

Director's Report to Library Board May 2015

ARTWORK AT CENTRAL

The Library made the decision to exhibit works of art as part of a group showing with State100 and Art100's artist-in-residence program. One of the works by Mike L'roy had a controversial theme that required additional vetting by staff. Ultimately based on this vetting process I made the decision that we would exhibit the work. Fortunately we have a well-crafted art policy that clearly defended our reasons for exhibiting this work. We worked closely with the artist and we did make every attempt we could to respond to the individuals that shared their concerns. I do very much appreciate the Library Board's support in backing our decision to keep the artwork on display, as well as the support of the Mayor's office that we would not censor this work. Although there was obviously some objections to displaying the painting I also received a number of responses in favor of us to stand by our position on intellectual freedom.

LIBRARY SITING AND ALLOCATION

We have closed on the Graybar building and will be initiating our design process as soon as we can through an RFP process.

We have been gathering a team of designers to begin work on the PlayLab concept at Pinney. Hopefully this will lead to a Knight Foundation grant to develop the prototype for the program. In the meantime construction is in full swing at the Royster Corners site with primarily infrastructure proceeding at this time.

IMLS STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

I was invited to the IMLS Focus Strategic Priorities "Learning in Libraries" program in Kansas City. In addition to learning about other projects around the country it was a great networking opportunity and I was able to discuss program ideas with the Kansas City director and the director from Philadelphia.

SPECIAL VISITOR: SUSAN CRAWFORD

I had the opportunity to give a Central Library tour to Susan Crawford who was in Madison giving a keynote presentation at the WiscNet conference. Susan has been described as the next Elizabeth Warren known for her crusades against overcharging internet providers and speaking about their territorial practices. She was very impressed with our Central Library and was surprised by the scope of our programs and services. She even tried her hand on a stop motion animation station. She constantly kept taking notes about our operations and asking if it would be alright to share the information. After her tour she met with Mayor Soglin. The promoters for the conference later called me and said that she raved so much about the library that they wanted a tour for their administration, which we have arranged.

TOUR OF MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

I was invited along with Plumer Lovelace, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Library Association, to meet with Milwaukee Library Director Paula Kiely and to tour their facilities. This was my first visit to Milwaukee's Central Library and it is a beautiful building with its 1895 roots. We also visited one of their newest branch libraries and I hope to take some Pinney staff there since it would be very comparable to our upcoming build.

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The City has been working on developing training and programs on RESJ so Madison can better address disparity and diversity issues. Several members of the Library's management team have already completed the training and we have been trying to incorporate RESJ principles into our operations. Our efforts have been recognized by the City and we were invited to give a special presentation to the Common Council on our application of RESJ practices. Two other agencies, Fire Dept and City Clerk will also be part of the presentation. It is rewarding that our leadership efforts in this area is being recognized.

STAFF RECOGNITION

I wanted to send out a last hoorah for Jan Jensen who recently retired from MPL after a 34 year career with us. Jan didn't want any special recognition but she did leave us a terrific note of recognition for her years at MPL. She shared how she started at Hawthorne coming from a grade school teaching background and was forever grateful for the opportunity. She moved from Library Assistant to Librarian during her tenure and over her years saw a lot of change from circulating processes to the arrival of the internet. And she reminded staff that MPL continues to reinvent itself but most importantly that it remains relevant to the community. Just as she started at Hawthorne, Jan ended her MPL career at Hawthorne. She will be missed.

MEETING WITH NEW ALDERS

I have been meeting with the new Alders to give them an introduction to the library and in particular to talk about the Library's planning process.

UPCOMING TIME AWAY FROM MY OFFICE

Just wanted to give you a heads up that I do have two trips coming up in June. I will be in Colorado from June 10-15. (To celebrate my granddaughter's 2nd birthday) I will be at the ALA Conference in San Francisco from June 24-July 1 where I will be presenting at a day-long preconference showcasing programs, services, and building design features of the Central Library I will also be part of a panel discussion on Open Source projects, featuring KOHA and our Yahara Music Library.

May Schedule

Business Meetings

Pinney Fundraising Campaign Meeting
WiscNet Future Technologies conference
Meeting with Alder Kemble
Meeting with Enis Ragland, Mayor liaison
Meeting with Cathy Daane, possible library board candidate from MMSD
Meeting with City Finance and Accounting Staff
ULC Webinar on Public Library Service to the Hispanic Population
ALA Conference session planning
Meeting with Bert Stitt to review our Tell Us program
Meeting with Alder Hall
Meeting with Alder Baldeh

City Business

Dept/Division Heads Meeting
Meeting with City HR on hiring processes
Mayor's Management Team meeting
Mayor's Human Services work group
Meeting on the Mayor's Homeless Plan
Personnel Review Board
Board of Estimates to address staffing amendments
Racial Equity and Social Justice Progress Report meeting
Engagement Team updates
Board of Estimates Special Capital Budget presentation

Public/Media Appearances

Numerous interviews on "Don't Shoot". Media contacts included all local TV stations and one station from Milwaukee. AP Wire was the principle print contact.
Central Library tour to Susan Crawford.
Veleen Rabbit performance by the Children's Theater of Madison
Susan Crawford Town Hall meeting at WiscNet conference
UMOJA 25 year exhibit, opening reception
Milwaukee Public Library site tour
BratFest Celebrity Cashier
Connect Madison Economic Strategy program
Madison Tourism Conference and Awards program
DMI Breakfast program on the Starting Block project
Mikkel Svane, author presentation
Food Cart Fest