

9.2



City Council

Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Farmersville City Council
FROM: Karl Schoettler, City Planner – Collins and Schoettler
THROUGH: John Jansons, City Manager *[Signature]*
DATE: September 26, 2016
RE: Potential Zoning Ordinance Amendment to allow "Little Free Libraries"

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

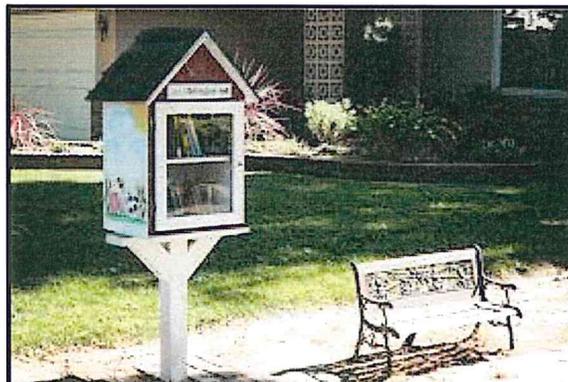
It is respectfully recommended that the City Council consider the staff report on the subject of Little Free Libraries and give direction to staff for future action.

BACKGROUND:

There is interest in allowing residents to establish "Little Free Libraries" at various locations in the community. This report explains possible actions to allow Little Free Libraries.

ANALYSIS: and / or DISCUSSION

Within the past few weeks staff has been asked whether "Little Free Libraries" are allowed in Farmersville. A Little Free Library is typically a "take a book, return a book" free book exchange. They come in many shapes and sizes, but the most common version is a small wooden box of books - often with the appearance of a large mailbox. Anyone may take a book or bring a book to share. The photo below shows an example of a little free library.



Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on whether such libraries should be permitted in Farmersville, and potential installation standards.

From a zoning perspective, Little Free Libraries constitute a use of land and are therefore subject to regulation. Most cities that have allowed Little Free Libraries typically amend their Zoning Ordinance to classify Little Free Libraries as a permitted accessory use in some or all zone districts. Most cities also establish some basic standards to ensure safety for the public. Common standards include:

- Little Free Libraries are considered as an accessory use, and are permitted provided that, all such libraries meet the following placement requirements:
- Little Free Libraries shall not be located within or overhang the public street right-of-way or any public easement;
- Little Free Libraries shall not obstruct vehicular, bicycle or pedestrian traffic, either physically, or by a person utilizing the Little Free Library;
- Little Free Libraries shall not obstruct access aisles or paths utilized by persons in wheelchairs or for ADA accessibility;
- Little Free Libraries may be placed as a permitted obstruction in a required front yard (area between the front wall of a building and the public street right-of-way);
- Enclosures shall be sized and arranged such that no person or child is able to enter;
- Little Free Libraries shall be anchored to the ground or otherwise securely attached to something having a permanent location on the ground.
- Signage associated with a little free library shall be limited to one unlighted sign no larger than two square feet, attached to the structure.

Direction for Staff

Based on the foregoing information staff is seeking direction from the City Council on the following issues:

- Should "Little Free Libraries" be allowed in Farmersville and to what extent should they be regulated?
- In what zones should Little Free Libraries be permitted?
- Should some basic zoning standards (such as those listed above) be established to guide the design and placement of Little Free Libraries?
- Should a permit be required for a little free library? Most cities that allow them classify little free libraries as an accessory use and as long as they meet standards (such as those cited above) no permit is required.

COORDINATION & REVIEW:

If Council gives direction for processing of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment such an amendment would undergo preparation by the City Planner and then public hearings before the Planning Commission and then the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Preparation of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment would have costs associated with time of the City Planner and City Attorney and publication costs associated with public hearing notices.

CONCLUSION:

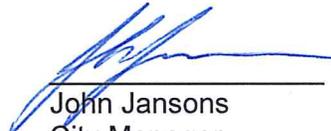
As noted above, staff is seeking input from the City Council on whether and how to allow the installation of Little Libraries in Farmersville.

Attachment(s): 1- Example Photos and Free Library Information

Respectfully submitted,

Approved By:

Karl Schoettler
City Planner
Collins and Schoettler

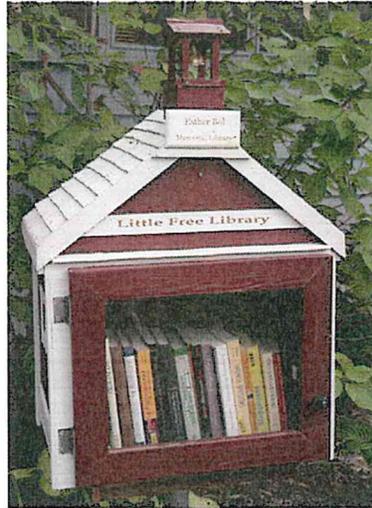


John Jansons
City Manager

Little Free Library

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization that supports the worldwide movement to offer free books housed in small containers to members of the local community. The organization is based in Hudson, Wisconsin, US. Little Free Libraries are also referred to as community book exchanges, neighborhood book exchanges, book trading posts, pop-up libraries, and micro-libraries, and have been likened to human bird feeders.



