



## **2021 Annual Report of the South Pasadena Public Library Board of Trustees**

**Date:** December 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Bianca Richards, President, Library Board of Trustees

The Library Board of Trustees (LBT) is pleased to present its 2021 Annual Report. The Board members who served in 2021 are Bianca Richards, David Uwins, Annie Chang, Joseph (Mario) Molina [resigned November 2021], and Dean Serwin [appointed February]. Mayor Diana Mahmud was the designated City Council Liaison.

For the first half of the year, the Board of Trustees continued to hold their meetings virtually, with members of the public able to participate via Zoom. Beginning in July, the monthly LBT meetings transitioned to a hybrid virtual and in-person format.

The mission of the Board is to monitor the activities and progress of the South Pasadena Public Library and to advise the Library and the City of South Pasadena on library services. The Board's core responsibilities include establishing rules and regulations for the administration of the library, reviewing and submitting an annual operating budget to the City Manager, and making recommendations to the City Manager with respect to the appointment, suspension or removal of the City Librarian.

The Library Board of Trustees' 2021 Work Plan included five main objectives:

- Administrative Policy Review
- Emergency Plan and Procedures
- Review the Board's Charge, South Pasadena Municipal Code, and Statutory Authority
- Prepare for Library's Next Strategic Planning Process
- Aid the Friends of the Library with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee for the Library

The Board continued its systematic review of Library Administrative Policies and voted to approve amendments to the Library's Local History Collection Policy, the Policy on the Giveaway of Newspapers, and the Ray Bradbury Conference Room Policy. The out-of-date Policy for Reproduction of Historic Photographs was rescinded.

While emergency plans and procedures are operational and not typically the purview of the LBT, this item was included in the Work Plan to ensure that lessons learned from the pandemic were captured and documented for future reference. Staff have extensive documentation about the plans and procedures that were implemented due to the

pandemic, and continue to work on editing them to be part of the Library's Emergency Plan and Procedures document.

The Board conducted an in depth overview and discussion in regards to the Board's charge, the related South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) and statutory authority. Staff are now in consultation with the City Attorney about the best way to ensure that the SPMC is in alignment with the State of California Education Code that governs library boards.

The LBT identified a timeframe for the library's 2023-2027 strategic planning process, intending it to take place in early 2022, before the parcel tax renewal activity begins in the late spring of 2022. Funds for a strategic planning consultant were included in the Library's fiscal year 2021/2022 budget. A new strategic plan will inform educational outreach efforts related to parcel tax renewal.

David Uwins, Trustee liaison to the Friends of the South Pasadena Public Library (FOL), attended meetings of the FOL Exploratory Committee for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee for the Library (21CCL). The Committee drafted organizing principles for the 21CCL, which will enable the fundraising entity to activate quickly when an appropriate major capital fundraising goal is identified.

In spite of the on-going limits imposed by COVID-19, the Library continued to serve the public and maintain a high level of operations. In-person library services returned in May 2021 and the Board was pleased to see the following highlights take place over the course of the year:

- Overdue fines eliminated.
- Auto-renewal launched.
- Library staff engaged in equity, inclusion, and diversity, training.
- Library App launched.
- New digital resources like Press Reader, LinkedIn Learning and Coursera launched.
- "Trees of Library Park" Google map and scavenger hunt launched along with printed broadside of the poem "The Natural World" by South Pasadena Poet Laureate Ron Koertge.
- The annual bookmark design content for kids was back after a year off.
- The first annual scary story contest for kids took place.
- Successful Virtual Summer Reading Program.
- Re-introduction of in-person Storytimes in September 2021.
- Full capacity Teen Advisory Board cohorts in the spring and fall.
- National Poetry Month celebrated with a crowdsourced poem by Poet Laureate Ron Koertge, recorded by South Pasadena High School drama students.
- Google map of historic districts and landmarks launched.
- Programs for adults, including "The Rialto Revealed", Comic Book Discussion Club, author talks with Maia Kobabe and Chloe O. Davis, and a series of programs related to the One City One Story citywide reading program.

- Grant received by Local History Librarian Olivia Radbill to digitize yearbooks and city directories.
- Children’s Librarian Judy Neeb received an honorary service award for outstanding service to children and youth in the community by the SPUSD PTA Council.

Despite difficult circumstances, our library continues to adapt while providing essential materials and resources. 88% of respondents to the Community Input Survey that was part of the City’s recent strategic planning process ranked library services and events as good (41%) or excellent (47%); no other single quality of life aspect had such a high excellence rating. This is a testament to dedicated and productive staff, an engaged board, the support from the Friends of the Library, city leaders, and a community that truly values the library.