

Eric Sharrin:

Okay.

Eugenia Schatoff:

And we're good.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. So, let me call the meeting to order, the special board meeting on April 1st. It's 6:00 PM. We'll start with the pledge of allegiance, and you've got the flag. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America ...

William Morris:

... To the flag of the United States of America, and to the-

Eric Sharrin:

... And to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Okay. Do we have any public, any at all? We have six participants.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Not at this time.

Eric Sharrin:

And we are eight. Okay. Let's go with a old business, library renewal project, library tours update.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, we had a productive buildings and grounds meeting, and one of the concepts that Donna and Irene had discussed about starting library tours was really fleshed out. Both Mike and Irene can, certainly, add more. We've identified the date. Starting April 13th, they're going to be offered twice a day, 11:00 AM, and 6:00 PM. We are finalizing the handout that's going to go along with the tour, and also going to be available on our website. And we're still in production on the tour video. So, that will definitely be done next week. So, I don't know if Irene or Mike, if you guys have anything to add.

Irene D'Anna:

All is good.

Michael McCue:

[crosstalk 00:01:56].

Donna Warren:

And, Virginia, when that's done, could you just definitely let me know, because I really need to review it again. I'm not so familiar with the parts of the building the same way I would like to be to do a tour and feel confident about it. So, I just want to review it a couple of times before putting myself in front of people.

Irene D'Anna:

So, I have similar feelings, and I was thinking of doing the tour at 11:00 and 6:00 PM on Tuesday to just get one day out. I mean, you guys could do it other days if you want, but I figured that's enough, once a week. And then, I was going to get there maybe at 9:30 and do a little run, my version of the run for Eugenia, just make sure she approves and gives comments, and the constructive criticism. You're welcome to come during that 9:30, 10:00 on that first Tuesday, which is April 13th, not too far away.

Donna Warren:

I got to look at the calendar. If it works for me, I would love to.

Irene D'Anna:

Yeah. And if you can't make it, then, we could meet up any other time, and I give you a tour. And if you like it, you could tour as well.

Donna Warren:

Sounds good.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Very good. Referendum vote date.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, this was something that I wanted to bring up. We had discussed it in committee. I wanted to bring it up prior to the board meeting this month because there had been several dates that had potentially been thrown around. And in terms of thinking about any date, it's important to identify the date, and then, backtrack from that date regarding legal notice and when certain steps need to be taken from a legal perspective. As we all know, this does not only involve you as the library board voting on a referendum vote date, but it involves the school board voting and approving library referendum vote date.

Eugenia Schatoff:

And so, I wanted to bring it up. When we had entered into this pause and a period of reflection and feedback, there had been several dates that had been discussed. And I wanted to bring it up as a topic of conversation because if potentially we are looking at a fall date, then this would really need to be something that would be approved by you guys within the next few board meetings that you have. So, what are everybody's thoughts on when we should attempt to hold the referendum?

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. What I'll do is I'm going to call on everybody one at a time from newest to oldest, and meaning newest board member to oldest, being on the board members. So, Mike, what are your thoughts on the referendum and a date?

Michael McCue:

Well, I will share with you that under the guise of educating myself as a new board member, I got in touch with Bruce Bond, and I will be having coffee with him probably Monday or Tuesday just to hear

what he had to say. He did make an offhand remark in the midst of conversation about our respective children and grandchildren, that the school board had serious reservations about the price tag for the project. So, did not elaborate. And I did not press for any details.

Michael McCue:

I will certainly try to elicit more comments from him when we meet face-to-face. So, being so new as you know, I don't know that I necessarily have an opinion yet. I think I would have one more following that conversation, which I will summarize and pass along to you as soon as it occurs. I told Eugenia no sidebars. I don't believe in sidebars, and I will certainly not act as some rogue agent out there on my own.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Very good. Well, that's encouraging news. Thank you. Thank you. And so, we are with, I guess, holding off until you meet with them to decide upon what a good date would be?

Michael McCue:

Well, I think the tour that Eugenia treated us to the other day certainly makes you realize the gravity of the situation, and the interconnectedness of the physical plants problems. So, shut down, certainly, is something that no one would want to face but, wow!

Eric Sharrin:

It's eminent. If you could possibility get Bruce to go on a tour, that'd be fantastic.

Michael McCue:

Believe me, I'd love to try.

William Morris:

And have a coffee in the mechanical room.

Michael McCue:

He only lives a block and a half away, so maybe I can camp out on his front porch or something.

Eric Sharrin:

All right. Thank you. Irene?

Irene D'Anna:

Okay. So, I'm very grateful to Mike for doing that. And I think we don't need to win his favor at your coffee meeting, but we need to identify what his reservations are, and how to address them. And, I have to be honest, I'm new too. And I cannot go and sign my name on a 23 and a half million dollar renovation. I trust the people that Eugenia and the board hired. This company, construction management company builds libraries, so I trust them. So, if he has issues with the price tag, perhaps maybe we should connect him, in addition to a nice tour, to that company to alleviate some of his concerns that they've addressed the issues properly. So, that's my first thought. My second thought is

that I believe from April 1st, which is today, up until June, we have to aggressively address the board to make sure that we get into their June meeting, and that we then schedule a date for late September.

