



**LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019

6:30 PM

**SCOTTS VALLEY BRANCH MEETING ROOM
251 KINGS VILLAGE ROAD, SCOTTS VALLEY, CA 95066**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioners Lindsay Bass, Martha Dexter, Nancy Gerdt, Cindy Jackson, Jim Landreth, Deb Tracey-Proulx and Bob White

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any member of the audience may address the Board on any matter either on or off the agenda that is within the Board's jurisdiction. Note, however, that the Board is not able to undertake extended discussion or act on non-agendized items. Such items can be referred to staff for appropriate action which may include placement on a future agenda. If you intend to address a subject that is on the Agenda, please hold your comments regarding that item until it is before the Board so that we may properly address all comments on that subject at the same time. In general 3 minutes will be permitted per speaker during Oral Communication; A MAXIMUM of 30 MINUTES is set aside for Oral Communications at this time.

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

A. Library Director's Report – November 2019 (P3-5)

5. MEMBER REPORTS

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed in the "Consent Calendar" will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes on the action unless members of the public or the Board request specific items to be discussed for separate review. Items pulled for separate discussion will be considered following General Business.

- A. Minutes of September 16, 2019 (P6-8)
RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve Minutes

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

General Business items are intended to provide an opportunity for public discussion of each item listed. The following procedure is followed for each Business item: 1) Staff explanation; 2) Board questions; 3) Public comment; 4) Board deliberation; 5) Decision.

- A. Downtown Library Project (P9)
RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review and discuss
- B. Development of Meeting Room Policy (P10-23)
RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review and discuss

8. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned to a Regular Meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, January 20, 2020 at 6:30 PM at the Downtown Branch Meeting Room located at 224 Church Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The Santa Cruz City-County Library System does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Out of consideration for people with chemical sensitivities, we ask that you attend fragrance free. Upon request, the agenda can be provided in a format to accommodate special needs. Additionally, if you wish to attend this public meeting and will require assistance such as an interpreter for American Sign Language, Spanish, or other special equipment, please call the Library Administration Office at 427-7706 at least five days in advance so that we can arrange for such special assistance, or email library_admin@santacruzpl.org.

November 18, 2019

Library Director's Report to the LAC

Staffing

Hired: Rachel McKay – LA II, Downtown Branch Library
Sarah Jones – Volunteer Coordinator Assistant, Headquarters

Resigned: Tinka Anderson – Systems Administrator

Library News

Dressed in their Halloween costumes and surrounded by cake, decorations and many shared memories, staff closed the doors to the old Felton Library for the last time on October 31st. The old library building (the Belardi Building) will be converted into the San Lorenzo Valley Museum. The new Felton Branch Library is still on track to open on January 25th.

Power Outage

The headline in the Library's November newsletter reads, "No Overdue Fines Through Thanksgiving!" and the article explains, "Things have been crazy for all of us with these power outages. We had to unexpectedly close branches and had limited services where we were open. We know that times like these are when you need us most.

We want to thank you all for your patience and help alleviate some of the stress these outages have caused. **So we are eliminating all overdue fees through the Thanksgiving Holiday."**

Polaris, the system that manages patron accounts, and provides the library's catalog, along with the Internet for the entire system, digital collections, and our phones went down Saturday evening, October 26th. The Live Oak Branch opened Sunday with power, but without phones, the Internet or Polaris. Downtown and Felton remained closed all day Sunday. Downtown was reopened to the public on Monday but did not have power and it closed early at 5pm.

Even in our Libraries that had no power, customers could still check out books, but staff manually managed patron accounts. In order to deal with the backlog and assuage customer concerns about late fees, the Library eliminated overdue fees through the Thanksgiving Holiday. The outage also impacted our acquisitions and our vendor, Baker & Taylor, was unable to connect to our system. This slowed the acquisition's team's progress on the opening day collection for Felton, but they will be able to make up the time.

