

REVISED AGENDA
FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL
DELMONT GARDENS BRANCH LIBRARY
3351 LORRAINE STREET
BATON ROUGE, LA 70805
MEETING ROOMS 1 AND 2
FEBRUARY 15, 2007
4:00 P.M.

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. DISTRIBUTION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 30, 2007 –
APPROVAL OF MINUTES AT BOARD MEETING ON MARCH 15, 2007
- III. TAX ABATEMENT – SCHWEGMAN’S BUILDING – LYDIA ACOSTA
- IV. UPDATE ON TOXIE CRAFT PROPERTY – LYDIA ACOSTA
- V. UPDATE ON SAFE PLACE
- VI. UPDATE ON JTS PROPOSAL
- VII. COMMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Minutes of the Meeting of the

East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control

February 15, 2007

The regular monthly meeting of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control was held at the Delmont Gardens Branch Library on Thursday, February 15, 2007. Mrs. Georgia Brown, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Members of the Board present were Mrs. Katherine Auer, and Mr. Dan Reed. Also in attendance were Mrs. Lydia M. Acosta, Library Director; Mrs. Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director of Administration; Mrs. Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director of Branch Services; Mrs. Brenda Lovett, Library Business Manager; and Mrs. Rhonda Pinsonat, Assistant Library Business Manager. Also present were 11 members of the community; and Mr. Scott Dyer of *The Advocate*. Absent from the meeting were Library Board members, Mr. Stephen Moret and Ms. Dorothy Stepteau, and Ms. Nikki Essix of the Parish Attorney's Office.

Mrs. Brown noted that item 5 (Update on Safe Place) and item 6 (Update on JTS proposal) on the agenda would be deleted. She asked for a motion by the Library Board to adopt the revised agenda for the meeting. Mr. Reed made a motion that the agenda be adopted with the deletion of items 5 and 6, and Mrs. Auer seconded the motion.

The minutes of the workshop meeting of the Library Board on January 30, 2007 were distributed to the Board members at this meeting. The minutes contain a transcription of the 3-hour discussion of the implementation of the recommendations of the Cyntrenik's study of the Library's 10-Year Strategic Plan. Therefore, because of the length of the minutes, the Board will review them before the March meeting, and then approve them at the March meeting.

Tax Abatement – Schwegman's Building

Mrs. Acosta stated that she received a letter dated January 25, 2007 from Mr. Robert McNeese, Urban Development Director, informing the Library that the City-Parish has received an application for participation in the Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement (RTA) Program from Amedisys Property, LLC. The property in question is located at 5959 South Sherwood Forest Boulevard and is also known as the "Schwegman's Building". The RTA Program promotes development and improvement in downtown, historic and economic development districts, and enhances the long-term tax base. The program allows the owners of approved properties to pay ad valorem taxes for five years based upon the assessed value of the improvements on the property prior to the rehabilitation or expansion. The application must be approved by our local governing body which is the Metropolitan Council. As a recipient of property taxes, the East Baton Rouge Parish Library would be affected by an approval of this application. The estimated abated tax for the Library is projected at \$15,634.35 per year for a period of five years or \$78,171.75 in total.

Mrs. Acosta said that the Library Board of Control may provide written or oral comments about this application to the Finance and Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Council on February 21, 2007 and to the Metropolitan Council on February 28, 2007. Mr. Reed stated that he is in favor of approving the application because Amedisys Property, LLC will renovate a long vacant building. This project will be good for economic development. Mrs. Auer was also in favor of approving the application. Mrs. Brown was in agreement, so Mrs. Acosta will notify Mr. McNeese of the Library Board's support of this application.

Update on Toxie Craft Property

Mr. Toxie Craft, owner of the property at 5051 Greenwell Springs Road, adjacent to the new Eden Park Branch Library contacted Mrs. Acosta this past summer about the sale of his property to the Library. The Library had approached him in 2002 about purchasing his property. However, he was not interested in selling at that time. The Library Board members are now interested in purchasing Mr. Craft's property in order to control the development around the site of the new branch library. Mr. Michael DeFelice re-appraised the property, and recommended that both a survey and an environmental assessment be completed before purchasing this land. The Library Board of Control agreed to purchase the property pending a satisfactory survey and environmental assessment.

Mrs. Acosta reported to the Board that a site map and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report have been completed and delivered to the Library by SJB Group, LLC. The results of the site assessment indicate environmental conditions that include a leaking underground gasoline storage tank at a former 7-Eleven, Inc. Store that was located immediately west of the Craft property at the current location of the Quality Express gas station. A mechanical groundwater remediation system and groundwater monitoring wells were observed near the site's western boundary. A groundwater monitoring report submitted to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality on July 15, 2006, confirmed the presence of hydrocarbons in the groundwater samples collected from the monitoring well near the site. In the opinion of SJB Group, LLC, the hydrocarbon release at the former 7-Eleven Store could have impacted the Craft property due to the close proximity of the release to the property. Therefore, SJB Group recommended a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment to determine the nature and extent of this impact on the Craft property.

Mrs. Acosta spoke to Dr. Aaron Bass, an engineer with SJB Group about the Phase II Site Assessment should the Library Board wish to go forward. Dr. Bass stated that soil samples would be taken along the property boundaries between the Craft property and the gas station. Soil borings of between 12-15 feet in depth would be collected and sliced into 3 foot sections for lab analysis of oil and gas; the two substances they suspect are present. The results of the analysis could possibly show no contamination or possibly contamination within allowable limits. Dr. Bass stated that since the Library had planned to remove the buildings and plant grass, this use might be permissible on the site. Mrs. Acosta asked Dr. Bass if the soil on the Eden Park Branch Library property should be tested also. Dr. Bass agreed to deliver a proposal of the cost of a Phase II Site Assessment to the Library in the next two weeks. Mrs. Acosta asked the Library Board what they wish the next course of action to be.

A discussion by the Board followed. Mrs. Brown suggested that Mrs. Acosta contact an engineer working for the City-Parish for advice on whether the Library Board should proceed with a Phase II Site Assessment. Mrs. Brown would like to purchase the Craft property to keep developers from encroaching on the new branch library. However, it may not be feasible if there is an unacceptable level of contamination in the soil. Mr. Reed asked if they even needed to be concerned since there is a monitoring well on the property, and if the Library is only interested in planting grass on the site. It was agreed that Mrs. Acosta will contact Mr. Peter Newkirk, Head of the City-Parish Department of Public Works, for guidance on this issue.

Mr. Don Browning, a member of the community present at the meeting, expressed his concern about purchasing the Craft property. He felt that if the Library purchased the site and federal regulations changed in the future, the Library could be liable for cleaning any contamination regardless of who caused the spill.

In other business, Mrs. Brown asked about the value of the Library's collection and how that collection is insured in light of the destruction of many libraries during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Mrs. Brenda Lovett, Library Business Manager, explained that the City-Parish Purchasing Department maintains an ongoing value of the Library's collection based on purchases and deletions of old materials.

On another matter, Mr. Reed stated that the committee formed to investigate financial strategies for the Library Board to pursue has not met. The committee members are Mr. Reed, Chairman, Ms. Steptean and Mr. Moret. The committee plans to meet before the next Library Board meeting scheduled for March 15, 2007. This meeting will be open to the public. The date and the location will be announced through the media and on the Library's website.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mrs. Auer, seconded by Mr. Reed.

Georgia Brown, President

Lydia M. Acosta, Director