

**Community & Library Services
Commission
Monday, March 9, 2026
6 p.m. – Regular Meeting
MINUTES**



**City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
City Council Chambers**

STAFF:

ASHLEY WYSOCKI, Director
Community & Library Services
CHRIS COLE, Manager, Facilities & Dev.
Community & Library Services
CHARLENE GOMEZ, Sr. Admin. Assistant
Community & Library Services

LOLLY MCHARDY, Chair
CEASON BAKER, Vice Chair
STEVE BARNES, Commissioner
LAUREN GRUEL, Commissioner
JEANNE PARIS, Commissioner
TRICIA THIENES, Commissioner
TEISHA NIM-HUSAINI, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair McHardy called the meeting to order at 6 p.m., at which time a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commissioner Barnes.

ROLL CALL

Baker, Barnes, Gruel, McHardy, Nim-Husaini, Paris, Thienes
Staff: Wysocki, Cole, Rodriguez, Gomez, Vu (Public Works), Pohler (Public Works)

PRESENTATION

None

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

Gomez announced that supplemental communications were included in the agenda packets at the dais.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Norm Westwell spoke regarding concerns at Greer Park South. Mr. Westwell believed the property to be a park and not a stormwater retention pond. He asked Commissioners to speak to their respective Council Members about budgeting funds for the park and lake issues.

Peggy Smith spoke on Greer Park South issues and commented on the odor of the lake.

John Phibbs spoke about concerns at Greer Park South, the lake flow, flooding, and provided his opinion as an engineer.

Kay Goddard spoke regarding delay of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and Friends of the Library, and the donation offered by the volunteer group. Ms. Goddard also spoke in opposition to the International Surf Museum sharing space with the Main Street Library Branch. Ms. Goddard recommended relocating the museum to one of the larger hotels for higher visibility.

Michael Harada, a retired landscape architect, spoke on the concerns at Greer Park South. Mr. Harada believes the land to be a park and not a water basin.

Susan Jensen spoke about living near Greer Park South, saying when the park is in good condition, criminal activity dissipates. Ms. Jensen stated that an increase in water also increases the smell and volume of waterfowl, which leads to more droppings. She would like to see the park maintained in better condition for the enjoyment of the community.

Vanessa Masters spoke regarding flooding of homes near Greer Park causing trash/debris buildup. Ms. Masters would like more enforcement on feeding the waterfowl and voiced her opposition to using the lake as a water basin. She asked Commissioners to recommend proper maintenance to City Council.

Paula Schaefer asked Commissioners to express their support to City Council regarding the agreement with the Friends of the Library (FOTL). She spoke on her desire for the City Council to accept the agreement along with an \$825,000 donation over the next two-year period and the requirements by FOTL. Additionally, Ms. Schaefer spoke on the “meshing” of the library with the International Surf Museum. She asked that City Council hold off on the museum’s MOU. Ms. Schefer felt it was not in the best interest of library patrons. She asked as stewards of the library system, that Commissioners speak with their City Council members.

Elaine Bauer Keeley provided information on her and her family’s history with the City, serving on boards, committees, and City Council. Mrs. Keeley stated that she had attended the workshops for the Library Master Plan on the five branch libraries. She spoke on the age, condition, and issues with the branches, suggesting the development of a committee to work on raising funds to help with the architect’s planned recommendations. She suggested speaking with various entities within the City, and others who come into the City to help fund the improvements.

Lee Westwell spoke on Greer Park South, voicing her concern about the infrastructure. Ms. Westwell described the pipe structure and how the water flows. The lack of proper pipe sizing causes the water to stay in the lake instead of flowing out, therefore causing overflow and flooding during strong storms. Ms. Westwell explained where she lived and the effect on her property during flooding.

Diane Feltman spoke about the most recent flooding and the news coverage. Ms. Feltman voiced her desire for a park, not a flood basin. She also commented on the storage of equipment and the possibility of damage it may have caused to piping.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair McHardy requested approval of February 11, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Baker moved to accept as written with Commissioner Paris seconding the motion. All in favor (7-0).

STUDY SESSION

Greer Park South Capital Improvements Update – Chau Vu, Director, and John Pohler, Deputy Director, Public Works, reported on Greer Park Lake and water retention basin. Vu stated that Greer Park Lake was intended to act as a detention pond and detain runoff from

the southern drainage area. Vu provided background on the park, and the items housed within the park, including a water retention basin, passive park amenities, a critical sewer lift station, and provided specifics on the drainage. Vu discussed mitigation measure in place that include pumping down of the lake, placement of various supplemental pumps to alleviate the overflow of the lake and flooding of the nearby streets, and the building of berms. Staff also survey existing catch basins before and during rain events to prevent blockage.