Irene D'Anna:

And the reason for late September, I think, is because school starts basically September 1st, and the PTA meetings start towards the end of September. And I would say those PTA meetings, right at the beginning of the year, is when most of the people in Pearl River who have kids attend. Everybody attends the first PTA meeting, and then, nobody attends any of them later. So, I would like to have, in all of those meetings, they're within three or four days, an information booth to educate people, and make them aware of the issue, and then, have a vote at the end of September after those PTA meetings.

Irene D'Anna:

So, because the library it's the kids and the elderly people, the in-between people are just passing through. So, I'd like to address that. I have other ideas about addressing the senior community in our neighborhoods to educate them. So, I feel that at the end of September would be the most ideal date to have the vote. I'm good.

Eric Sharrin:

Thank you. Thank you. Bill?

William Morris:

I don't have a specific date. I'm a little concerned with the continued concern expressed by the school board president on the price tag because I think it continues to not recognize what the various roles are in this process. But I agree with Irene with the end of September sounds ... She makes a good case for having the Bond vote at that point. And it would be good to have some more people in to see what's going on, and maybe get out there in our newsletters with perhaps more than we had before and stating what the condition is.

Eric Sharrin:

[crosstalk 00:11:37]. Yes. Thank you. And Donna?

Donna Warren:

Well, I was thinking September as well. Right after the summer, the kids are back, everybody's ready to get more information, I think, on what's happening around them, especially, concerning the children in the community. So, I think it's ideal. I'd like to not wait further than September, if we can help it, because, one, the building's falling apart, and, two, I think it allows for more negativity if we push it further than that. And I think we have to be careful of that. As far as Bruce Bond goes, he said the same thing all along, but he's also said that he wanted to see us vote at the same time.

Donna Warren:

Obviously, that's not going to happen, but I feel like that's a contention point with him that he would like the library to vote along with the school board to get as many people voting at the same time. And I don't think that does us any service, unfortunately. So, keep that in mind, Mike, when you're talking to him too. He pushes that every time, besides the number that I don't think that he has done enough research on or enough of an information, fact-finding tour kind of thing, to understand where those

numbers are coming from, because they're justified. And we've been trying to explain to people what, and why, and the reason we're at those numbers. And, unfortunately, if we wait much longer, they're just going to be higher. So, I'm all for September. Thanks.

Eric Sharrin:

Yes, you have something to say or add, Irene?

Irene D'Anna:

Yeah. So, I think we're both in consensus that if they don't bring it up to vote in June, then, we're not going to get our September date. I believe that we have to put all of our efforts, every one of us, to educate the public and also educate the people on the board. If we can't get on their agenda in June, I believe we have to take the next step, which we've been reluctant to take, which is to legally ask them to put us on their agenda. Do you guys agree or disagree?

Donna Warren:

I'm worried about it. I feel like we may not have a choice, but I am worried about doing it because I think the optics of it, it looks really bad. It becomes something completely different to the public, but maybe we just have to start this way and see what happens, and then, make a decision.

Irene D'Anna:

What's the alternative?

Eric Sharrin:

Well, if I could just interrupt for a second.

Irene D'Anna:

Non-occupancy?

Eric Sharrin:

Excuse me, Irene, if I could just interrupt before ... We still have to hear from one person on the board, which we haven't heard-

Donna Warren:

Oh, Eric, I'm sorry. Sorry.

Eric Sharrin:

I feel like I'm at work again because I send out emails and nobody replies. I must be like a wallflower. I blend into the background. So, my feeling is that I've thought about the September date almost immediately when I realized that we were not going to make March. I thought once you go into May, just looking at everything, I didn't think we'd be able to get everything in place because we do have this advisory board. Oh, and, Mike, while having coffee with Bruce, if you would like to ask him to be on the advi ... We have an advisory board, and they don't really have to meet, but they're giving us advice. And I spoke to him once. I've called him a few times, but he hasn't returned the calls. But he did call once, and I did have a nice, long conversation with him.

Eric Sharrin:

And he has a lot of knowledge. He's been in that position since the turn of the century, and way before that, since 1988. The turn of century member's only 20 years ago, but since 1988. He knows Pearl River. He's spent his entire life here. And I feel, as an insurance salesperson who's had his whole career here, he can add a lot to this. So, maybe you could ask him if he'd like to join that advisory board also. But, yes, September. Now, I did have one question just to clarify. Irene, you were saying the end of September. When you say end, could you be a little bit more specific on a date?

Irene D'Anna:

I don't know if they already scheduled the PTA meetings for next year. That's why I say end of September just because they usually happen within the first three weeks of the school year. I'd have to call and find out if they were scheduled for next year or not. I mean, they did release the official calendar, and it was not traditional this year. Usually, they start the first Tuesday after Labor Day, they started September 1st, which blew my Hawaii vacation reservation. So, I would say, give me a day or two to call, and see, and find out if the PTAs have already scheduled those meetings, or when do they typically do that? So ...

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. I'm just going to take a quick look at the calendar. Let's see what we have. So ...

Michael McCue:

Well, Yom Kippur is the 15th and 16th.

Eric Sharrin:

Right. Well, it's the 15th at night and 16th day. Rosh Hashanah is the beginning. You do know Sukkot, that's not as religious, but that's on the 27th and the 28th. So, if we ...

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:17:42].

Eric Sharrin:

What?

William Morris:

What about the 21st?