Preparing for the Next Situation

Libraries play a critical role in the aftermath of disasters as communities seek to recover. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, Libraries in those stricken areas transformed themselves into a hub for connecting residents to missing friends and family members, and connected residents to FEMA, the Red Cross and other critical services. In NY, libraries provided temporary shelter and supported residents who sought to register their children for school. Libraries in the Midwest have provided similar services following tornados. The recent outage in our area called attention to several needs that the Library is now exploring for solutions. We are reviewing costs for backup generators for our data center, and exploring a potential path to move most of the Library's data into the cloud. Additionally, senior management living in Scotts Valley were without cell service and Internet. The Library is considering several communication systems that would be resilient to nearly any disaster. It's also reviewing its protocol for how and where staff are directed to go during an emergency.

Improving Administrative Efficiencies

The Library introduced a new software to staff in October to more efficiently manage incidents at the Library. The program called PITS, tracks and organizes incidents electronically. Staff can more easily pull up information on suspended patrons or patrons who have violated the Library's code of conduct. Additionally, security cameras will soon be added to the entrances at the Downtown Library and improvements to Branciforte's security cameras are also being made.

The Library also introduced a new Intranet for staff. The service improves internal communication and supports better knowledge sharing across the system by centralizing and organizing the information that the Library relies on to conduct its business.

Improving Efficiencies for Customers

Customers will soon be able to pay for lost items and other services to the Library online with their credit card. The service will go live on December 9th.

Community Engagement

At Fall Staff Day on October 14th the Library introduced a Marketing Plan and an overview of marketing principles to all staff. The plan intends to focus marketing efforts on transformative programming, building brand awareness, and capacity building for all staff to participate in the process. One result of the plan is a Communications Toolkit that can be used by staff.

On Wednesday and Thursday October 24th and 25th the Downtown Branch Library hosted a Census 2020 Recruitment Table Session. The Census department was able to leverage our connections with existing service providers in the library to share job information with low income and unhoused individuals.

On November 15th the Library participated in the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History's (MAH) book launch party for *Buscando a Marla | Looking For Marla*. The authors worked with the Diversity Center Youth Groups of Santa Cruz and Watsonville to develop the story, which explores experiences from our gender expansive community.

On December 7th our intrepid *Precision Book Truck Drill Team* will take to the streets with the Downtown Santa Cruz Holiday Parade. The Library is a community favorite at this annual event and provides a unique opportunity for the Library to show its fun side.

Improving Learning

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries continues to strengthen its ties to public schools. The Library is embarking on a program this year to provide Educator Library Cards to all school teachers. The cards provide extended privileges to facilitate the circulation of more books into children's hands. Along with the card, the educators are connected to a new Library newsletter that provides targeted information for educators about unique services to support learning.

Additionally, the Library will celebrate its newly opened Life Literacies Center at the Downtown Library on November 23rd, from 12-4pm. The Center provides programs and services that support job readiness, service connections for people experiencing homelessness, housing navigation, access to County benefits, and support from Encompass Social Services. Some services will be provided in Spanish.

The Life Literacies Center partners with community organizations and volunteers to provide transformative programs and services to library users. Additional Life Literacies Services will be added as the Center scales up with new community partners. The Center is particularly seeking partnerships that will enable the Library to provide free legal aid, English language development, resources for new Americans, and information about the 2020 Census.

Innovation and Learning

On November 17th, the Library hosted the launch of the Santa Cruz Virtual Reality Sea Level Rise Explorer Program in partnership with the City of Santa Cruz Climate Adaptation Educational Outreach Campaign. Library users can try out the new technology and enter into a future world with sea level rise in Santa Cruz at the Downtown Library. The custom made software and the cutting edge virtual technology introduces a new community platform for exploring some of the world's greatest challenges and also demonstrates how Libraries are on the forefront of learning and exploration.



LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019
6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Lindsay Bass, Nancy Gerdt, Cindy Jackson, and Bob White
ABSENT: Martha Dexter, Jim Landreth, and Deb Tracey-Proux
STAFF: Director of Libraries Susan Nemitz, Assistant Director of Libraries Eric Howard, and Administrative Assistant Ivan Sumano-Vargas

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED THE AGENDA
MOVER:	Lindsay Bass
SECONDER:	Bob White
AYES:	Bass, Gerdt, Jackson, White
ABSENT:	Martha Dexter, Jim Landreth, Deb Tracey-Proulx

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Library Directory Susan Nemitz reported on the current developments in the Library.

