

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

### B. Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries - Discussion

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#### **RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: RE-ENVISIONING PUBLIC LIBRARIES (The ASPEN REPORT)**

We distributed print copies of the full report at the June meeting, and it is at <http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/Dialogue-on-Public-Libraries/2014/report>. Reviewing the Executive Summary (pages viii – xii) and “15 Steps for Library Leaders” (page 50) will be helpful for the discussion. Keep in mind that the Report addresses public libraries but I’d like this discussion to focus on actions the Commission might take, either directly or in support and encouragement of local library staff and boards to take action.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, created the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries to help advance the work that public libraries are doing to address community challenges and to support the transformation of communities and their public libraries in the digital age.

The Dialogue concluded that the long-term health of libraries is essential to the long-term health of the communities they serve. The report explores the essential role of public libraries in a networked world and begins to re-envision the 21<sup>st</sup> century library in a hyper-connected environment and dramatically changing world. Enabling all libraries to fulfill their new roles will require community leaders, civic partners and librarians to share a common vision for what public libraries can be.

The report is intended to raise the profile of public libraries to the center of the knowledge society, highlight the opportunities and possibilities, increase support for an expanded library role in a networked world and spark a national conversation and action to re-envision the 21<sup>st</sup> century library as a center of learning, innovation and creativity. It is also intended to provide a resource for engaging government leaders, trustees and community partners in dialogue to advance concrete actions for transforming public libraries.

We have had an initial conversation about the report with our library development staff and with our Library Leadership Advisory Committee. At the January Summit, public library directors were introduced to the Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library, and began working through a process to address one of “15 Action Steps for Library Leaders.”