Eric Sharrin:

The 21st it's also ... Yeah, we don't have religious Jews. That's the first two days of Sukkot but, yeah, once again, we don't have religious Jews here. So, the 21st would probably work fine. I don't know that I would do it later than the 21st. I mean, I was always thinking the second Tuesday, along with most elections are the second Tuesday of the month, but 21st could work also. But I would try and not do anything later than that. Just to comment on as far as when we want them to vote, I don't want to be on the agenda by June. I want to be on the agenda in May.

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:18:23].

Eric Sharrin:

I feel it is better that we know what the cards are, we know what's on the table. And they're not voting on anything, but to put us on the agenda. All we want is to put the vote on a calendar. That's the only thing that they're almost obligated to just say yes to do that. By law, if you read it, that's all they have to do. They can't vote on how much money this is, whether it's too much or not. It's for the whole community, and for all of our constituents, and all of the people in Pearl River to decide. It's not for the school board to hold up us having a referendum on a date that we're asking, and have been asking for, for a while.

Eric Sharrin:

At the beginning, we wanted it in December, they said, "No, you can't." And so, we waited. We waited because it was too cold, and there were many different things. We waited through all that. Unfortunately, after Liz died in January ... Was it January or February? I put forth the thought to just take a step back, and let's listen to people. When I did that, it took that May timeframe off the table because, otherwise, maybe we could have been with the school board. But, counting back, it's a 45-day thing. Right? So, if they were to vote on the 3rd of May, we would need an immediate ... I think we're already too late.

Eugenia Schatoff:

I just wanted to say, Eric, when you guys decided to put it on pause, it really was because you were being responsive to requests from the school board, and from comments that you were receiving from members of the general public. So, you were doing that in an effort to really reassess the project because we had heard from different parts of the community that people still hadn't heard about it. And there was also a large contingent of people that had incorrect or not factual information about the project. So, that was really behind the decision-making to put the campaigning on pause.

Eric Sharrin:

And so, along with some ... I mean, it was very emotional at the time also, but I felt it was the right thing. We need to listen. We need to get this input, hence we created this advisory committee where we're speaking to senators and all. With all that said though, I'm looking at September, but I think we should have that vote put on the agenda so that they can give us our date or not give us a date, and then, if we have to take legal action, we do it in June, and that ... Maybe over the summer would be better. I don't know if they meet over the summer, but we need to be in May because if it's not done then, I don't want to wait until September and then have to start doing things again.

Eric Sharrin:

I really would like it, one way or another, set in stone by the end of the school year, if at all possible. And I'm optimistic. I feel that once our school board they come ... If we could get them all here, and we could get them to tour the building, and even come to our monthly information sessions, which they haven't attended, and ask their questions. They've never asked the questions straightforward to get the answers. They once had a meeting there, where Eugenia showed up. I don't know if you saw that meeting. Eugenia was there with Robert, and they were asking certain questions with no answers going

on, because this is just Robert conducting illegal. So, we never answered it. I want to answer every single question they have as to the cost, as to why, when it happened.

Eric Sharrin:

And I want it all out there. So, no question is unanswered, and then the decision can be made. But my point is, hopefully, we can get there and, hopefully, they'll see this, and we'll be able to get into May, and they'll be able to say, "Yes, you can have a September date." So, find out what date's good. I think the 21st should be the latest we should go. If we could do the week before on the 14th, it would be good. And that's my thoughts, with a lot of extra add into it, but September. I think we're all in agreement on September.

Irene D'Anna:

So, I looked at the calendar for this year in September, and it looks like there were PTA meetings in September 24th, even October 1st. So, it looks like it's late September, beginning of October, that these meetings are happening. So, perhaps maybe waiting for these PTA meetings might not be the best idea to prolong such a thing, because it's just the marketing approach. So, I think we should do it when it's best for us. So, I take my contribution a little bit back. So, anytime in September, I'm good.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you. No, I appreciate that. That's important also to be able to be flexible a little bit, but it was a good thought had it been on the 21st. You could even try it for the 27th or the 28th. So ...

Irene D'Anna:

School is starting earlier this year, so the meetings might happen earlier. So, if they do, maybe we'll catch some of them. I don't know.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Otherwise, [crosstalk 00:23:56] ... Go ahead.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, I was going to say, so it sounds to me like you guys are all in agreement that we should invite Robert to our meeting at the end of this month, April 26th, so that he can prepare the resolution that you guys would pass at your next meeting?

Eric Sharrin:

I'm not sure if we agree on that, but we do agree that we should have a vote in September. We never once mentioned Robert in any one of this conversation. [crosstalk 00:24:24] however, well, if we do this ...

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, you can't have a vote because your May board meeting, if you pass it in the May board meeting, you're going to miss the June school board meeting. So, your only opportunity to pass the resolution is either at your April board meeting or to schedule a separate meeting. So, if you don't want Robert at the April board meeting on the 26th, when do you want him?

Eric Sharrin:

No, so, [crosstalk 00:24:51]-

Donna Warren:

Sorry. Can I just ask a question before you say? Can we just direct him to write it up and send it over? Do we need him to be part of the meeting?

Eugenia Schatoff:

No, but he needs to write the resolution and you guys need to vote on it, and it needs to be a public meeting.

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:25:06] he doesn't need to be present at the meeting.

Donna Warren:

Right. That's what I'm saying. If we have to-

Eugenia Schatoff:

Well, no. Yeah. But I would need to call him and talk to him to make sure everything's prepared for whatever date and chooses your meeting to vote on it.

Eric Sharrin:

So, first, let me iterate ...

