

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee of the
East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control

April 2, 2007

The second meeting of the Finance Committee of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control was held at the River Center Branch Library on Monday, April 2, 2007. Mr. Dan Reed, Chairman of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Members of the Committee present were Ms. Dorothy Stepteau, and Mr. Stephen Moret. Also in attendance were Mrs. Lydia M. Acosta, Library Director; and Mrs. Brenda Lovett, Library Business Manager. Also present were Metropolitan Councilman Mike Walker of District 8 and his Legislative Aide Ms. Zona Pickens; Ms. Jackie Addison, Legislative Aide to Metropolitan Councilwoman Lorri Burgess of District 10; Ms. Rebecca Waldrop, Legislative Aide to Metropolitan Councilman David Boneno of District 11; Mr. Bill Palmer, Superintendent of BREC; Mr. Ted Jack and Mr. Reed Richard, both Landscape Architects with BREC; and Mr. Davis Rhorer, Executive Director of the Downtown Development District. Also at the meeting were Mr. Richard Leibowitz, Bond Attorney for the City of Baton Rouge, the Parish of East Baton Rouge; Ms. Denelle Wrightson, Architect with PSA-Dewberry; Mr. Steve Jackson, Architect with Cockfield Jackson Architects; five members of the community; and Mr. Scott Dyer of *The Advocate*.

Several typographical corrections of the minutes of the meeting of March 12, 2007 were noted. The corrected minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Mr. Moret, seconded by Ms. Stepteau.

Mr. Reed welcomed those in attendance and explained that the Finance Committee of the Library Board of Control is an investigative committee charged with studying various financing options for construction of four library buildings. The committee is looking at ways to construct these branches on an accelerated schedule in order to save on construction costs which are projected to continue to rise. The committee will make recommendations to the Library Board of Control, and the Library Board will vote on the course of action to take.

Mrs. Acosta distributed several financial projections reflecting five scenarios for the years 2008 through 2015. The five scenarios were the following: build a new Goodwood and issue no bonds; build a new Goodwood and issue bonds; renovate Goodwood and issue no bonds; renovate Goodwood and issue bonds; and renovate Goodwood, issue no bonds, budget for a new east branch in 2015. In the first four scenarios three branches (a new Perkins branch, a new east branch, a new or renovated Goodwood) open in July, 2010; a new downtown branch opens in 2012. In the fifth scenario, a new east branch is budgeted in 2015 and opens in the next 10-year tax period.

Councilman Mike Walker thanked the committee for the opportunity to address them about constructing a library in the eastern portion of East Baton Rouge Parish. Councilman Walker stated that Mr. Todd Waggenpack and Mr. Kelly Sills have purchased the former Fairwood Country Club property off Old Hammond Highway. These developers are willing to donate 3.5

acres to the East Baton Rouge Parish Library for the construction of a branch library. This donation would save the Library Board of Control approximately \$1 million. Councilman Walker said he supports bonding the cost to construct the branch library because he has seen bonding work successfully in Mayor-President Kip Holden's *Green Light Plan* for road improvements. Bonding would enable the Library to build the branches sooner saving on construction costs and provide library services that the citizens desire at an earlier date than originally projected. Councilman Walker told the committee that he would be an advocate for the Library in regard to bonding with the other members of the Metropolitan Council. He also was supportive of no rollback of the 11.1 millage rate for the Library in 2008.

Mr. Richard Leibowitz, Bond Attorney for the City of Baton Rouge, the Parish of East Baton Rouge was asked several questions about the issuing of bonds for library branch construction. Mr. Leibowitz said that the Parish of East Baton Rouge has an excellent bond rating because of the history of the stable management of the Parish's finances. The Parish also has the security of a 2% sales tax. Mr. Leibowitz added that the interest rate on bonds is currently 4% which is very attractive for the Library. He also mentioned that the City-Parish Plan of Government does not allow the Library to start a construction project if it does not have all of the money to pay for the completion of the project. He stated that if the Library Board votes to issue bonds for the construction of the branches, the Library will enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Parish and the Library will reimburse the Parish for the debt service costs. The millage rate would be frozen at 11.1 mills to ensure the repayment to the general fund.

Mr. Moret referred to the comparison of projected cash balances spreadsheet for the five scenarios. He said that it appears that the Library could save more money by bonding in the year 2010 rather than 2008. Mr. Leibowitz replied that a five-year bond would be possible and could be a savings to the Library. Mr. Moret asked Mrs. Brenda Lovett, Library Business Manager to produce projections using a five-year bond schedule.

