

January 18, 1968

Minutes of the special board meeting held in the Lecture Room of the Library, January 18, 1968 for discussion of the preliminary report on the survey conducted by Dr. Guy Garrison.

Library Board members present: Messrs. L. O. Green, Howard Hummer, and Donald Kraft, Mrs. Daniel Petty and Rabbi Karl Weiner, Miss Mary Radmacher, Librarian.

Also present: Dr. Guy Garrison, Mrs. Gladys DuBow, Mr. Ed Simon and a representative from THE LIFE newspaper.

President of the Library Board, Rabbi Karl Weiner, presided and stated that the meeting was held for a discussion of the preliminary report on the survey conducted by Dr. Garrison. He expressed appreciation for the competency with which the report was rendered.

Each member of the Board had received a copy of the preliminary report and the discussion was as follows.

Mr. Kraft expressed surprise at the figures on education quoted in the report and asked how this could be taken into consideration. Dr. Garrison answered that some suburban libraries tend to reflect the upper class and educated middle class and overlook the less educated class of people who are less interested in how the library develops. Some library programs geared to the less educated would benefit many of these people.

Rabbi Weiner stated that the evaluation of the downtown area is not quite the same to newer residents who do not have nor know the the historical memories.

Mr. Simon referred to Dr. Garrison's mention of the difficulty of public transportation in Skokie which other surveys indicate is true of most suburban areas. Dr. Garrison replied that public transportation does not figure very much for library use. The argument of putting the library where pedestrian traffic is

heaviest is not very pertinent, nor would he advocate putting the library in some way off area, but it should be located where it is accessible.

Mr. Kraft referred to the "standards" of books per capita near the bottom of page 13 and stated that 4 books per capita would be more reasonable for Skokie. He asked if the new building specifications allow for 350,000 volumes? Answer from Miss Radmacher, "yes."

Mr. Kraft inquired about the statement on page 16 which reads, "efforts should be made to increase the book budget to cope with rising prices." and asked Dr. Garrison, "Are you suggesting that money spent on books - actual dollars - should continually increase"? (It was stated that each year we spend more and get fewer books because of the increase in cost of books.) Dr. Garrison answered that the budget will have to be bigger each year to keep up with the rising need. Rabbi Weiner observed that the increase in costs advance before the budget can be increased accordingly.

Mr. Kraft questioned the circulation per capita figures listed, stating that Skokie Public Library circulation should not be compared with Evanston because Evanston Public Library includes the school library circulation with the public library figures. This is not done by Skokie Public Library.

Mr. Simon asked for an opinion as to why borrowing seems to have fallen off recently. Dr. Garrison answered that several things reflect in this - great improvement in school libraries in the last decade, plus most of this fall off is in the large centers of the city where circulation has fallen because of people moving to the suburbs. Because of this it is probable most of the suburban libraries will continue to have an increase in their circulation. It does not appear that anything will happen in the next few years to cause less use of the library.

Mrs. DuBow asked for a reason for the slight decline in Skokie. Miss Radmacher answered that the constant improvement in the school libraries is a factor, Federal

funds available to school libraries and use of the copying machine means the patrons do not have to take out everything they use. She further stated that on a percentage basis the decline is not tremendous and is offset by the fact that there is more and more reading in the summertime. Rabbi Weiner observed that another important factor is the purchase by the individual of paper backs.

Mr. Kraft stated that assuming all of this ties together and considering that our budget is what we get in on taxes, if we are going to pay more for books then we must have more taxes. Mr. Simon asked the question - if very few tax rates exceed .12 how can we justify to the community that we want to get beyond this rate? Dr. Garrison replied that this posed a very difficult question and one the Board wrestles with all the time. Whenever you have a large number of anything you are bound to be on the top and you are there because you want to be there. You must prove to the taxpayers they are using the facility. Mr. Simon asked Dr. Garrison if he would suggest this is the character of this community - that it wants to have the very best library? Dr. Garrison stated that of the people he talked to there was hardly a person who did not seem inclined to want to provide the best library service possible. Skokie is obviously a place that has a vital interest in education. He also stated that the family background of the population seems to impel the people to use the library and the test we have is that the public wants to use it.

Mrs. DuBow asked if there is any measure for comparison of cost for services. Dr. Garrison stated that it is not possible to make such an estimate. Skokie offers more in the way of other kind of services such as children's programs, adult programs, group services and all of these take money. Skokie is doing a better job than other libraries. This takes money and is the reason why the budget is higher.