William Morris:

So, I think we-

Eric Sharrin:

... And clarify. What we did agree on is that we would like to have the meeting in September. So, to the original point that you made, Eugenia, you said, "Well, let's find out when we wanted to have the meeting, then let's step back and see when we have to do things." And that's where we are now. So, we did agree to Robert. That was like I think your brain skipped a couple of steps ahead. We agreed on September. Well, that means that we have to have a referendum vote probably by the end of April, which means we would have to have Robert. I think, I'm just putting the steps together.

Eric Sharrin:

But what was discussed was a leap to go to Robert. With that said, I agree. I think we should make this decision at the end of April. If we want to have this on the agenda in May, we need to make this decision in April, and have Robert get this referendum, and get on one of the school board's meetings in May. So, I just wanted to put that all together and tie it all in.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Bill, your hand is raised.

William Morris:

Can I ... My hand is ...

Eugenia Schatoff:

[crosstalk 00:26:29].

William Morris:

I'm waiting for Eric to acknowledge me.

Eric Sharrin:

I'm sorry. I was staring off into the distance. I apologize.

William Morris:

Okay.

Eric Sharrin:

Go ahead, Bill.

William Morris:

So, I think what Eugenia was trying to say is that we need Robert to do some work. If we think we want to get this on the agenda for one of their May meetings, we need to have him draft the resolution that we'll vote on April 26th. And I think your point was good, Eric, that we want to get this on their May agenda because we need to give ourselves some slack in case things go sideways, as Irene said. Once June is gone, they're gone until September. So, we won't have another opportunity.

Eric Sharrin:

Yeah. We need to ... Go ahead.

Irene D'Anna:

I just want to underst ... I don't know. When I first got here, I feel the seriousness of the situation is somehow not here. I mean, I think the reality is the library is going to either close or move into a location that will not have any of the services that we need. So, this is really serious. So, with Mike's help, with whatever I've got, we need to educate, but they need to act by June. Otherwise, we're just saying, there goes the library. So, I can't do that.

Eric Sharrin:

Right. And we're just stepping that back one month, Irene. So, it's not acting by June. It's really acting by May. And that gives us a one month buffer. As Bill said, if it goes sideways, which it has in the past, we want to be able to be able to act, and react, and take a positive way to make sure that we are successful one way or another.

Irene D'Anna:

I meant earlier.

William Morris:

Yeah. Then that's why May to ask them to put it on a specific date, preferably, early in May, if we can swing that somehow. And just hope that everything goes well, and if it doesn't, it gives us a little bit of slack to be able to take whatever actions need to be taken to make sure that they do what they're obligated to do.

Eric Sharrin:

Yes. And I think if we have to have a special meeting to pass this vote, you don't want to do it on ... When's the May board meeting? Is it May 24th, or is it ...

Eugenia Schatoff:

It's the budget hearing, so it's a Tuesday.

Eric Sharrin:

The April board meeting is?

Eugenia Schatoff:

The April is the 26th.

Eric Sharrin:

Yeah. So, it's on 26th, and then, it's a matter of which school board are we going to be on?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Yup. So, what I was just trying to say was that if this is something that we're even hoping to potentially vote on in the 26th, it doesn't require a vote from you, but just hearing the consensus that we are looking to proceed as soon as reasonably possible. So, then that represents on my part following up with Robert, getting all of our ducks in a row from a legal standpoint.

Donna Warren:

I think so.

Eric Sharrin:

All right. In which case that we need to ... If we have to meet earlier to pass this resolution, if that's what needs to be done, if we have to physically vote on this resolution, then we'll meet earlier. I don't think we should wait until the actual board meeting. If we could take action earlier to get this done, to ensure our hopes of being on one of the two school boards that happened in May, I think we can have a special meeting just for that, in my opinion. We don't have to wait until that board meeting [crosstalk 00:30:21].

Eugenia Schatoff:

Okay. And it does represent a contact with Robert because as per our last communication about the topic, the last he heard from us, we were on pause.

Eric Sharrin:

Right. And if we feel we need to meet with him, or we need to have a meeting, so he can be there to give us any advice ... We do have a couple of new board members ... We'd be glad to have him, and meet with him so he can give us the proper [crosstalk 00:30:47].

William Morris:

I mean, I think the concern is that ... I can't speak for Donna, but the concern is that it costs us a substantial sum of money every time he comes in, and I don't think we need advice at this juncture.

Eric Sharrin:

Right.

Donna Warren:

Right. I feel like we're just [crosstalk 00:31:03].

William Morris:

We know what the issues are.

Donna Warren:

Yeah.

Irene D'Anna:

We've done this before. Right? Isn't just [crosstalk 00:31:08]?

William Morris:

Oh, yes. This will be the third time.

Irene D'Anna:

Change the date.

William Morris:

So, I think we know what the issues are at this point. We don't need legal advice. We may need it after.

Donna Warren:

Right.

Irene D'Anna:

Just change the date. That's it.

William Morris:

Yeah. So, and as far as ... Just one thought on not having, I'd really rather do this at the regularly scheduled board meeting. I want this to all be like, that they tried to rush this through blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We have a regularly scheduled board meeting that happens the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Right? Or first fourth Monday of the month. And that's where we take care of the business that's associated with this. I don't want to look like we're jamming something. That's my thought.

Irene D'Anna:

I agree. And the reason for the ... I'm sorry, go ahead, Eric.