Mr. Reed introduced Ms. Denelle Wrightson, Architect with PSA-Dewberry. Ms. Wrightson is an architect from Dallas, Texas who specializes in library design. Mrs. Acosta referred those in attendance to the schematic design for "The Library in the Park" concept. Initially this design included a library building of 80,000 square feet. This design has now been expanded to 95,000 square feet to include space for Library Administration. This additional area would be built on a third floor. Under this scenario, once a new downtown branch is completed, the Library Administration would move to the downtown branch leaving the third floor in "The Library in the Park" for expansion.

Mrs. Acosta noted that although renovating the current Goodwood Library would produce a slight cost savings, the renovation cost does not include the cost of storing the materials currently in the Goodwood Library, and finding a place for the Library Administration to work while the building is renovated. Mr. Bill Palmer, Superintendent of BREC, said that his organization prefers the Library following Scheme C, "The Library in the Park". Keeping the current building would have a negative impact on the design and energy of the renovated Independence Park complex.

Ms. Wrightson added that most renovations of an older building end up costing more than new construction because of unknown costs such as the discovery of asbestos. The current building which is almost 40 years old has fulfilled its life expectancy. She added that attempting to leave the building open while the renovation is being done, increases the problems of noise and liability. In her experience renovating a building in use is only done when there is only one library building for the community. Ms. Wrightson noted that constructing a new building would allow the Goodwood Library to remain operational while the new facility is being built. The new facility would have a smaller footprint than the current building, and it would be more functional.

Mr. Reed asked about the differences in the initial schematic of 150,000 square feet versus the one of 95,000 square feet. Ms. Wrightson said she cut out the auditorium and decreased the size of all the other areas. The concept now contains approximately 40,000 square feet on the first floor for Circulation, Children's Services and meeting rooms; 40,000 square feet on the second floor for Teens, Reference and adult reading/study areas; and 15,000 square feet on the third floor for Administration, Technical Services and Branch Services. Mr. Reed asked if the square footage on the third floor could be added to or increased. Several uses for the third floor once the Administration is moved were discussed.

Mr. Palmer reminded those in attendance that the deletion of the auditorium was made because the Library will have access to the 800 seat BREC Independence Park Theatre for large group programs. In addition, the Garden building at Independence Park and the new BREC Administration building on Florida Boulevard has meeting room space.

Ms. Stepteau asked about the use of escalators in a multi-story building and the location of the meeting rooms on the first floor. Ms. Wrightson replied that in her experience with moving stairs, they incur frequent maintenance and safety issues. The meeting rooms are placed on the first floor because of the noise involved. In most designs the activities generating the most noise are situated on the lower floors. Ms. Stepteau mentioned that in the past she had asked about constructing a multi-level library branch after seeing the Denver Public Library. At that time it was felt that a multi-story building would be problematic for staff and for security. Ms. Stepteau said she appreciated Mrs. Acosta's willingness to build a library with several floors. Ms. Wrightson noted that a rule of thumb in designing libraries is to limit each floor to between 30,000 and 40,000 square feet. This facilitates the patron's ability to find materials. It also allows for the creation of different atmospheres on each floor. Ms. Wrightson added that what libraries offer their patrons and how they offer it, is changing so rapidly that it is important that building designs be flexible to accommodate these changes. Mr. Steve Jackson, Architect with Cockfield Jackson Architects who also worked with Mrs. Acosta and Ms. Wrightson on "The Library in the Park" concepts agreed with the ideas that Ms. Wrightson presented at this meeting.

Mr. John Berry, a member of the community, asked to address the Finance Committee. He asked the Committee to verify that the plan is to eventually move the genealogy department from the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library to this new facility. Mr. Reed said that this idea will be reviewed at the appropriate time. Mr. Berry also expressed concern about sufficient parking for library patrons when the soccer fields are being used. Mr. Berry also requested that a citizen of the parish be chosen to work directly with the architect who will design the new library. Mrs.

Acosta stated that citizen input is solicited during the building program development stage. Mr. Reed added that the Library Board has provided many opportunities for the public to express their ideas about this facility.

The meeting concluded with the scheduling of the next Finance Committee meeting for Thursday, May 3, 2007 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the Carver Branch Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Stepteau, seconded by Mr. Moret.

Dan Reed, Committee Chairman

Lydia M. Acosta, Director