The first Little Free Library in Hudson, Wisconsin

History

The idea was popularized in Hudson, Wisconsin, in 2009 when Todd Bol mounted a wooden container designed to look like a school house on a post on his lawn as a tribute to his mother, who was a book lover and school teacher. Bol shared his idea with his partner, Rick Brooks, who spread the word, and the idea spread rapidly. Library owners can create their own library box, usually about the size of a doll house, or purchase one from the website. For a fee, libraries may be registered and assigned a number at the organization's website. Owners receive a sign that reads "Little Free Library". They often have the phrase, "Take a Book. Leave a Book." The Little Free Library Index lists locations with GPS coordinates and information.

The original goal was the creation of 2,150 Little Libraries, which would surpass the number of libraries founded by Andrew Carnegie. As of January 2014, there are over 15,000 Little Libraries worldwide. As of February 2013, all 50 U.S. states and 40 countries worldwide have been involved in the program. An estimated 1,650,000 books were donated and borrowed from 2010 to 2013.

Libraries have been donated to rural areas that have no libraries of their own or that have been affected by disasters. Libraries often incorporate materials from the community.

Libraries of all shapes and sizes exist, from smaller collections in brightly painted wooden houses to a library based on Doctor Who's TARDIS.

Regulation

In late 2012, the village of Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, denied permission to potential Little Free Library projects and required that an existing Little Free Library be removed because of a village ordinance that prohibited structures in front yards. Village trustees also worried about inappropriate material being placed in the boxes. However, in August 2013, the village approved a new ordinance that specifically allowed Little Free Library boxes to be put up on private property.

In June 2014, city officials in Leawood, Kansas shut down a Little Free Library under a city ordinance prohibiting detached structures. The family of the nine-year-old boy who built the structure created a Facebook page to support the amendment of Leawood's city code. Another resident of the city who erected a Little Free Library was threatened with a \$25 fine. In July, the city council unanimously approved a temporary moratorium to permit Little Free Libraries on private property.

In September 2014, the town of Spider Lake, Wisconsin effectively banned Little Free Libraries on private property by requiring a "conditional use permit" and a fee of \$375. In October 2014 the town sent the homeowner a notice of violation and ordered homeowners to remove the LFL or face legal sanctions.

On January 29, 2015, the Metropolitan Planning Commission in Shreveport, Louisiana shut down a Little Free Library. Zoning administrator Alan Clarke said that city ordinances only permitted libraries in commercial zones and that of the all Little Free Libraries in Shreveport, the one that was shut down had "bothered someone." The following month, the city council temporarily legalized book exchange boxes until the zoning ordinance could be amended to permanently allow them.

Students start Little Free library in Visalia

Stephanie Weldy, sweldy@visaliatimesdelta.com 4:54 p.m. PDT March 11, 2015



They've been popping up on street corners across America for years. On Tuesday, a Little Free Library popped up in front of Jostens in Visalia.

The concept of the libraries is simple. Open the door to the wooden, hinged box and take a book — any book — and feel free to leave one — or a few — for another person to enjoy.

The little library in front of Jostens is targeted for adults, with over 40 books ranging in genres — from the classics, including "Jane Eyre," to dystopian novels, fantasies, mysteries, romance and more. And no library card or money is required.

This library is perhaps a little unique from most others, as it was started by 10 Willow Glen Elementary students as a project for the Tulare County Step-Up youth program. And in the early afternoon on Tuesday, a handful of Jostens workers, Willow Glen staff,

and Tulare County Librarian Darla Wegener watched as four of the 10 involved students struggled with the chamber of commerce's giant, ribbon cutting scissors for a little, ribbon cutting event.

"I think it's fabulous they're contributing to literacy efforts in the county, in Visalia, and in the industrial area — while most industrial areas usually aren't best served by libraries," Wegener said. "That they're giving of themselves is fabulous."



(Photo: Steve R. Fujimoto)

The students said the library is a way to get more community members reading and educated.

"The purpose of the library is to help the community and people who can't afford books to read," 13-year-old Kayley Jones said.

Kimberly Holguin, 13, is the student behind the idea of bringing Little Free Libraries to the community.

Holguin said she was in class when she read an article that said Visalia is one of the least educated cities in the nation, and that made her realize that getting people to read could counter that.

"The objective is to make us more educated and to show people that reading isn't a chore," she said. "It will make you smarter."

The library at Jostens is the first to be installed by the students. Their goal is to place five libraries throughout the community in upcoming months, with the second one, geared toward children, to be placed in front of the Willow Glen Elementary School campus.

The students have built two libraries so far at the cost of roughly \$200, and they're working to raise more funds for the additional boxes.

The funds for the Josten's library came from donations from the Tulare County Library Foundation, and the books for the boxes were raised through a book drive at Willow Glen that netted over 1,000 books.

"They didn't have to do this, they wanted to do this," said Willow Glen Principal Tammy Milligan. "I'm extremely proud of everything they've done. I love this group of kids."

For Kayley Jones, the library in front of Jostens holds perhaps even more significance to her than to the other students who helped get it in place.

The box is dedicated in honor of her mother, Sherri Mittel, who died recently from a chronic illness.

Mittell worked at Jostens and loved reading a good mystery book over a cup of coffee, Jones said.

Jones' sister, Taylor Jones, 21, said she's proud of her sister and what she's contributed to.

"I think it's wonderful," she said. "It think it's special. It ties my mom's memory into the community."

This is the fourth year students from across the county are working to combat local issues through the countywide Step Up program.