5. MEMBER REPORTS

Commissioners provided updates about their respective regions.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

RESULT:	APPROVED CONSENT CALENDAR
A. Approved Minutes of July 15, 2019	
MOVER:	Bob White
SECONDER:	Lindsay Bass
AYES:	Bass, Gerdt, Jackson, White
ABSENT:	Martha Dexter, Jim Landreth, Deb Tracey-Proulx

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Jump Bike Station at the Garfield Park Branch Library

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Staff Report. Claire Fliesler, the Transportation Planner from the City of Santa Cruz presented on the Jump Bikes.

B. Review Draft ILL (Interlibrary Loan) Policy #320

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Staff Report.

RESULT:	APPROVED INTERLIBRARY LOAN POLICY #302
MOVER:	Nancy Gerdt
SECONDER:	Bob White
AYES:	Bass, Gerdt, Jackson, White
ABSENT:	Martha Dexter, Jim Landreth, Deb Tracey-Proulx

C. Grand Jury Response

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Staff Report.

RESULT:	APPROVED GRAND JURY RESPONSE
MOVER:	Nancy Gerdt
SECONDER:	Bob White
AYES:	Bass, Gerdt, Jackson, White
ABSENT:	Martha Dexter, Jim Landreth, Deb Tracey-Proulx

D. Service Model

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Staff Report. Director Susan Nemitz gave a brief presentation on the service model.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Final adjournment of the Library Advisory Commission at 8:00 PM to the next regular meeting to be held on Monday, November 18, 2019 at 6:30 PM at the Scotts Valley Branch Library located at 251 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

Respectfully submitted,
Ivan Sumano-Vargas, Clerk of the Commission



STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 18, 2019
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Eric Howard, Assistant Director of Libraries
RE: Downtown Library Project

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss the Presentation by Jayson Architecture

DISCUSSION

Please see the presentation at <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showdocument?id=78010>.
The Assistant Director will provide updates.

STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 18, 2019
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Eric Howard, Assistant Director of Libraries
RE: Community Room Policy

RECOMMENDATION

Review current policy, proposed policy and consider several key questions outlined below.

DISCUSSION

The Library provides four different types of rooms that are or will be made available to the public at current or soon to be remodeled/new libraries. Those four rooms include Study Rooms (spaces that accommodate 1-4 individuals); Conference Rooms (spaces that accommodate up to 8 individuals); Multipurpose Rooms (spaces that accommodate up to 40 individuals). Lastly, some Santa Cruz Public Libraries provide Community Rooms which are in a separate class from the others, because they can be utilized outside of the regular Library hours and some can accommodate up to 100 individuals.

This discussion is focused only on the use of Community Rooms and the policy around their use. There are Community Rooms at the library branches in Scotts Valley, Boulder Creek, Aptos and there are plans for Community Rooms at the remodeled Branciforte, as well as the future Downtown Library and new Capitola and Felton Branches.

The new policy attempts to better communicate the alignment between the Library's mission and its available space.

1. Should the policy provide any other type of priority preference in its reservation policy?

2. What other considerations should exist for lending out the space when the Library is normally closed?
3. Should the Library only lend the space to nonprofits?

Attached:

- 1) Library's Current Meeting Room Policy
- 2) Draft Community Room Policy
- 3) The American Library Association's Q & A on library room policies.

Policy Title: Meeting Room Use

Policy Statement:

The Santa Cruz Public Library system makes its meeting rooms available for public use and neither approves or disapproves of any viewpoint expressed by meeting room users. The Library does not endorse any goods or services, makes no representation as to the accuracy of the information and assumes no liability for the quality or safety of any goods or services which may be the subject of the meetings. When the meeting rooms are not being used by the Library, the Library Joint Powers Board or the Friends of the Library, the library will open the space to all persons or groups for meetings. No group or organization will be permitted use of the room if it appears that the contemplated use would be a clear and present danger to the library, its occupants, or the community. This policy shall apply to all users of the meeting rooms.