Eric Sharrin:

No. You speak first. I'll hold myself because you may say something which will change my mind.

Irene D'Anna:

So, I think once we draw that date, I think it's worthwhile to pursue the board meeting and try to address their concerns. Even if it's three weeks, we might be able to achieve it. So, that way, we don't look again like we're trying to move this along without their input, without all of their stuff, the concerns that you had Eric. So, that way, we try to use these three weeks to educate and get as many of those board people to do the tour of the library. That's my personal opinion. So, I actually don't mind waiting until the board meeting. I think that's not a bad idea.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. And my face that you saw me make, and I know you saw me make it because I was contorting there. It's just I don't feel we're trying to ... We're six months after we started this, we're not trying to rush anything through.

William Morris:

I'm not saying we're trying to rush anything, but, look, sometimes there's been a perception of bad faith or an expression from other people that there's been bad faith on our part in terms of how we've tried to schedule things. I know that's absolutely not the case. I've been here. I know how it went down. But I would like to be aware that people seem to be willing to ascribe those intentions to us, and to the board rather than just its fiduciary responsibility to take care of the building, and make sure that the library stays standing and keeps running. So, where there's an opportunity not to give the potential for somebody to take it and run with it in a different way, I'd like to not have it be there.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. So, if I could just take a step, but I just opened up the Pearl River Board of Education site to see when the board meetings are. They have three board meetings in May. Because this may help us make our decision, also, when we may want to do it earlier. There's a board meeting on May 4th. There's a board meeting on May 11th. And next to that, there's a comment, "BOE candidates night, tentative." Then there's a board meeting on May 18th, and that says, "Budget vote and school board elections." When I'm reading this, my feeling is, all of a sudden, that May 4th is open, otherwise, we're looking at possibly June 8th because they have agendas set for May 18th. I remember they usually meet every other week. So, that May 11th meeting really is a special meeting. It's just tentative, and it is just for the candidates. So, we're either doing it on May 4th or we're doing it when they're having a budget vote and school board elections.

William Morris:

I don't know. We do multiple tasks at particular stated meetings, Eric. I think they have an agenda.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Can I just interject for a moment? I would just want to steer away from trying to hypothesize their perception on what date they potentially would choose to include some of their agenda. Remember, we did appear on several agendas, and then re-yanked at the last minute. So, I think there's a lot of factors at play. So, from our perspective, I know we can have dates that we would potentially hope to be on the agenda. Ultimately, it's their decision. And then, if they choose not to include us, then that would include legal repercussions. So, I just don't want to prolong a conversation about something that we won't get an answer on tonight.

Irene D'Anna:

We can aim for May 4th. I think that's plausible even with our existing board meeting that we have on the 26th. No problem.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you, and thanks for bringing that up, Eugenia, because there's a valid point. We're trying to predict the future, which is always very hard to do.

Eugenia Schatoff:

As we've learned from this process.

Eric Sharrin:

[crosstalk 00:36:00]. So, for referendum vote dates, we've heard from everybody. We have the beginning of a good plan. And so, is there any other further conversation that we'd like to have on the referendum vote date? Anybody? Going around.

William Morris:

No.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. So, the next item up on the agenda is a relocation commercial real estate agent.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, I had brought this up previously to the entire board in October. It was discussed in November and December. Initially, there had been a subcommittee formed of Liz and Donna to view potential alternative locations, sites for us. Donna and I did tour a couple. The idea of hiring a commercial real estate agent was tabled at that time as we've seen the predictions about the building continuing to deteriorate have been coming true. And so, therefore, I think it really behooves us to have a professional in our corner who can review existing sites, help us out in terms of negotiating a lease. The bottom line is we know we're going to have to move. We don't have the timeline yet, but we know that it's eminent, whether it's three, six, nine, 12 months down the road.

Eugenia Schatoff:

This is separate and apart from the Bond referendum. The building is just continuing to fail, and we'll reach a point where it's not safe or cost-effective to keep running the library in it. And so, therefore, I

wanted to put forth to the buildings and grounds committee, and also to the full board, can we please hire a commercial real estate agent to look at all of this on our behalf? I've done all of the preliminary research on a number of sites, but it's reached a point where if we can do this before there's a dire need to move, it can be better planned. We can have an idea of exactly what it is that we need. I don't want us to be put in a position where we're over a barrel and don't really have a choice, and are trying to retrofit something to make it work because we're forced to move because of some substantial, catastrophic failure of the mechanicals.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. All right. So, just a quick question. When we hire a commercial real estate agent, there's negotiations going on, and looking at it, do they also negotiate on our behalf or are they just finding something and saying, "Here it is." And then, we have to deal with the whole lease and negotiation with the ...

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, the good ones will negotiate the lease on your behalf, and they don't make money. Typically, the way that they make money is through the lease agreement. So, by finally landing the lease, that's how they receive compensation. And there are a lot of intricacies to commercial leases. And so, that's certainly something that I've been able to research to date, and do a lot of the legwork for us. But in terms of getting the best deal and being able to negotiate all the intricacies, that's something we really want a professional doing for us.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. All right. So, if I can hear from everybody about hiring one. Let's do it backwards. So, I will start with Donna.

Donna Warren:

So, my dog is barking a little, so, excuse me, if you hear that. Eugenia, I wonder if there are many more properties in Pearl River that we haven't seen besides the hillside one that we had talked about, if they're much more available to begin with?