Vu said the project went out to bid and proposals had been received. She provided CIP budget information on requested funding for improvements, including \$150,000 toward design to install a trash capture device and upsizing the existing pipe for better flow; \$400,000 in construction costs to dredge the lake, desilt to increase capacity, and modernization of the pump system to manage the water level of the pond. The improvement project would separate the current lake circulation system and create a new lake drainage system by installing a new suction pipe with screen, and new pump with a lake level switch. She continued with details on the McFadden Sewer Lift Station, saying it was not a drainage project, but was meant to pump sewage from homes. Vu spoke on the elevation and lack of slope for natural flow, the shallow groundwater challenges and the need for a wet well holding tank, which will begin soon. Phase II will include the construction of the wet well, a valve vault, gravity sewer, force main, and infrastructure investment. Vu noted that over \$5M has been scheduled for this project. The item is expected to go before City Council in a few weeks, with an anticipated start time in the spring. The project should be awarded soon and take approximately a year to complete.

Vu called for questions. Commissioners inquired about statements made by the public, if water could be retained before McFadden Avenue, the 8" pipe system versus a larger pipe, if a community collaboration such as the one at Edison Park could be developed, and what could be done in the meantime. Vu said a drainage master plan was conducted, and a new design will replace the 8" pipe with a larger system.

Pohler confirmed that no broken pipe currently exists, and that staff attended a meeting coordinated by Mr. Westwell on May 31, 2025, taking the community comments into consideration on the new design. In regard to what can be accomplished in the meantime, Vu said staff continue to mitigate by increasing pumping in various areas to divert the drainage to alternate area and are looking for design and funding for capacity upgrade without changing the park landscape.

There was discussion on wildlife feeding signage, which staff has doubled on site, in addition to requests for clarification on the pond capacity, whether the silt and settlement effect the capacity, and if the park could be restored to its previous condition. Pohler addressed the capacity saying it needed to be desilted in order to add capacity. He said the challenge with returning the park to the previous condition was the high salinity in the soil, which prevents growth of plant life survival, and the water table controlled by the Orange County Water District.

Final discussion included the number of phases anticipated for the project, and whether community meetings could be conducted during each phase. Vu said three phases were anticipated and Wysocki said staff could arrange for community workshops. Vu will continue

to seek funding for the project.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Library Facilities Master Plan – Preliminary Recommendations and Framework

Rodriguez provided background on the library system and summarized the statistical information provided in the staff report.

Steve Johnson of Johnson Favaro Architects provided information on the extensive community outreach conducted over the last year. He referenced two reports for additional information, including the Discovery Phase Report and the Final Report. Mr. Johnson stated that the Master Plan does not require any funds to be expended at this time, and that it is merely a roadmap to follow when and if the city decides to act on any of the items within the report.

Mr. Johnson spoke on the key items requested by the community. He said the current branches are small in size compared to other library systems. Demonstrated through data on increased usage since 2023, each facility was undersized and aging. Based on input, the recommendation was for two full-size library branches – Helen Murphy and the Banning branches – at 21,000 square feet, and 14,000 square feet for the Main Street and Oak View branches. It was recommended to update Central Library in phases to address specific needs and cost expenditures. Mr. Johnson reiterated the Master Plan was the planning stage, not construction, and it was Johnson Favaro's job to show what could fit within the area. Therefore, no funding was required at this time.

Mr. Johnson provided recommendations for the following library branches:

- Helen Murphy Branch – the library branch would remain open while the new branch was constructed and would include additional parking.
- Banning Branch – similar in current size with the difference being to remove the conflict with the pickup and drop-off at the adjacent school. Recommendations reviewed included the addition of a children's library.
- Oak View Branch – challenges would include the library on OVSD property and their parking on City property. Smart planning could be to add a second floor, locate the community center on the bottom floor with the library on the upper floor, add an open community space, a park, and expanded parking.
- Main Street Branch – the recommendation included addressing the potential differences between a library and a museum. Two example designs were provided. Challenges were addressed, such as restoration issues due to the historical nature of the building, water issues, ADA compliance, and limited parking due around Triangle Park. A 5,000 square foot addition was shown in one example, with the addition of 3,000 square foot recommendation in the second example, if including a museum.

- Central Library – Mr. Johnson noted that the building was historical in nature, known regionally, not just locally. Johnson Favaro recommends keeping the integrity of the original architecture, noting the elevators are not ADA compliant, nor is the book tower seismically connected. Two options were provided: Option 1 is recommended and includes a children’s wing replacement and cost savings, additional meeting rooms to house Veterans’ Resource Center, Friends of the Library, Genealogy, and a 3,500 square foot outdoor play space, which according to Mr. Johnson was original architect, Neutra’s, vision “for children to be whole from the inside out.” Removing book stacks would provide a teen area and maker’s space. Option 2 retains the original structure. Both options allow for a larger children’s library.

