

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WAS HELD ON THE 8TH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND EIGHT OF OUR LORD AT THE HERITAGE LIBRARY IN PROVIDENCE FORGE, VIRGINIA, AT 11:00 A.M.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
David M. Sparks	Present
James H. Burrell	Present
Stran L. Trout	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Absent

Chairman Trout called the meeting to order

IN RE: HERITAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

It was noted that the Board was meeting in response to the decision of the Library's Board of Trustees to close the Heritage Library because of electrical safety issues identified in a recent inspection. In addition to the Board members, present at the meeting were County Administrator John Budesky, County Building Official Clarence Jackson, Assistant Building Official Woodson Cotman, General Services Director James Tacosa, and Librarian Alan Bernstein.

Mr. Budesky noted that electrical issues in the building were more serious than anyone had realized. Mr. Jackson advised that he had just completed his own cursory inspection and agreed that the condition of the electrical system did create serious safety issues that warranted the closing of the building, but he felt that repairs could be made; however, he added that the structural problems identified by the inspector did not present any immediate danger. Mr. Budesky reported that an electrical contractor would be inspecting the premises immediately to provide an estimated cost of repairs. It was noted that there were likely other electrical issues that could be uncovered, including in the attic space which had not been accessed by the inspector.

Mr. Budesky advised that there was a nearby vacant building owned by the Evelyn family that might be an option as an interim site for the Library. It was noted that there was also open space at New Kent Commons.

Mr. Burrell reminded that Charles City County had a stake in the process and needed to be a part of any decision-making. It was pointed out that the Library Board actually owned the Library building.

The Board members then left to tour the nearby Evelyn building where they were joined by John Bragg, a member of the Library Board, Charles Leftwich on behalf of the property owner, and County Attorney Jeff Summers.

Mr. Evelyn advised that he had suggested the building only as an option and that he was not a part of the entity that actually owned the building; however in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest, he removed himself from the discussion.

Mr. Leftwich reported that the building contained approximately 2,600 square feet and that the owner was willing to perform interior work to meet the Library's needs.

When asked if the building would be suitable as a interim home for the Library, Librarian Alan Bernstein advised that "large, empty rectangular or square spaces" generally worked well for libraries and although it was not ideal and had less space than their current facility, there "could be a far worse solution".

Mr. Bragg reminded that the Heritage Library provided important internet access for many patrons without home computers, and that it would be important that the Library continue that service. He also noted that the Library could continue to use its current facility for storage.

There was agreement that the two options open to the Library Board were whether it would be more cost effective to make repairs at the current location that it owned, or to relocate to a leased interim location for at least three years. It was also noted that it would need to be determined what renovations were needed before rental costs could be calculated.

Mr. Budesky advised that he was awaiting information from the owner of New Kent Commons regarding estimates for that space as an option. Concerns were expressed that parking would be a problem at that location, and the site was not as accessible to Library patrons from Charles City County.

Mr. Bragg advised that the Library Board was only in the "talking phase" regarding the possibility of opening a small branch in Charles City. He also indicated that the Library Foundation had some funding that might be available for use.

Mr. Budesky clarified that the Board and County staff would continue to work with the Library Board as best it could, but that the decisions would have to be made by the Library Board itself.

There was discussion about public misperception regarding County responsibility for the Library. Mr. Bernstein advised that efforts had been made at the last Library Board meeting to clarify that the Heritage Library was privately owned, was not a County operation, and only received funding from the two counties, and that the localities could not be blamed for its present condition.

It was summarized that the next step would be for the Library Board to meet with the Evelyn property representative regarding what renovations needed to be made to the building so that a cost estimate could be obtained and compared to the repair estimate from the electrical contractor.

Mr. Budesky repeated that the County would do what it could to assist with permitting, but reminded that there might be some issues with the use of the Evelyn building as a library, noting that the Health Department would have to determine if the septic system was sufficient and that there might be some other re-use issues as well.

Mr. Sparks asked if information could be available by the Board of Supervisors' January 14 meeting. Mr. Budesky reminded that there was no action required by the Board of Supervisors until such time as the Library Board had made its decision and might need to approach both counties to request additional funding. Mr. Bragg indicated that it was an important enough issue that they could call an emergency meeting of the Library Board.

Mr. Sparks spoke about the community's use of the Heritage Library and urged the Library Board to act quickly.

It was agreed that County and Library staff would visit available office space at New Kent Commons later that afternoon.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burrell moved to adjourn the meeting. The members were polled:

Thomas W. Evelyn	Absent
David M. Sparks	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Absent
Stran L. Trout	Aye

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.