

Hi to all 112 recipients ~

You'll find the following in this Update:

- Details for the Community Open House and tours at the Downtown Library
- Summary of meeting with Library Director Susan Nemitz
- Things you can do to help!

OPEN HOUSE at the LIBRARY

Location: Downtown Library

Date: Monday, August 6

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

The proposed "mixed-use" project (basically building a new library in a new 5 story parking structure) will be presented to the public in an Open House format. We have heard that there will be tours of the library available, presumably so anyone attending can see the "dismal" state of the library, shake their head at the carnage and beg for a shiny new library in the proposed parking structure.

The Economic Development Department is taking the lead for this Open House, with SC Public Libraries and the Friends of SC Public Libraries mentioned in some media web sites as hosting the open house. In other words, City and Library staff.

This description came by email from Amanda Rotella, Economic Development Coordinator:

"At the open house event, all of the informational tables will be staffed by members of the City team, and they will be there to provide information and hear from the community. The tours of the library will be self-guided, but we will have library staff at each station to share information and answer questions. Our goal is to give the community an opportunity to learn more about our current library, but also engage in an exercise of imaging what our own 21st century library facility could be like. We will have pictures from libraries across the world to help spark conversation and ideas."

Even though this will not be an opportunity to have your ideas incorporated into their plans to build this project and is likely simply be more window dressing, ***please plan to attend the Open House!!!***

We must be a voluminous presence on August 6th. **This cannot be left to just a few of us to do.** Show up, look at their stuff, then share your thoughts with those who will be staffing the open house. Be strong, be cordial, be passionate, be respectful. By all means, be there!

Here is how it is advertised on the SC Public Libraries web site: <https://www.santacruzpl.org/news/2018/jul/28/open-house/>

Open House

We invite the entire community to attend the City's Project Open House to learn more about the proposed Library Mixed-Use Project.

Library Mixed-Use Project Open House

Monday • August 6th

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Downtown Library • 224 Church St.

This project will serve as a catalyst for important downtown improvements led by:

- A new modern library with the space, technology, and amenities that residents have requested
- Consolidation of surface parking lots into one structure, enabling better use of space
- A permanent, dedicated home for the Downtown Farmers' Market on a new site
- Additional office, retail, and affordable housing uses in our downtown

Our Downtown is always changing. Numerous recent improvements and projects are making Santa Cruz for the better. The proposed Downtown Library Mixed-Use project is increasing vitality in the downtown area. Central to the project is a focus on sustainability and green building, which are aligned with the City's commitment to addressing climate change.

View similarly tagged posts: Library Administration, Santa Cruz, Branches, Events
Posted by cowend on July 28, 2018 at 6 a.m.

Permalink: <https://www.santacruzpl.org/news/permalink/733/>

MEETING WITH LIBRARY DIRECTOR

There were 15 in attendance last Monday (7/23). We had an hour of exchange with Library Director Susan Nemitz, asking questions and listening to and responding to answers. We thanked her for engaging with us.

I'll set the scene using some of the words of one DBTL attendee (Satya Orion), who wrote a letter to the Economic Development Department after the meeting:

"Today I attended the most amazing meeting with Susan Nemitz, along with 15 other community members. What felt so unique about this meeting was that it was a respectful dialogue, seeking information and common ground - considering compromises, possibilities.

"I don't think I've ever attended a meeting quite like this and it felt so refreshing. My sense was that everyone felt heard and were there together in the discussion rather than divided into "for and against".

"This is what has been missing from this process and many other processes in my opinion. Two minutes to make a comment at a City Council Meeting is better than nothing, but is not a dialogue.

< snip some >

"I expect you might understand how it feels to have someone try to convince you of something, rather than engage in dialogue, hearing both sides. The community wants to be included in all decisions that affect us - not in a controlled way such as divided up into corners of a room, with two minutes to comment or questions written on index cards - but a genuine discussion.

"This sort of discussion needs to be moderated and have guidelines for sharing - but I saw today that it really works!! We all felt heard - Susan too. And we all left feeling so much better to be included in the process."

The Meat of the Meeting

As to the meat of the meeting, Susan said many things that were questioned. She kept referring to the DLAC Final Report as her go-to reference, even though we know (by observing the year long DLAC process) that the facts were fixed around the goal of a new library in a new multi-level parking garage.

- She made some unsubstantiated remarks (e.g., "*roof leaks continuously*" and "*50 year old windows will break more than new windows*").
- Susan said "*Technically I work for the City*" even though she is the Director of Libraries of a Countywide Library System. Technically, according to the JPA agreement, the Director of Libraries is "*hired by the Services Authority*" and "*the contract between the Director of Libraries and the Services Authority shall outline details of compensation and benefits.*" Additionally, according to the [Agreement](#), Susan reports to the JPA. Not to the City. It is also true that "*the Services Authority's contract with the Director of Libraries may be administered by a Party under contract with the Services Authority.*" In this case, that's the City of Santa Cruz. Confused?? Easy to be. We learned this last year, much to our surprise! Still, Susan's words ("*Technically I work for the City*") make us wonder if her allegiance to this particular project is based, in part, on her apparent misunderstanding of who she technically works for.

- She stressed that future maintenance costs will be taken from operating funds, implying that there would be more maintenance required for the Renovation Option. This is another unsubstantiated statement because every building needs maintenance and maintenance costs of a new building could be greater than she anticipates. We simply do not know.
- The only negative we heard from Susan about the proposed project was her concern that being a tenant in a garage would result in loss of control of the library design process. She also agreed that sound attenuation in a garage would probably increase costs.
- Replying to one statement about how the existing library doesn't seem to be using its space very well, Susan replied "*This building is so underutilized it drives me crazy.*" We think this is very important, because Susan's comment tells us there is a lot of space currently poorly utilized and opens the possibility of creative thinking for reconfiguration during renovation. They just have to want to do that! It certainly was not done during the DLAC process, was it?
- Finally, toward the end of our short hour, Susan listened to several heartfelt comments about what the library means to them ... why they want to restore it at its current location. Then she asked "*What do you like about this library?*" Hooray! That was a first -- actually being asked what we like about the library! We told her but our hour was over before we could say more.

Epilogue

So, what did we get from this meeting and why does it matter? The answer is we got the only dialogue (defined as a conversation between two or more people) promised by the City to be part of DLAC process. This dialogue occurred between the Library Director and the public in the downtown library public meeting room. That's why it matters, even though the decision has already been made. Our meeting showed what should have happened, what could have happened to properly engage the public.

Things You Can Still Do to Help

- First thing is don't assume others are doing these things!
- Attend the August 6th Open House. Be prepared to ask specific questions if you feel comfortable doing that. Be skeptical of any answers and/or claims being made.
- Write Letters to the Editor promoting revitalizing the existing library.
- Attend August City Council meetings and speak for the existing library during Oral Communications Meeting dates will be listed on the [Council's agenda page](#). Tentative dates are 8/14 and 8/28.
- Share this newsletter with like-minded friends.
- Share our DBTL web site with like-minded friends (it is upgraded frequently).

For the library,

Jean Brocklebank (Communications)

Judi Grunstra (Librarian)

Michael Lewis (Webmaster)

[Don't Bury The Library](#)

