

Hi Fellow Library Commissioners:

Unfortunately I'll have to miss next Wednesday's meeting, and as I recall, our May meeting is usually a brief one followed by a social event. Since my term on the Commission is about to expire, I'm taking this opportunity to raise an issue that has been bothering me for the past several months. It is related to the Commission's role as the Oversight Committee for Proposition A funding. First, however, I want to apologize for not having raised this concern at an earlier meeting.

Approved by the voters in 2010, Prop. A required the Supervisors to appoint an independent citizen oversight committee to ensure that the funds were properly spent. When the Supervisors assigned this responsibility to the Library Commission, I considered it a wise decision. The Commission seemed eminently well qualified to oversee the expenditure of library funding. Unfortunately, however, the Oversight Committee has not not been receiving the basic information it requires in order to assure the voters of Marin County that their tax dollars are being effectively spent.

The Library Commission, to my knowledge, has convened in its role as the Oversight Committee only three times. According to the Commission's minutes, it convened on August 10, 2011 for 12 minutes, on January 11, 2012 for 64 minutes, and on July 12, 2012 for 9 minutes.

On December 4, 2012 there was an article in the Independent Journal indicated that county officials had shifted a \$170,000 expenditure from the county's general fund to the Measure A parcel tax fund. It was to cover the salary and benefits of a human resources director being loaned to the library. The need for this additional employee is not the issue I'm raising. My concern is the decision-making process. A substantial sum of Proposition A money was spent. It could otherwise have been used for library materials, for equipment, or for the redesign of several library lobbies which is currently underway and which will apparently cost more than had been anticipated. Members of the Oversight Committee could only learn of this significant transfer of Proposition A funds if they just happened to spot a very brief article buried in the back pages of the I.J.

Another article appeared in a recent I.J. issue (March 30) noting that the cost of the library's lobby remodeling project has increased by almost 50%. The Board of Supervisors approved an additional \$82,000 for this project. The cause of this unanticipated expenditure is not the issue that I am now raising. The concern is that the Oversight Committee was left completely out of the loop.

Marin County has an outstanding library system that is admired and widely supported by its residents. If voters are going to approve an extension of the current parcel tax they will need to feel confident that their tax dollars are being prudently spent. They are counting on the Oversight committee to provide them with that assurance.