Mr. Kraft noted that Skokie salary scales are not in competition with the scale of many other libraries. Mr. Simon suggested that clerical help might be

done by women of the community. Dr. Garrison said that the point was well taken if the clerical help is available. Discussion on this with the suggestion from Mr. Simon that the Library Board might want to give them increased benefits as they go along to keep them. Rabbi Weiner pointed out that the library may have to add some professional staff.

Referring to page 48, the section on public relations, when questioned Dr. Garrison stated his statement was made mostly from his own judgment. Rabbi Weiner explained that one difficulty developed because the downtown merchants association has avoided having any direct address to the Library Board in any way and this has been a constant situation. Dr. Garrison observed that these are the times when library boards are pulled into political situations.

Mrs. Petty asked Dr. Garrison if he found that the people were thinking this Board did not want to expand to the west and were unaware of the Library's stand because of the economic reason for not wanting to do so? In other words the price of the property to the west is so much greater than what we are buying to the east. Dr. Garrison replied that most people feel they like the Library and want a larger one.

Mr. Kraft stated that there is an important point brought out here that it is not what we have or have not done but what the public thinks we have done. Rabbi Weiner commented that this does make a difference, whether this comprises the opinion of the people or an appraisal of what we have done by the authority whom we have asked to evaluate us.

Mr. Hummer told Dr. Garrison that all the way through the report reference is made to the Central Business District and the manner of stating it puts the Library in a bad light. There is no place where the Library's side is stated, and further suggested that the statement about the Board's relationship to the public be omitted.

Mrs. DuBow asked if Library Boards have by-laws and wanted to know if the

statement of limitation of terms contained in the report is stated in the Library's by-laws. The question was asked of Dr. Garrison whether, in his view, two terms would be considered an adequate term? He replied that while there are always exceptions, he would recommend that a member serve two terms and go off for two terms and then perhaps come back at a later time.

Mr. Kraft referred to point 2, page 36 in reference to the Pre-school story hours at the school libraries and remarked that this is the most popular thing going here. Mr. Simon asked how are we going to be successful in getting the school libraries and school librarians to do a better job if this is paid by the public library? Dr. Garrison answered that someone must take hold and, in his opinion, there are enough interested school people that might start some pilot programs. It might open up some interesting dialogue.

Mr. Kraft referred to the suggestion of a Skokie Library Association. Dr. Garrison explained that a lot of libraries are putting on staff for such a thing as school liaison but this is mostly in large cities.

Mrs. DuBow mentioned that one thing the Citizens Committee did find out is that there are some people who are ready to go ahead with the expansion.

Discussion about the statement of the library housing or buying books for the use of students for school assignments was held. The Librarian stated that if the school needs these things in big quantity then they need them in the school library and they should be there - not at the public library.

Mr. Kraft made the suggestion that Sunday hours be tried for a six week period to determine if the general public would use the library at that time. Mrs. DuBow suggested that if the library is opened for the adults this should be clearly stated by newspaper publicity, etc. and, if the library is not used by adults, Sunday hours will be discontinued.

The closed reference area was discussed and Miss Radmacher stated that she would choose to have a controlled open shelf reference area but that is impossible

in this building.

Point 6, page 4. Recommendation that there should be a librarian who would serve as liaison with high school libraries and one for public relations. Consensus that one person could do both jobs.

Recommendation that the library should have more room for films and art exhibits is in line with the thinking of the Board.

Page 60 of the report states that this community would be better served by a central library than a library and branches.

A statement is clearly made in the report that it would be impossible to do all the things the Citizens Committee wanted, including working with the school libraries, etc. without an increase in the tax rate.

Mr. Hummer recommended that pages 64 and 65 be omitted and, if not the entire page, omit first part of the sentence in second paragraph at the top of page 65, "If the street extension is removed" and make a sentence starting "there is clearly a unique, etc." Also, omit the third paragraph under point 7 "It may never compete again" or at least tone down the statement. He further recommended that on the five points for solution on page 69, points one and two be combined and in the last line on page 72 do not use the first word "imply."

Mr. Simon inquired as to how the figures for required space were worked out. The answer was that this was done by the architect and the Librarian. Requirements of space are predicated on Hammond & Roesch's report of November, 1967.

Suggestion was made that since this is a survey, we should get a feed back. Copies could be mailed out and a reply from the groups requested. Mr. Hummer stated he views this report as a speaker's kit. Discussion followed of the best procedure to get a feed back for appraisal of the citizens' reaction.

Mrs. DuBow suggested that if the procedure is to meet with groups, the Library should have their plans ready to present and thus "Kill two birds with

one stone."

Rabbi Weiner asked each Board member to study the preliminary report and set down in writing a program of priorities for discussion at a special meeting to be held February 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

  
Selma Petty *af* Secretary