Terms of Use

1. The Library System and its affiliated organizations and programs have first priority for use of the meeting room. Governmental agencies have second priority and are exempt from fees for use. All other groups may reserve the meeting room space on a first come, first served basis.
2. Groups may use rooms only for the hours booked in advance. All set-up and clean-up must be accomplished within the reserved time. Groups must return any space to the condition in which they found it unless staff requests otherwise.
3. Groups are responsible for their own set up. Chairs, etc. must provide wheelchair access consistent with guidelines established by the American Disabilities Act. A minimum of 1-4 spaces must be saved for wheelchairs with a clear view of the speaker.
4. All meetings must be open to the general public. Meeting room activity calendars are posted on meeting room doors.
5. No admission fee may be charged; no collections may be taken on the premises, no funds or business solicited or direct sales made except by the Library or Friends of the Library or their agent.
6. The City of Santa Cruz bans the use of polystyrene foam plastic products in the city facilities, including all countywide library branches. The library strongly encourages composting.
7. Signs, posters, displays, and decorations may be put up with prior

Permission from the branch manager.

8. Loud talk or any use of the room that disturbs library staff or library patrons is prohibited.
9. Libraries are fragrance-free facilities. No incense may be used and fire regulations prohibit the use of candles however exceptions for special events may be approved by the library director. Smoking is not permitted.
10. Failure to cooperate with any of the rules will result in denial of future use privileges

Reserving a Meeting Room

1. The charge for use is \$25.00 per hour or any part thereof. All charges are payable within five working days of the date reservation is made. Reservations are not confirmed until full payment is received. A receipt for payment is your confirmation of booking.
2. No group may reserve a room more than twelve times in a single calendar year.
3. The Library reserves the right to cancel a reservation due to circumstances beyond its control – for example construction projects or community emergencies. The Library will notify the group of the reservation cancellation as soon as possible.
4. Use fees are refundable with 30 days' notice only and are payable by check from the City of Santa Cruz Finance Department. Refunds must be requested; they are not issued automatically unless the Library has cancelled the meeting.
5. Additional fees for use of kitchenettes and equipment may apply.
6. Each branch will develop procedures for room rental including the issuing and return of keys. Procedures will be approved by the Library Director or her designee
7. Keys will not be duplicated
8. The cost of replacing lost keys and/or changing locks if deemed necessary will be borne by the individual or organization renting the room
9. A copy of applicable policies and procedures will be provided.

Care and use of the Meeting Room

1. If refreshments are to be served, the Library should be informed at the time the reservation is made. Alcoholic beverages may be served only with special permission; this is secured using procedures outlined in the Alcohol Beverages policy.
2. Users are responsible for cleaning up and for any damage to Library property or the facility. Repair or cleaning costs may be assessed if damage occurs.
3. No food or other items may be left or stored in the meeting room or Kitchen.
4. Trash and recyclables that do not fit into the provided receptacles must be removed by the user. The Library may assess charges for damage or cleaning.
5. The Library assumes no responsibility for personal belongings.
6. Kitchenettes are available for use at the Downtown and Scotts Valley branches. Use of these facilities requires an additional fee of \$15.00.
7. The projector at the Downtown branch is available for use with a personal laptop for \$15.00. The Scotts Valley Media Wall is available for use with a personal laptop for \$15.00 if no staff assistance is needed. If staff assistance is needed to pre-program the wall the minimum charge is \$25.00 and \$25.00 per hour after the first hour.
8. All other equipment as listed is available at no charge. Renters must bring own supplies such as flip charts, markers, etc.

Adopted 2008
Revised July 2011 (effective Sept 1, 2011)
Revised December 2011

Appendix I: Branch Specifics

Groups must return any space to the condition to which they found it. Please refer to specific arrangement as posted in room. Availability of specific items is subject to change.

Aptos:

Seating for 69
(6) 6 foot folding tables
Sink with cold water only
Ceiling mounted screen
4 foot by 6 foot blackboard/bulletin board
3 foot by 4 foot blackboard/bulletin board

Boulder Creek:

Seating for 35
Small wet bar
Wall mounted projection screen
Portable projection screen
Television
VHS player

Central

Seating for 75
Kitchenette with stove and sink
Wall mounted projection screen
Podium
Overhead projection equipment
TV/VCR unit
Overhead projector for transparencies
Chalkboard
White board/flip chart

Scotts Valley

Seating for 72
Kitchenette with oven, refrigerator and sink
9 screen media wall (available for overhead projection)
Podium
6 5'x3' wired tables that can be joined together

DRAFT POLICY

Why does the Library provide community rooms?