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, there are already a couple, for example, that Irene was mentioning that weren't listed on the general sites. So, I think that there is stuff out there that we have yet to see. I also think it's important for us, from an operational standpoint, for myself, to determine what it is that we actually need to be able to provide as many services as possible, and then, enter into the search stating what we want first, as opposed to being forced into the decision by the building failing.

Donna Warren:

Yeah, no, I understand that. I think that, but we're going to be limited though to what's in Pearl River, obviously. I know that's going to make sense, and that we could somewhat run, I guess, programs from, and have a good amount of books, and have the staff at. If we hire somebody, there's no payment upfront? It just works on the other end of it? Can you just explain that?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Yeah. Typically, that's how it works. There's no payment upfront.

Donna Warren:

So, [crosstalk 00:41:13] like buying a house and the way the agent would make money after selling it? Like that?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Correct. Except for, typically, they make money off of the lease agreement.

Donna Warren:

So, do you have somebody in mind, somebody [crosstalk 00:41:25]?

Eugenia Schatoff:

I do not. That would be something that I would get different people to perhaps do a presentation for us the next board meeting. We want to make sure that there's no playing favorites or nepotism. There are a couple of names already. And we would want to make sure that we had somebody who had experience placing either retail businesses or established and similar to us in purpose. So, we're not looking for a dental office, [crosstalk 00:41:53].

Donna Warren:

Of course, but I'm guessing you're looking to hire somebody within Pearl River, right? One of the real estate agents in Pearl River, right?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Absolutely. Yes.

Donna Warren:

Okay. Yeah. Then I'm fine with it. If it helps us to figure things out, why not?

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you, Donna. Bill?

William Morris:

Yes. I'm all for it. I mean, it'd be nice to have some prop ... I mean, all we're authorizing today is Eugenia to get some proposals from brokers, right?

Eric Sharrin:

Yes.

William Morris:

Yeah, that's fine.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you. Irene?

Irene D'Anna:

I have a lot of opinions on this. So, now, you're getting to know me.

Eric Sharrin:

[crosstalk 00:42:30].

Irene D'Anna:

I have a lot of opinions. Okay. So, I think getting a real estate agent is a very good idea. However, there are many steps that I feel like we need to take before that. Number one, I'd like to know how much of the budget we can allocate that we currently spend on whatever, maintenance and whatever, that we could move then to leasing the space. Because some of our operating budget will not go away. So, that's number one. Number two, we have to decide what services we're going to offer at this remote location. And a lot of that will have to do with the budget that we're going to allocate towards leasing. So, we might not be able to afford a large, huge space, and therefore, we might not be able to offer X amount of services.

Irene D'Anna:

So, we need to figure that out. Then, after we do that, we need to figure out how much square footage we need based on the services that we're going to provide. So, those I think are three major steps, budget, services, and the square footage. Hold on. I'm almost done. The next thing is, usually, agents, we have to be careful not to sign a contract with an agent that says that if we find a space on our own, that they're going to represent us, meaning that we're tied into this agent.

Irene D'Anna:

And also, it's a little tricky because a lot of times, let's say we're going through this budget stuff, they're basically working for free, assuming that we're ready to move. But the thing is, if they don't get any action from us, with the school board and all this stuff is going to be going on, if they get tired of it, I want to make sure that the contract we signed with this agent is short-term, and then, we have a way out. Those are my four points.

Eric Sharrin:

Excellent. Thank you. And have you been through-

William Morris:

So, we're not authorizing Eugenia to sign a contract with anybody. We're authorizing her to explore, get people in to make proposals. There's no commitment here. I agree with all your points, but ...

Irene D'Anna:

I don't know, Eugenia. I don't know what you had in mind, but I know that sometimes agents before they decide to do work with you, because it's basically their free time, they want some commitment saying that if they find something for you, that they will be your agent. So, I don't know. I mean, in my previous experience, I've done several leases with different companies, and I've done them through agents, and sure enough, they wanted my exclusivity for a certain amount of time or for a certain offer.

Irene D'Anna:

So, if they go and take you to a place, sometimes they say, "Okay, I have to repre ... " The agent has to represent you. Sometimes they go even beyond that. So, it depends. Anytime you have a relationship with an agent, you have to sign some thing saying that they're representing you. And if they show you [crosstalk 00:45:48] that-

William Morris:

But what we're authorizing Eugenia to do is to get those proposals so we can examine that. So, we're not authorizing her to agree to anything at this juncture.

Irene D'Anna:

Okay. I didn't know [crosstalk 00:46:01].

William Morris:

And if they have terms in their proposal that we find distasteful or unacceptable, then we don't have to ...

Irene D'Anna:

Okay.

William Morris:

I think the two things can happen in parallel. And so ...

Irene D'Anna:

Okay. I move quick.

Eric Sharrin:

Yeah, no, this is all good advice. And the question I was going to ask is, have you experienced it? And you answered that by saying, "I've done this before, and this is what I've experienced, and this ... " And it sounds like you're giving us some sage wisdom, which I think is ... I'm repeating myself with that, but you've been through it, and this is what you've seen. So, as we go through the process, and it's not immediate, but as we do this, this is what we need to look out for to make sure we're not pigeonholed with one agent. You find a property over here with another agent, the first agent's going to represent you. Now, you have two agents representing you.

Irene D'Anna:

And, typically, the fee is one month's rent to the agent. So, if we decide to go with a property, we pay that agent one month's rent, typically. Although, for a larger lease, it could be negotiated.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you. Thank you for your knowledge and the input. Mike?