Mr. Johnson urged Commissioners to look at operations versus construction costs. Due to the high cost of redesigning, the project will be phased. Johnson Favaro strongly recommended that the City not lose open park space, and therefore, go up with the design and not out into the park.

Individual Commissioners voiced their opinions on the design aesthetics, project costs, and were in consensus that this was not the right time to present a high-cost item to the City Council for recommendation.

Wysocki was asked when the last Master Plan was created and about the RFP process, for which she replied that it was the first of its kind, and staff followed the City’s Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Additionally, staff not affiliated with the library evaluated the proposals received, and an interview was conducted with the top qualified candidates.

Commissioner discussion moved to the costs to develop the Master Plan and expenditures to-date along with the funding source. Wysocki said City Council approved \$400,000 in fiscal year 24/25, with Johnson Favaro coming in just below. Rodriguez said that to-date, \$324,910 had been expended – 98% of the contract. Wysocki said the funds are provided through the Library Development Impact Fees, specifically for the library.

Commission then discussed the facilities, their condition and size, visitation by the public, the purpose of a master plan, and projected costs and the lack of available funding. Additionally, conversation was had on those cities used for comparison, the size of their library systems and square footage of their facilities. For comparison, Johnson Favaro looked at Costa Mesa (2 branch system), Newport Beach (a main and branch system), Riverside (main and 7 branch system), and the California State Library System, which lists all libraries per capita.

Wysocki reminded Commissioners that the renderings were in concept only and images used in the Master Plan were merely placeholders. Wysocki reported that funds would need to be allocated for future design, which would be the next phase, and would include community input. She used the Edison Park Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as examples. Discussion on the amount spent to date followed and Wysocki was asked if the City was beholden to Johnson Favaro Architects moving forward. Wysocki said no, a new design contract would go through the RFP process, pending City Council approval of additional funding.

Discussion ensued on aesthetics matching the City vibe and the desire to see what other firms offered and potential for a smaller scale of the Master Plan providing options beyond full facility facelifts by fixing current needs.

Commissioner Baker called for the formation of a subcommittee to rework the Master Plan before proceeding forward. Wysocki reminded Commission there was a Commission approved liaison group already in place who followed the lifecycle of the Master Plan and worked with Johnson Favaro through the community input process. Wysocki said that the Commission could choose to continue with the current group or at a future meeting, dissolve it and establish a secondary group. Wysocki offered the option to table the item while the Commission massaged its options.

MOTION: Commissioner Baker motioned to rework the Master Plan and establish a subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Barnes, Baker, and Thienes, and to release a new RFP seeking another architectural firm; seconded by Commissioner Paris (as corrected in the April 8, 2026 meeting minutes). Wysocki stated that with a current liaison group already in place for this project, she didn't believe a new committee could be established at this meeting and it may have to be brought forward at a subsequent meeting. Further, Wysocki advised Commission that should they wish to move forward with a secondary Master Plan, it would require approval of additional funding from City Council.

Commissioner Barnes moved a subsequent motion to table the item until staff could come back with an answer on what it would take to develop a new committee, as suggested by Commissioner Baker. The item was seconded by Commissioner Baker. The motion passed, all in favor (7-0).

AYES: Baker, Barnes, Gruel, McHardy, Nim-Husaini, Paris, Thienes
NOES: None
ASTAIN: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Calendar of Events for March and April 2026 – Wysocki announced that event information was located in Commissioner packets.

Project Updates – reported by Cole

- Library Fountain Update – Project was moving along and identified repairs should be completed in the next few weeks. Additionally, a maintenance contractor was selected.
- Newland Barn Double Door Update – French doors to be replaced, and they should arrive within the next three days. The doors will be constructed of aluminum, which should hold up over time.
- Newland House Funding for Paint & Repair – Money was earmarked in the current budget for the project. It should go out to bid soon.

STAFF ITEMS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

America 250 Liaison Group Reports – Commissioner Paris asked about the Commission working on a group project. Discussion on the Commission working as a whole or in groups ensued and what constitutes a violation of the Brown Act.

Commissioner Baker inquired about the interest survey supplied by Wysocki. Wysocki said that based on responses, Commissioners Barnes and Nim-Husaini were assigned to a banner project at the Art Center. Additionally, Wysocki shared the survey with Toledo, who is the liaison for the City’s Celebration Committee and will be working on additional events. Wysocki also mentioned the potential for other departmental 250 event opportunities. Commissioners discussed and decided to continue with their small established groups.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS (Not Agendized)

Commissioner Barnes announced that he attended the Art Center exhibition opening.

Commissioners Paris, Baker, Nim-Husaini, and McHardy attended the Schroeder Park play equipment ribbon cutting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair McHardy called for adjournment at 8:03 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Huntington Beach Community & Library Services Commission is Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 6 p.m. in City Council Chambers at City Hall, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648.