The Santa Cruz Public Library's room policy seeks to support the Library's mission to "connect, inspire, inform" and to support its vision to "transform lives and strengthen communities."

Priority for room reservations is given to Library sponsored programs. If the Library has not reserved the room for itself, priority is then given to government agencies.

Group Study Rooms Are Supported by a Separate Policy

Terms of Use for Community Rooms

1. Reservations require a library card.
2. Applicants must complete the application and submit it no later than one business day prior to their reservation date. **(This still needs to be completed)**
3. The organization's representative must meet (at least one time) prior to the program for an on-site orientation of the building, its use and care, including emergency evacuation needs. That representative must be present at the program and is responsible for returning the key (if the room is managed independently of the Library) the next business day.
4. Rooms can be reserved two months in advance of their event and up until one business day prior to their event. Rooms can't be reserved more than four times by one group in one calendar year. (The Library, including its sponsored programming, Friends of the Library and government agencies are exempt from this rule.)
5. All publicity for the event must state that it is not a Library sponsored program. Publicity material must also state that the Library neither approves nor disapproves of any viewpoint
6. Groups may use rooms only for the hours booked in advance. All set-up and clean-up must be accomplished, within the reserved time. Groups must return any space to the condition in which they found it unless staff requests otherwise.
7. All meetings must be open to the general public. (The Library and government agencies are also exempt from this rule.)
8. All programs shall not discriminate against any individuals or groups of individuals because of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or citizenship. The arrangement of the room must also comply with ADA access.
9. All participants must abide by the [Library's Code of Conduct](#).
10. No admission fee may be charged; no collections may be taken on the premises, no fund or business solicited or direct sales made except for sales by the Library or Friends of the Library or their agent.

11. The City of Santa Cruz bans the use of polystyrene foam plastic products in the city facilities, including all countywide library branches. The Library strongly encourages composting.
12. Signs, posters, displays and decorations may be put up with prior permission from the branch manager.
13. Libraries are fragrance-free facilities. No incense may be used and fire regulations prohibit the use of candles however exceptions for special events may be approved by the library director. Smoking is not permitted.
14. The Library reserves the right to cancel a reservation due to circumstances beyond its control. The Library will notify the group of the reservation cancellation as soon as possible.

Care and Use of the Community Room

1. Alcoholic beverages may be served only with special permission; this is secured using procedures outlined in the [Alcohol Beverages Policy](#).
2. Users are responsible for cleaning up and for any damage to Library property or the facility. Repair or cleaning costs may be assessed if damage occurs.
3. No food or other items may be left or stored in the meeting room or kitchen.
4. Trash and recyclables that do not fit into the provided receptacles must be removed by the user. The Library may assess charges for damage or cleaning.
5. The Library assumes no responsibility for personal belongings.
6. The organizations representative is responsible for securing the exterior doors and windows and returning the key within one business day.

Meeting Rooms Q&A

Definitions

Behavior policy: Behavior policies cover actual behavior and not arbitrary distinctions between individuals or classes of individuals, appearance, or behavior that is merely annoying or generating negative subjective reactions from others.

Establishment Clause: The First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits the government from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion.” This clause not only forbids the government from establishing an official religion, but also prohibits government actions that unduly favor one religion over another. It also prohibits the government from unduly preferring religion over non-religion, or non-religion over religion.

Library-sponsored event: This event is planned and executed by the library; co-sponsored events are normally considered to be library-sponsored.

Meeting room policy: Meeting room policies provide rules and regulations that govern all possible spaces used for meetings by outside groups in the library including library-related parks, lobbies, and labs.

Non-library sponsored (group) event: This is an event that is planned and executed by an entity other than the library.

Public forum: A public forum is a place or space, either physical or virtual, in which any person can exercise their First Amendment right to speak or engage in other expressive activities. The courts have identified three different types of public forums:

- A **traditional public forum** is a government-owned place that has been traditionally available for public assembly, speech, and discussion (e.g., parks, sidewalks, and streets).
- A **designated or limited public forum** is a place purposefully opened by the government for designated expressive activity by part of the public or all of the public.
- A **nonpublic forum** is a place that is neither traditionally used for expressive activities nor set aside or opened up in a substantial way for expressive activities.

