

FLETCHER FREE LIBRARY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The Commission strives to support the Library's efforts informing, enriching and nurturing a community engaged in lifelong learning. The Commission helps to reinforce the Library's principles of being open to all; dedication to intellectual and personal freedom; being responsive, adaptive and accountable to the needs of the community; and being a steward of materials and space. The Commission helps the library administration and staff in their efforts enabling and facilitating learning; empowering the community through the generation and sharing of knowledge; and sustaining and growing the resources that the Library has to offer.

The Fletcher Free Library Commission is composed of four Commissioners appointed by the City Council; four self-sustaining Trustees; one Commissioner appointed by the Mayor; and in what may be unique among City Commissions one Commissioner appointed by Library staff; in addition to one non-voting representative of the Friends of Fletcher Free.

UPDATE:

Over the past year the Commission has been involved in several significant processes and events. After nearly four years at the helm of the Library, Director Rubi Simon left to pursue opportunities in New Hampshire. The Commission thanked her for her extensive service to the Library and by extension the City as a whole and wished her the best of luck moving forward.

An extensive and nationwide process was undertaken by the Mayor's Office to find a new director. A hiring panel was formed that included Commission Chair Ed Adrian and Trustee Cate MacLachlan. Additional panel members included HR Director Susan Leonard; Chief of Staff Brian Lowe; Acting Director Robert Colburn; Chief Information Officer Beth Anderson; City Councilor and State Representative Selene Colburn and School District Family Outreach Coordinator (and now City Councilor) Ali Dieng.

After sorting through dozens of resumes and interviewing multiple candidates both in person and via Skype, the finalists were brought in to meet with the Commission, staff and various City officials. Ultimately Mary Danko was confirmed as the new Director by the Council in January, 2017. The Commission is thrilled to have Mary on board to continue meeting the Library's mission for the 21st Century.

PROJECTS:

The Commission has served a supportive and advisory role for the Library staff and administration in the following projects over the past year. The Commission also continues to work on, help refine and implement the Library's Strategic Plan.

Thanks in part to the extensive efforts of Library Development Manager Kath Laing the Library has gone through an extensive rebranding and identity process working closely with the design firm Solidarity of Unbridled Labour to collaborate on brand rollout and launch. The by-product of this effort is readily apparent from the new library cards, stationary, and website.

The Commission continues to work in symbiotic relationship with the Friends of the Library. Ellen MacLellan the Friends representative on the Commission, is a stalwart intermediary for our organizations. The Friends continue to act as a valuable partner providing generous financial support to the Library through the fundraising generated by its book sales and by providing a non-profit mechanism for donations.

In February and March, 2017 the Library became one of only 19 nationwide that had the opportunity to host the “Exploring Human Origins” exhibit presented in conjunction with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History and the American Library Association. Through panels, interactive kiosks, displays, and videos the exhibition provided a focal point on exploring the evolutionary journey of becoming human. Coordinated by Librarian Barbara Shatara, the exhibit was a resounding success in the community enjoyed and explored by multigenerational, multiethnic and multiple groups and entities.

As a potential follow-up to the “Exploring Human Origins” exhibit the Library is in the process of developing a grant through the National Endowment for the Humanities entitled *I’m Your Neighbor BTV*. This program proposes a multi-generational humanities program with the purpose of building connections and increasing the understanding between new arrival groups and longer-term Vermonters in Burlington.

Commissioner Glenn McRae is chairing the recently created Behavior Policies and Enforcement Taskforce. The purpose of this group is to propose a revised ordinance that will potentially provide a tiered and focused approach to addressing inappropriate behaviors on Library property. Members of this taskforce also include Commissioners Megan Estey Butterfield, Charles Winkleman, and Trustee Patrick Kinner.

Trustee MacLachlan is chairing the recently created Library Development Working Group. The purpose of this group will be to focus on development and fundraising with an eye towards the annual appeal process and how it might be better coordinated with the Friends of the Library. The group will also concentrate on developing a capital campaign focused on remodeling and upgrading the Library facilities. Members of the group also include Commissioner Jessica Nordhaus, Trustee Peter Ireland and Friend Ellen MacLellan.

The Commission is pleased to continue assisting Director Danko and her staff in fulfilling the missions of the Library and assisting the Library in moving forward.