

**Bozeman Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, November 15th, 2023, 4 pm  
Community Room  
Minutes**

**Attendance** Trustees Stewart Mohr, Pam Henley, Jennifer Pawlak, Ken Spencer, & Mike Redburn; Bozeman Public Library (BPL) Director Susan Gregory; Assistant Library Director Kit Stephenson; Administrative Assistant Lauranna Cossins; Department Head Carmen Clark, City Commissioner Terry Cunningham & Library Foundation Director Janay Johnson; City Attorney Greg Sullivan

Not Present: Friends of the Bozeman Public Library President Dana Pepper

**Call to Order** Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Stewart Mohr at 4 pm.

**Public Comment** – *Please state your name and address in an audible tone of voice for the record. This is the time for individuals to comment on matters falling within the purview of the Committee. There will also be an opportunity in conjunction with each action item for comments pertaining to that item. Please limit your comments to three minutes.*

There were no public comments at this time.

**Approval of the Minutes**

**Action** Trustee Redburn moved to approve the minutes from the Oct 18th, 2023 meeting. Trustee Pawlak seconded. There was no further discussion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

**Action/Discussion**

**Presentation by Bozeman Hotel MM/LC and Left Lane Development for the Construction of a [Parking Facility at the Bozeman Public Library](#). Discussion of Proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Direction to Staff on Whether to Commence Discussion with Developer on the Proposed Parking Facility.**

Library Board Chair Mohr noted that there was an overflow crowd for the meeting. The Bozeman Fire Marshal controlled the number of people allowed in the Community Room per

room capacity of 140 people and the overflow crowd of approximately 120 people attempted to listen from the gallery outside the meeting room. Several people watched the meeting through the windows facing Main Street by standing in the bushes and peering in. Board Chair Mohr explained the agenda for the evening, noted the controversial nature of the developers' presentation and stated that the meeting would be conducted in a civil manner.

No disruptive behavior would be tolerated. He said that first, the developers were going to make a presentation to describe their proposal to build a hotel and condominiums on property adjacent to the Library parking lot and their proposal to share the Library parking lot by extending it in length and building a second deck. Mohr said that upon completion of their presentation, members of the Board of Trustees would ask clarifying questions of the developers. It would not be a discussion at that point but an effort by the Trustees to make sure that they fully understand all aspects and dimensions of the proposal. The third step would be to open the floor to public comment. For public comment, the Trustees asked that people who had already submitted written comments to City Hall and the Library not also speak in order to give others the chance to do so. Chairman Mohr said that comments should be about the proposal, not about development in general in the City of Bozeman. He reminded the crowd that the issue that night was about the proposal to utilize Library property only. After the completion of those three steps, the Board would then have their discussion and vote on the question of whether to direct Library and City Administrative staff to proceed with the project.

Mohr explained that due to statutory authority in the Montana Code Annotated, the Library Board of Trustees has final authority over the Library property.

Andy Bernard, principal partner from Left Lane Development, New York City, stated he had a brief presentation in which he would explain the project, show several renderings and hopefully address some of the concerns about the proposed Memo of Understanding (MOU).

Bernard and his development partner, Casey Tippens of Livingston, introduced themselves and explained their interest in building a hotel and condominiums in Bozeman. They noted that Bozeman is on the map nationally and is a dynamic, growing community with lots of potential. Bernard has family members who have lived in Bozeman for years and Tippens has successfully developed numerous projects in the Bozeman and Gallatin Valley area for twenty years; he lives in the nearby Paradise Valley with his family.

Bernard said that the goal was to increase both parking their customers could access and Library parking on the Library site via construction of a covered parking facility with lighting and a deck of public green space that Library staff and patrons could use. Left Lane would assume full responsibility for funding the \$11MM construction costs and covering maintenance, taxes and assessments. The Library would have parking spaces above ground and the hotel/condominiums would have both an underground lot under the existing Library lot as well as designated spaces above ground for their guests and condominium owners.

Left Lane would provide an easement through its development site which would allow pedestrians to access the trailhead to the south of the Library from Babcock Street.

Left Lane would make a contribution to the Bozeman Community Housing Fund.

Left Lane's development would be expected to generate 200 permanent jobs, 275 construction jobs and +\$4M in incremental property and lodging tax revenue for the City annually, \$44M over the initial ten year period.

In exchange for the above, Left Lane requested a constraint on the height of the Library site projects to protect views of the residences they will build. The request was for a 75-year hold on building anything on the Library's 14 acres that would be higher than the existing Library, with the option to renew.

After the presentation, the Board asked a few clarifying questions regarding the Memorandum of Understanding that was presented to the Board prior to the meeting.

Chairman Mohr then opened the floor to public comment. He asked speakers to line up in the room, speak into the microphone and limit their comments to three minutes.

Approximately 50 people provided public comment in opposition to the proposed development with use of Library property. Each speaker was passionate in asking the Library Board to vote "No" to the development. People referenced the history of the present Library: the efforts to clean up a brownfield site, hold an election for a property tax increase, pursue federal grants and to raise private money to build a Library that would be a "community jewel." There was one neutral comment from an architect thanking the developers for the presentation. More than 100 written comments emailed to both the City administration and the Library administration were provided to the Library Board prior to the meeting in opposition to the specific Left Lane proposal and the use of any Library property in the future for commercial development purposes.

Speakers referred to the possibility of losing much of the beauty of the 14-acre site: losing a large section of the magnificent Library Sculpture Park, part of the Main Street to the Mountains trail and the massive loss of trees if the parking lot project happened.

The people in the gallery who couldn't get into the Community Room created large paper signs that said "NO!" and taped them to the windows facing into the meeting. The message from the public was loud and clear. The final speaker made a powerful speech opposing the project and said, "This property is sacred. This is our Central Park!"

**Action:** Trustee Henley moved that the Board of Trustees not pursue this development project discussion any further. Trustee Pawlak seconded. Each Trustee spoke to why they were voting "no". There was no further discussion. The Board voted unanimously to not pursue the project any further.

Correspondence – Gregory provided written correspondence to the Library Board prior to the meeting.

Department Heads' Highlights – Department reports were provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

**Reports – Reports postponed until the next Library Board meeting on January 17th, 2024:**

City Commission Library Liaison - Terry Cunningham

Library Foundation - Foundation Director Janay Johnson

Friends of the Bozeman Public Library- President Dana Pepper

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Stewart Mohr adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.