

From: webmaster@shorelinewa.gov
To: [agenda comments](#)
Subject: City of Shoreline: Agenda Comments
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Page 1

1. Yoshiko Saheki
2. Shoreline
3. (O) Parkwood
4. Not answered
5. 05/01/2017
6. 9(a)
7. Last month, I wrote to Director Friedli and City Manager Tarry to say that I was disappointed to hear about the proposed dissolution of the library board. However, given that it is a proposal endorsed by the current board, it seems to me that dissolution is the next logical step.

Having now read the draft minutes of the last library board meeting (March 2), I do want to comment on the statement in those minutes, "There hasn't been a need to rally, there just aren't issues."

As a longtime Friend of Shoreline Library, I would like to go on the record to say that there are issues. There have been issues in the past and in the future, there will likely be other issues that could occupy a full board and not just a subcommittee of a board. I will repeat the ones I mentioned to Director Friedli and City Manager Tarry:

"1. Under a previous director, KCLS had become extremely centralized. While there are certainly economic advantages of centralizing systems, I don't think the cities served by KCLS are identical and unfortunately, KCLS often veers toward the cookie cutter approach. Without city boards, there's a danger that KCLS will be even less sympathetic to the idea that branches should reflect and respond to the immediate communities they serve. I would argue that by having a library board, Shoreline joins other municipalities with library boards in sending KCLS a message that cities care about and are invested in services provided by KCLS.

2. The ever-evolving staff infrastructure of KCLS. I think this is where the board can serve as a liaison

between the City and KCLS and simply report to KCLS what, in their judgment, best serves the City's residents. Even though like all government agencies, KCLS receives public comment, the fact of the matter is that comments from a city-appointed board have more weight than comments from the general public. Hence, a few years ago, the City of Mercer Island resurrected its library board after a heavy stream of comments from their regular citizenry proved ineffective.

3. There are two remodels forthcoming for the Shoreline Library, a restroom remodel and creating a teen area in one part of the building. Has the board looked at the restroom plans to see if they reflect the City's preference for green buildings by reducing water usage and such? Granted, the only function on the part of the City for the restroom remodel is in issuing the permit but since the library is a well-used public building, it seems appropriate to see if it aligns with the green initiatives that the City has adopted. Then, is the proposed teen area in the library coordinated at all with any space City provides for teens or any of the City's recreational services for teens?

4. The Shoreline Library has had a challenging time with teens from immigrant families. How does this intersect with the Council's resolution that Shoreline be a welcoming city for all? Is there a partnership opportunity here between KCLS and the City?

5. As you've probably heard, the director of KCLS resigned. During the hiring process for this newly-resigned director, KCLS set aside special time for all the city boards to meet the candidates. (Incidentally, not all cities served by KCLS have a library board.) Presumably, KCLS will do so again when hiring the next director. So without a board, Shoreline will miss that opportunity."

These are examples of issues that do not necessarily need to be "kicked upstairs" to either the City Council or the KCLS Board of Directors. But by approaching the appropriate staff at KCLS, a city library advisory board can be both very effective and productive. The role of any library board, as I see it, is to look after the interests of the community in respect to library services provided by the library system. In contrast, the role of Friends groups (and both libraries in the city have very active Friends organizations) is to support the library and be its frontline cheerleaders.

There will be times when advocating for the interest of the community will not align with the cheerleading role of the Friends. For example, if the libraries in Shoreline are inadequately staffed, it is the role of the library board to press for changes or to help change policy; the role of the Friends is to simply make do. That is why a city-appointed library board makes sense. Currently, the following cities served by KCLS have city-appointed boards: Bothell, Bellevue, Enumclaw, Issaquah, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Maple Valley, Mercer Island, Redmond, Renton, Seatac and Tukwila. Kenmore, as I've heard, like Shoreline, is dissolving its board.

In concluding, let me say that KCLS has an annual budget of over \$116 million and an appointed rather than elected board of directors. I am heartened that a recent change in state statute will increase the board from five to seven directors. But there is more that is needed to make KCLS accountable. Having a library board helps. It does take time, initiative and and commitment to learn how KCLS operates and I am sorry to see the board go.

8. (o) Neutral

Thank you,
City of Shoreline

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