Rules about what kinds of restrictions on speech may be legally imposed in a given place are based on the type of forum that has been established.

Public Forum (Meeting Rooms and the Law)

1. Does the First Amendment apply to my library?

The First Amendment applies to all government and publicly funded agencies, including libraries. It does not apply to private institutions. The extent to which it applies to a government or publicly funded agency—whether a public library, public school library, or academic library that is part of a public institution—will depend on the context and application of the public forum doctrine.

Because the mission of public libraries is to serve the larger community, courts have imposed stricter standards on restrictions to access to the library's resources and facilities, and require greater access to information and the library facility in public libraries. Public schools and universities—including their libraries—serve defined communities of students and employees, rather than the general public. As a result, they are generally considered nonpublic forums. They may have greater latitude to impose restrictions on access consistent with their missions. Students' access to resources and the removal of materials in public schools and academic libraries in public colleges and universities, however, are matters still subject to the First Amendment.

Any institution that opens its facility to the public for the use of its space could be considered a limited or designated public forum for that purpose and would have to meet the more stringent First Amendment standard applicable to that type of public forum. Also, any library that participates in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) must provide free access to FDLP information resources in all formats to any member of the general public without impediment.

All libraries, public or private, are encouraged to adopt policies supporting intellectual freedom and reflecting the principles expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights*.

2. Must a public library provide meeting rooms to the public?

A public library is not obligated to provide access to its meeting rooms and other facilities.

If a public library chooses to open its meeting rooms, display cases, or literature tables for public use, those facilities are considered a designated public forum.

Public libraries that open their facilities to public use cannot disadvantage or exclude speakers or groups from using their facilities solely because they disagree with those parties' views or the content of their speech.

A public library that opens its facilities for public use may not exclude a group from its facilities to avoid controversy or public disapproval.

3. Must publicly funded school and academic libraries provide meeting rooms to the public?

Publicly funded school and academic libraries are not obligated to provide access to their meeting rooms and other facilities.

School and academic libraries are likely to be subject to institutional policies and should consult with their administration about these spaces. Publicly funded schools and universities that open their spaces to the public would be governed by the same public forum rules as public libraries, so libraries are advised to consult with their administration.

4. Do libraries endorse the speech or viewpoints of outside groups that use library meeting rooms?

Just as libraries do not endorse information contained in their collections, libraries do not (and should not) endorse any speech made by outside groups in their meeting rooms. This includes political, social, religious, and partisan groups as well as groups that advocate or advance controversial ideas or disparage others. Libraries should consider including language in their policies stating that the provision of meeting room space to a group is not an endorsement of the group, its beliefs, or its speech.

5. Does it violate the Establishment Clause if a public library provides meeting space to a religious group or a group that intends to engage in religious practices?

No court has held that the First Amendment's Establishment Clause requires libraries to prohibit meeting room use by religious groups engaged in worship. Religious groups and organizations must be treated like any other community group. See also "[Religion in American Libraries Q&A](#)."

6. Who promotes meetings and events when the library is not a sponsor?

The sponsoring group should be responsible for promoting its meeting or event. Libraries are under no obligation to display advertising for outside groups, but if they choose to do so, all groups should be treated equally. Promotional materials should clearly indicate the name and contact information of the sponsor of the program. If the name and address of the library is used for directional purposes, advertising should indicate that the views do not represent that of the library.

7. Can libraries deny a group access to meeting rooms?

Libraries may deny access only if an individual or group does not meet the eligibility guidelines stated in the library's policies. Meeting rooms are open to reservation by everyone who is eligible to use the facility according to the library's policy.

The reasons for denial must be reasonable in light of the policy, apply equally to all individuals or groups, and cannot be based on the organizers' views, background, beliefs, or the content of their speech. Meeting room policies should include a means of appealing a decision to the library director or the governing body of the library.

Libraries may not deny access because of disagreement with an individual or group or because they are considered offensive or controversial. Article VII of the *ALA Code of Ethics* states, "We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources."

