

**JOINT CALLED MEETING OF THE ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD  
AND THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
January 17, 2015**

The Abilene Public Library Board met with the Friends of the Library Board in the Conference Room of the Main Library at 10:00 A.M., Saturday, January 17, 2015. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present: Robert Carleton (Chairman), Debra Lillick (Vice Chairman), Carrie Casada, Patricia Nail, Dennis Regan, Ginna Sadler, and Joe Specht

Board Members Absent: Stan Chapman, Tiffany Fink, Debra Lillick (Vice Chairman)

Friends of the Library Board: Carrie Casada (President), Rhonda Bolt, Tiffany Lamb, Mary Pizzorno, Libby Rankin, Cathy Lauve, Jill May, Eddy Smith, Tom McAlister

Others Attending: Lori Grumet, City Librarian, Janis, Test (Information Services Manager),

Media present: ARN

Mr. Carleton and Ms. Casada called the joint meeting to order at 10:12 AM. There was a quorum present.

Ms. Grumet gave the purpose for the joint called session to review previous ideas pertaining to the location and condition of both the main and south side libraries to include:

- Development of a library on south side
- Joint school/library branch
- Facility with recreation center
- Questionnaire for the south side branch
- Lease new location for South Branch
- Explore park land opportunities (Redbud Park)
- Find a vacant building

Discussion began with the main library current facility problems. Ms. Grumet informed everyone the roof is the top priority. The General feeling for the FOL Board is that the roof is the responsibility of the City of Abilene and not the FOL. Asbestos abatement is currently included in the May Bond issue and would cover the cost of complete abatement and new ceilings. Eddy Smith suggested renovating current auditorium removing the stage and adding a caterer's kitchen. A suggestion was made to move some services to another site to possibly include Tech. Services, Genealogy, and Friends book sorting. Dennis Regan added that the older Rose Park Senior Citizens facility might work for those services. A suggestion was made to store some of the collection offsite with a courier service for delivery. Also discussed was the facade, electrical issues, carpeting, furniture and fixtures, technology and IT upgrades.

Ms. Grumet then informed both groups of the possible relocation of the Main library to Lincoln Middle School site with the suggested name of Abilene Heritage Square. Private funding is being secured for the renovations that would be required. The building is currently owned by the City. Other services might be included such a business incubator, black box theatre, café, etc. The football field would be converted into parking.

The alternative would be to do an entire new main library. A location would need to be found and the property acquired. The design would then need to be done. How would such a facility be funded would need to be determined. Then would come construction, furniture & equipment purchases and the staff to operate the facility would come last.

Roadblocks to an all new facility include timetables with some being too long and other too short. Funding is a huge hurdle. Then how are the immediate needs addressed in the meantime.

The consensus of those present would be to support the development of Abilene Heritage Square.

The South Branch library facility was discussed next. The current lease at the current location expires July 31, 2015 at the current cost is \$5,600 a month for 5,600 square foot leased storefront. It was discussed that the current landlord would most likely want to pursue another 5 year lease. The exterior signage is in need of replacing and the interior furnishes are showing use and age. Then the current problems of not enough space and not enough parking will remain for another 5 years.

The steps for leasing a new location would be to find a location which would include a RFP for space. The space would then be contracted. Funding would then need to be secured to renovate the space, purchase new furniture and equipment and costs for moving the collection. This entire process would likely be repeated every 5 to 10 years.

Tom McAlister suggested we consider a property on Barrow, 20,000 sq. ft. available for \$.40 per foot.

A Red Bud Park location was also discussed. It is understood that there are restrictions on that property use by the donors, but Libby Rankin felt this might be a project that could develop there.

Requirements for a new constructed facility were discussed. Five years would most likely be needed to develop the construction project. The same steps for construction of a new main facility would be required with a likely amount of \$7.5M in funding at the minimum. The best feature of this would be it would allow for a permanent infrastructure investment for 30 years or more.

Lori Grumet then asked the group for a consensus to continue our current lease with minimal upgrades, leasing a new location or purchase an existing building, renovating and owning the property. The group is not in favor of staying at the current location.

New Committees

Development of a new library strategic plan will begin the Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Lori asked interested board members to volunteer for a 5 person Strategic Planning Team to visit with the planner and help coordinate focus groups. The Strategic Plan should be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Five members are also needed for a Facility and Funding Committee.

Rob Carleton and Carrie Casada adjourned the meeting at 12:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Grumet  
City Librarian