Michael McCue:

I don't have a whole lot of recollections, Eugenia, with respect to libraries doing this in Bergen County, while I was employed. I think maybe Cliffside Park moved to a storefront while it did major construction, but have other libraries in our CLS done this so that we could draw on their experience? I'm happy to reach out to the BCCLS' executive director and ask him if they have somebody that we could tap into. But I'm very impressed with the comments from Irene, and Bill, and we should be mindful of those things. Absolutely. Can't be paralyzed. We got to be ready for a dire circumstance, should it arise.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Yeah. So, in our CLS, there are a couple of libraries in Orange County that were in temporary locations. There's a number of them on Long Island, actually, that have been through similar things. The way that I really saw this going, so, there are a number of properties that we've already viewed, or we've gotten pricing for, whatnot. Also, ideally, and I stated this to the committee, the buildings and grounds committee, the best option for us would be if the school district had availability for us in some capacity, or the town. That would be my first choice, if there was some way in which that could happen.

Eugenia Schatoff:

And I'm not even sure if that's a possibility, but that would be our ideal first choice, I think. In terms of second choice, finding a local Pearl River commercial agent, having them do presentations for you at a board meeting, would be the next step in terms of hedging our bets. In terms of figuring out the, how much we're willing to spend, and what services we provide, we put that together already. So, we have that available, and it's something certainly that we want to be considered as we're looking at spaces.

Eugenia Schatoff:

The other possibility that had been brought up, prior, was the potential of some mobile library, or bookmobile, techmobile, something like that. So, that's something also that we had considered. If we have the gift of time, we have more options in terms of being able to have the time to be able to plan appropriately. My biggest concern is, I don't want to be put in a position where we're moved into insufficient, not appropriate space that we're in for years and years until a referendum does happen.

Eric Sharrin:

Yeah, we don't want to have to move in the middle of everything again, because if there was an emergency and we had to move into a storefront across the street from the park, Central Avenue Park. Let's say [inaudible 00:50:35] this furniture, we realize that was choice F on five other choices. That was the bottom of the barrel. I'm not saying it is. And we realize it's temporary, we have to move again. We want to avoid that. We want to move once and be able to stay for a while. It sounds like that's what I'm hearing.

Irene D'Anna:

I have one comment based on what you said. I agree with you that, ideally, it would be a school structure or something that the town owns. Mike, if you're discussing things with Bruce Bond, perhaps, maybe, for him to understand the severity of the situation, you just might casually say, "Well, we probably have a year or two left in this building, do you have any space we could move to?"

Eric Sharrin:

A month or two, it sounds like.

Irene D'Anna:

Yeah. Well, I'm just saying that, perhaps ... I mean, there's the reality of it, when we do renovations we're going to have to move anyway. Like I said before, I think even in our previous meetings, people are not understanding the severity of it, you know? So, I have a feeling, Mike, if you're going to talk to Bruce Bond, just say, do you ... I mean, Eugenia, if you want to share how much square footage you need for the services you want to provide that we could afford, just convey that to Mike, and say, "Hey, have Mike ask Bruce if he's got any space around."

Michael McCue:

Well, I think as we discussed the other day on Eugenia's tour, for the ordinary Joe or Mary who walks in, things don't look so bad, and they don't understand. It's not until you get to the bowels upstairs, and the mechanical room, and into that closet area, and you see the stained ceiling tiles, that you begin to understand the dimensions of the problem.

Eric Sharrin:

And how much deconstruction has to be done just to fix what we have now. Yeah. So, the bottom line is, I think, we're all in agreement that, Eugenia, you should definitely look into a commercial real estate agent. We wanted to come to an agreement with that, and I think we do have consensus for that. Please correct me if I'm wrong, everybody. Very good. Okay. And with that ...

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:53:11].

Eric Sharrin:

Yes. Go ahead, Bill, please.

William Morris:

Just to ask one thing, if there are analysis that have been done of how the services would be split up, what we'd be able to offer, what we'd have to discontinue, sort of a continuity of operations plan for what we'd be looking for. If that exists, it would be good to be able to look at that in advance of listening to agents' proposals.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Absolutely.

Eric Sharrin:

And if it doesn't exist, should this be part of the building and grounds committee? I know we don't-

Eugenia Schatoff:

We do have one. We scaled it depending on, we've got 15,000 square feet, 10,000 square feet, 7,500 square feet, bookmobile, no bookmobile.

Eric Sharrin:

Very good.

William Morris:

Okay. Excellent.

Eric Sharrin:

Thank you.

Irene D'Anna:

When we were at the meeting, I floated a very crazy idea, I don't know if it sunk in, about erecting a temporary structure in the park across the street. Because with the vaccine stuff, they've erected structures that have ventilation and everything.

Eric Sharrin:

Right. So, if we were to do that, the land at the top of the park on the ... Give me a second ... On the east side of the park by John Street, is owned by the school.

Irene D'Anna:

That's what I'm saying.

Eric Sharrin:

[crosstalk 00:54:29].

William Morris:

The whole thing is owned by the school, Eric.

Eric Sharrin:

It might what?

William Morris:

The whole thing is owned by this [crosstalk 00:54:34]-

Eric Sharrin:

The whole thing. Actually, the whole park is owned by the school, but that would be a place where ... Bruce, actually, offered that up when I had my conversation with him. He was like, "Well, why don't you build a new building? Just build in at Central Avenue by John Street." So ...

