

Update # 13 - February 26, 2018

Dear Downtown Library Friends ~

The following email was sent to the City Council today. It is self-explanatory. We'll continue to update all of you.

Dear Council ~

This is the first in a series of emails to alert the Council of problems with both the process and the Final Report of the Downtown Library Advisory Committee.

These emails will all be on behalf of **Don't Bury The Library**, an informal group of 78 (and growing) City and County residents. DBTL is concerned with questionable actions by the DLAC as it met to consider spending \$23 million of Measure S funds to abandon the existing library building and move the downtown branch into a parking structure. DBTL is in addition to and separate from another group that opposes this plan (**CFST**).

Our main concern is that the DLAC Report (and everything the DLAC did) was fixed around a foregone conclusion to build a new library in the garage rather than renovate the existing building, thus bringing the entire process into question.

Modification of the Approved DLAC Report

After the January 25 DLAC meeting, in a January 27 email, I voiced immediate concern to Director Susan Nemitz that only modifications "approved at the 1/25 meeting [should] be incorporated in the document and that no further editing [should] be allowed."

On January 29, Director Nemitz replied that "Edits that do not change the substance of the recommendation will be allowed."

In a January 30 reply to Director Nemitz I voiced my concern more strongly: "I think it is unwise to be further editing the document, other than what the full DLAC approved at its final meeting on January 25. There is already public discontent about the vote to approve the document with its edits of record, coming before public comment at the meeting. Any further non-transparent editing will be seen as behind the scenes manipulation, based on what the DLAC heard from the public after it voted."

Behind the scenes modification, out of view of the public, is exactly what happened!

Why does this matter?

It matters because it demonstrates the overall pattern of manipulation of information to match a foregone conclusion by the DLAC. This was consistently observed throughout the June 2017

through January 2018 DLAC process. For months, all public comment received by the DLAC and library staff regarding mistakes or errors or concerns of bias were disregarded.

Errors remained in the 12/3 Summary of Options quickly drafted for the only public forum provided (after 6 months of meetings and only 10 days before the DLAC first voted to recommend the library-in-parking-garage option).

How many modifications were made after the vote to approve the document?

- Nineteen (19).
- We have reviewed the Report as presented to the DLAC and to the public on 1/25, along with notes on the modifications that were approved by the DLAC vote that same evening. We have also listened to the audio of that meeting to confirm which modifications were discussed and approved by the DLAC. There were only 8 such modifications approved.
- We then reviewed the Final DLAC Report on the SCPL web site. We found that instead of the 8 approved modifications, plus a few minor edits to correct grammar (e.g., changing the nonsensical "Incompliance" to Non-compliance), there are an additional nineteen (19) modifications of the document.
- While some of those additional 19 modifications do not "change the substance of the recommendation," they were done after the fact. Done after 12/3 when 80 members of the public were asked to use the errors and misstatements of the draft Summary of Construction Options to say which option they supported. Done after the DLAC concluded which option they would recommend. Done after one member of the public actually thanked the DLAC, for leaving in so many errors of fact, erroneous statements and misstatements and characterized the Report as one of conjecture and bias. In other words, as with a great deal of the DLAC process, the conclusions and report was manipulated from its first draft to match the outcome desires of Library administration, the City Manager and other City staff. A foregone conclusion with the facts fixed around the policy.
- The most glaring error of fact in the Report (presented to the DLAC and public 12/3 and 12/13) was still in the document when the DLAC voted to approve it. That error was first brought to the attention of the DLAC as early as the December 3 public meeting and was still in the Report at the December 13 meeting, at which the DLAC stated their opposition to renovation based on the erroneous Summary of Construction Options. In fact, both at public comment opportunities and in written comments the DLAC was informed that it was making decisions based on false statements about lack of funds for temporary relocation for Option A (\$720,000). The main author of the Summary of Construction Options actually lied on 12/13 when he said he did not know about the existence of \$720,000 in the Noll & Tam cost estimates, because he was personally informed of that fact at the 12/3 public forum. That error, which had been used by the DLAC in part to dismiss Option A was removed from the Final Report, after the DLAC voted to approve

it on 1/25.

What remains missing from the Report to be presented to the City Council?

- The results of the only public forum scheduled 6 months into the DLAC process and only 10 days before the DLAC voted on their recommendation (12/13). Although the Report erroneously states there were 92 members of the public, forgetting to subtract about a dozen City employees and members of the DLAC, nonetheless of the 80 residents attending, the overwhelming choice was a combination of opposition to a library in the parking garage and support for renovation of the existing library building. This information is missing from the Report.
- Missing is one of the 8 modifications approved by the DLAC vote, at the January 25 meeting, was when Director Nemitz said she would add something ("committee wants a plan for on-going funding for maintenance/shared management"). That DLAC recommendation was not added to the Report.
- Last, in explaining survey results that are included in the Report, the DLAC failed to mention that a key issue was not included in the survey; that is, the public was never asked what they thought about the proposal to build a new library in a parking garage. Since the original proposal before the City Council in December 2106 was exactly that - a library in a parking garage - one might assume that such a question about that proposal was deliberately kept out of the survey.

We have every single modification of the Report after its approval by vote of the DLAC, available in a document that we are willing to share. For now, our purpose in writing is to begin to inform Council members of several problems that will need careful scrutiny before accepting the DLAC Report. We hope that further modifications of the Report will not be undertaken due to this email. We will certainly be watching carefully.

Sincerely,
Jean Brocklebank (communications)
Judi Grunstra (librarian)
Michael Lewis (webmaster)
on behalf of Don't Bury The Library
<http://dontburythelibrary.weebly.com/>