8. Has a library ever been sued for denying access to the library's meeting rooms?

Libraries have been successfully sued by groups that have been denied access to library meeting rooms based on the group's beliefs, the content of their speech, or the fear that the group's meeting will cause controversy. Most notably, libraries have been successfully sued by religious groups that have been denied access to library meeting rooms. See *Concerned Women for America, Inc. v. Lafayette County*, 883 F.2d 32, 35 (5th Cir. 1989) and *Citizens for Community Values, Inc. v. Upper Arlington Library Board of Trustees*, Case No. C-2-08-223 (S.D. Ohio 8/14/08).

9. Should a library exclude politicians, elected officials, and partisan political activities?

An individual or group should not be denied access to the library's meeting room because they intend to engage in political speech, to meet with constituents, or to discuss partisan views. Partisan campaign events may be inconsistent with the library's mission and should be addressed in the library's policies. In addition, state and local laws governing the use of public funds and facilities may regulate the use of the library's facilities for partisan events. Libraries should consult with their legal counsel for guidance on these issues. See also "[Politics in American Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.](#)"

Policy

10. What should a meeting room policy cover?

A policy should address the following items:

- Statement of why the library provides meeting rooms to the public
- List of what the library provides as a meeting room to the public
- Eligibility requirements
- Appeals procedure

A policy may address, but is not limited to, the following:

- After-hours events
- Alcohol and drug consumption
- Consequences of not following policies
- Contract or written agreement
- Costs for cleaning
- Extra security and any related fees
- Food and beverage consumption
- Frequency of using a room (e.g., no more than once a week/month)
- Noise
- Prohibited items
- Purpose of use by the individual or group making the reservation
- Rental fees for room or use of equipment
- Restrictions on length of meetings
- Sales in the room

The meeting room policy should be applied equally to all individuals and groups and reflect the mission and plan of service of the library. Policies must adhere to local, state, and national laws and regulations.

The policy can regulate the time, place, or manner of use, as long as the regulations do not pertain to the message communicated during the meeting or to the beliefs, opinions, or affiliations of the sponsors. The meeting room organizer and those attending the meeting are required to comply with the library's behavior policy.

Best practice is to include a statement addressing the failure to comply with these policies, which may lead to immediate termination of the meeting, exclusion of individuals from library premises pursuant to the rules, and/or loss of future meeting room privileges.

The policy should provide a means of appealing a decision to deny access to the library's facilities to the library director or the governing authority.

Policies should be regularly reviewed by staff and be easily accessed on both the library's website and in the library itself.

11. What other policies apply to meeting room use?

All libraries should have a behavior policy approved by the relevant governing authority. Groups using library meeting rooms should be given a copy of the behavior policy when signing the meeting room contract or written agreement.

See "[Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities](#)"

12. What if the individual or group reserving the meeting room violates the contract or written agreement?

If the group or person violates the contract, policy, or terms of use, consequences may be imposed, including cancellation of reservation or loss of future use of the meeting rooms. These procedures should be outlined in the meeting room policy and in any other contract or terms of use given to the group or person when they reserve the room or space, including an appeals process. Compliance with the library's behavior policy should also be incorporated into the contract or written agreement.

13. What if the organizers or attendees violate library policy?

Library workers should take appropriate action as defined in the library's policies when a group or individual is violating those library's policies, such as the behavior and use policy. Behavior that harasses employees or users should not be tolerated. Library administrators have a responsibility to ensure that all library workers are familiar with and trained about all applicable policies concerning meeting rooms and user behavior. See "[Hateful Conduct in Libraries: Supporting Library Workers and Patrons.](#)"

Sales and Fees

14. Would engaging in sales or offering commercial information be allowed in a meeting room?

Meetings and organizations engaging in sales or offering commercial information may only be excluded under limited circumstances. Policies must be explicit when stating if sales or promotions of services and items are allowed.

15. May a public library charge fees for its public spaces?

Yes, but the fees must be applied equally. The rules and fees must be outlined in the library's policies. See "[Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*](#)."

Where can I find more information?

Questions about meeting rooms can be directed to the [ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom](#) by phone at (312) 280-4226 or by email at oif@ala.org.

Approved by the [Intellectual Freedom Committee](#) June 24, 2019.

"Meeting Rooms Q&A", American Library Association, July 15, 2019.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/meetingroomsqa> (Accessed November 14, 2019)

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