Irene D'Anna:

[crosstalk 00:54:48]-

Eric Sharrin:

[crosstalk 00:54:48] may not be so crazy. We can see how much would that cost to build and to rent because it's still very local to where we are.

Irene D'Anna:

Exactly. And the more we could be in the face of people, I think the better it is in terms of how temporary this is, and how dire the situation is, would not be a bad idea. So, let's do a real estate agent, and then, let's maybe investigate into erecting a structure. I don't know how to do that, but we're all smart people, we can figure it out.

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:55:29] classrooms, only the library.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. All right. Thank you. And if we're done with that item on the agenda, I'd like to move on to the new business and that would be air handler one.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, at this point, I think I've spoken to each of you, whether individually, or in committee, just to reiterate to everybody. So, we, next week, have one of our HVAC companies, Atlantic Westchester, is going to be coming in, and they're going to build some access windows into air handler one. Air handler one is the air handler where the bottom is rusted out. And they're going to investigate whether or not the unit is fixable or repairable or not, depending on how the holes have continued to grow larger at the bottom of the unit. It might be repairable. I don't have the estimate for what the repair would be. They didn't want to give that estimate until they actually opened up the unit and looked inside.

Eugenia Schatoff:

So, that is something that we're waiting to hear the results of, because if in fact it is fixable, we could potentially get another year out of it. And that's the positive scenario. So, if it is not saveable, then that opens up some other concerns and things that we have to consider in terms of how long we can continue to function with the existing unit, whether or not we replace it, or attempt to have some rental contraption fitted in to function as an air handler. This is an addition to the chiller. So, our decisions will be more clear once we see what the status of air handler one is.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. All right. Thank you. I think that concludes all the business on the regular portion. Are there any [crosstalk 00:57:56].

Eugenia Schatoff:

I think there are-

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:58:00] but there's still a board member with a question.

Eric Sharrin:

Wait. Okay. Thank you, Bill. Thank you. Who had the ... I was once again looking-

William Morris:

It was me.

Eric Sharrin:

It's you?

William Morris:

I'm said board member.

Eric Sharrin:

Oh. Go ahead, Bill.

William Morris:

Yeah, because I want to make sure that this is going to come back to the board before we make any decisions on what to do with air handler one, right?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Of course. So, next week-

William Morris:

No, sometimes, there are things that have happened that happened, where I personally hear about it later. And I just want to make sure that we're having a discussion about next steps on this as a board.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Yes. Because all next steps would be very pricey. So, it definitely would require the entire board.

William Morris:

Okay. That's all. Now I'm done.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. Thank you, Bill. Does anybody else have any comments to make?

William Morris:

[crosstalk 00:59:01].

Eric Sharrin:

Yes, Mike, go ahead.

Michael McCue:

I did talk to a immediate neighbor of mine who spent years working for the firms Blend Air and Design Air, and asked him as a taxpayer to come down and he take the tour, basically, up and see the HVAC equipment and render whatever advice he could. He's not in the business. He's not a possible consultant. He's not a possible contractor. He's a facility manager at one of the large corporations on 303 these days. So, he's agreed, and he'll come down. We'll meet with Eugenia next Wednesday afternoon at 3:30. So, he can build up some insights for us.

Eric Sharrin:

Fantastic. That'd be great. Thank you so much for doing that. That's great stuff. Very good. Does anybody else have any more comments before I move on the agenda and get ourselves to the executive session? If not, we have public. Does anybody have any questions?

Eugenia Schatoff:

Nope.

William Morris:

No, we have no public, I don't think.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Oh, no public.

Eric Sharrin:

No public. Okay. Very good. In that case, I'd like a motion to move into executive session to discuss union contract. All right. Mike made the motion, Donna seconded. The time is 8:06, and we are moving into executive session to discuss the union contract. And while you're stopping the recording and getting it all set up, Eugenia, we have-

Eugenia Schatoff:

Yeah, I'm turning on the camera. Yup.

Eric Sharrin:

Okay. We just came out of the executive session. We've had a discussion on the union contract, and now the next thing I would need is I need a motion to adjourn.

Donna Warren:

Motion to adjourn.

Eric Sharrin:

We have Bill and Donna. Donna first, Bill second. And all in favor?

Donna Warren:

Aye.

William Morris:

Aye.

Eric Sharrin:

Any opposed? And none abstained. Okay. Very good. 8:52. And thank you all for taking time out of your schedules, and it's a long meeting. We're out of here before 9:00, and we'll see you on April 26th, if not sooner, because it's only April 1st [crosstalk 01:01:29].

Transcript of Meeting of April 1, 2021

William Morris:

Well, we have committee meetings coming up. So ...

Eric Sharrin:

Have a very joyous, and a blessed Good Friday, a joyous Easter, but not you, Eugenia, because you're two weeks from now, if I'm correct.

Eugenia Schatoff:

No, May.

Eric Sharrin:

May. You're May.

William Morris:

May? Wow!

Eric Sharrin:

Okay.

William Morris:

So, you're guaranteed better weather that way.

Donna Warren:

Yeah, probably. Right? Goodnight.

Eric Sharrin:

Goodnight.

William Morris:

All right. Goodnight.

Michael McCue:

Goodnight, everybody.

Eugenia Schatoff:

Goodnight. Thank you, everybody.

Irene D'Anna:

Thank you.