones-Turner, Chair  
RE: Addressing concerns about library

Dear City Manager & Councilors,

We, the members of the Library Advisory Board, in light of the recent resignation of a Board member as well as public comments made during the Library's budget hearing, wish to share our observations about the status of the Library.

Without exception, each of us were taken aback by Bradley Rau's sudden resignation from both the position of Chair as well as the Board altogether. We were not aware of the degree of his unhappiness. We have deep concern about the way in which Mr. Rau has communicated, with some regularity, with City Councilors and the City Manager in a way that appeared to represent the opinion of The Board. He did not. We support that Mr. Rau can and should communicate with his municipal representatives in the capacity of Private Citizen, but we feel that it is against commonly-accepted ethics for him to appear as representing the Board via private communication when his opinions were his alone. To re-establish: the official position of the Board on any topic will be discussed and voted upon, in an open meeting, and the results of any vote will be posted in the Minutes. We are committed to full transparency. While we share his frustration with the pace of making change, we are committed to accomplish our work within the established structure of our Board and the City's process.

During the recent Budget Hearing there were two public comments that distracted from the Budget issues at hand. An update on status:

- Mr. Davis reached out to Ms. Reilly regarding access to the Outreach Program. She now has ample information and her concerns appear to be resolved.
- One Advisory Board member has had a private conversation with Bill Laidley, who conceded that he was speaking in "hyperbole" regarding his "mold and silverfish" remark and recanted it. (We cannot discount the damage done by ill-conceived remarks such as these, giving the Library a negative public perception of mismanagement and potentially damaging our reputation.)

While we recognize the importance of public participation in the City's budget process, it should be noted that none of the issues brought up during public comment at the budget hearing had anything to do with the library's budget being considered, nor had the questions and concerns been previously raised directly with either the Library Director or with this Board. We feel that the ensuing discussion took away from any potential discussion of the library's budget proposals.

Two issues we wish to bring to your immediate attention, as they seem to have gotten side tracked during the budget hearing:

- From the CIP budget - repairs and upgrades to the parking lot of the Main Library. This project, in particular, is of grave concern to the Board right now. We understand that the

engineering issues involve multiple City departments and will be a sizable project, however this lot serves hundreds of community visitors daily. Given its lack of lighting and sidewalks, degraded pavement, inefficient layout of insufficient spaces, upgrades are much needed, long overdue and critical to pedestrian safety.

- From the regular operations budget - funding to allow for an additional day of service for the community. For approximately the cost of the Council-supported Park Ranger position, the South Portland Public Library could have provided a weekly additional day of Main Library service. Not only has a full-six day a week schedule been long requested by our community, having such a schedule would allow us to more closely approximate the level of service other communities in the state provide to their citizens. It is distressing that this proposal received no further discussion during the budget process.

Our great concern (and what we believe to be the primary frustration that triggered Mr. Rau to resign) is that we have identified aspects of the Library that require improvement, and we have gathered data from the community that backs up our concerns, but due to lack of funding, our hands are tied in being able to improve the library facility, its services, and its programs. We've found that our 50-year-old library building has many issues which need to be addressed, and we have put much time in over the past several months toward developing a plan to address these needs as responsibly as possible. Know that, when budget proposals come your way, they have been discussed thoroughly by this Board, with an eye toward providing an excellent service to our community.

Library Director Kevin Davis works tirelessly on behalf of the Library and the community members who use it, and he is endlessly supportive of his staff. The Board is very pleased with his talent, commitment, and diplomacy with all patrons; he has our full support and it is our pleasure to work with him. The Library is a holistic organization that provides information, ideas, and services to the community in the most democratic and egalitarian way possible. We all share the same passion: to make our library the best that it can be.

Our goal in the upcoming months is to find ways to work more closely with the City Council, including but not limited to workshopping, periodically placing Library items on the general Council Agenda, etc. Much like Mayor Cohen has said, if we're going to offer a service, we should do it well. We are eager to finding strategies to reach this goal together.

Respectfully,

Colleen Jones-Turner, Chair, District Two  
Aimee Turner, At-Large  
Linda Eastman, District Three  
Jessica Walker, At-Large  
Debora Schofield, District One  
Emilio Rodriguez, District Five

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Responses to LAB memo:

**From:** "Dowling,Adrian" <[adowling@southportland.org](mailto:adowling@southportland.org)>

**Date:** June 15, 2018 at 11:49:59 AM EDT

Dear Ms. Jones-Turner,

Thank you for your email and for the memo.

I wanted to let you know that I have never received any emails, letters, or phone calls from Mr. Rau. I searched my city email account just to be sure, and I found nothing. Do you know whether he was communicating with the entire council or only with certain councilors?

Sincerely,  
Adrian Dowling

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On Jun 15, 2018, at 11:53, Colleen Jones-Turner <[cjonesturner@gmail.com](mailto:cjonesturner@gmail.com)> wrote:

We knew that he was communicating with several councilors, we were not sure as to the exact number.  
Thank you for getting back to me so quickly!  
Colleen Jones-Turner

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**From:** "Dowling,Adrian" <[adowling@southportland.org](mailto:adowling@southportland.org)>

**Date:** June 15, 2018 at 11:55:00 AM EDT

Thank you for the clarification, and thank you for your work and dedication to our public library — one of the most treasured gems in our city.

Adrian

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**From:** "Morelli,Scott" <[smorelli@southportland.org](mailto:smorelli@southportland.org)>

**Date:** June 15, 2018 at 12:28:01 PM EDT

Colleen – Thank you for this memo. I find it very help to hear from the full board, to hear your support for our director, and to hear you clearly articulate your concerns about funding for the issues noted. Thanks to you and the board for taking the time to put this together and for the work you do to make the library such an important part of South Portland!

Scott

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**From:** "Henderson,Susan" <[shenderson@southportland.org](mailto:shenderson@southportland.org)>

**Date:** June 28, 2018 at 5:31:13 PM EDT

Dear Colleen,

Thank you for your letter . I highly value your work as does the community.

There were many competing items for money this year. Personally, this budget year I prioritized slowing traffic on Cottage Road (and Broadway) because of feedback we have gotten about dangers to children and other pedestrians. I do hear your needs, I hope that your projects of parking lot and another day will soon be funded. You do a great job and our library is wonderful and appreciated as a vital community resource.

Sincerely,

Susan Henderson

Sent from my iPad