

December 27, 2017

Season's Greetings ~

This update is informational for now. Nothing for anyone to do until after the first of the year, so enjoy the season's glad tidings with family and friends. Then get ready to roll up your sleeves for January Library Doings.

As a reminder, on Sunday Dec. 3 there was a long overdue meeting at which members of the public could discuss the Downtown Library Advisory Committee's Summary of Construction Options for using Measure S funds to improve the downtown library. Rather than holding several facilitated public forums in the early stages of a project that could radically change our downtown, this meeting was held 10 days before the DLAC would make their recommendations. The overwhelming response from the 90+ attendees at the 12/3 meeting was that of the two options near the \$23 million budget, renovating the present library building was preferable to moving the library to the ground floor of a proposed multi-story parking garage (now labelled a "mixed use" structure).

Despite the public's responses, at their 12/13 meeting the DLAC chose to recommend the garage option. Not only did they unanimously choose that option, they did not even discuss the renovation option. They had simply dismissed it well before the meeting.

The most egregious slight of hand was made by one

of the Committee members, who was in charge listing the pros and cons of each option, for the purpose of making the recommendation. This Committee member not only made erroneous statements in the Renovation Option list of pros and cons, after the meeting he lied about being innocent in doing so. Details of this will be shared with all of you in Update #11 next week.

What's wrong with this picture? There are many questionable assumptions in the current Summary of Options. The public has been largely left out of the process (the options did not flow from the public but were forced upon us). One can only hope that when the City Council considers the recommendations they will look more carefully at whether the DLAC's recommended project will enhance downtown, or impose a very costly "white elephant" that contributes to more traffic and pollution. In a way this is another test of Santa Cruz's values.

Our understanding is that a subcommittee of the DLAC (that includes the liar) is meeting behind closed doors after the first of the year (or maybe even right now), to finalize their report to the City Council. The DLAC will then have its last public meeting (tentatively scheduled either January 24 or January 25) to accept the final report as a full committee. We'll confirm the meeting date as soon as it is firm.

As many of you have read in the Sentinel, we are headed into another recession this year and the City of

Santa Cruz already has a budget deficit to go with it. This is good news, in our opinion, since the parking garage option will still require extra City funding (from where?). A renovation of the existing downtown library, however, has its funding secured by Measure S bonds. This should work in favor of a conservative spending of funds in an uncertain future, where recessions and deficits are a way of life, telling us all that we've gotten too big for our britches and its time to think outside of the Growth-at-Any-Cost-Box.

Happy New Year!

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