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To: *New Hanover County Board of Commissioners*

From: *New Hanover County Library Advisory Board, Friends of the New Hanover County Library*

Date: *Adopted 01/18/2018*

RE: *Project Grace*

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Whereas the New Hanover County Library Advisory Board and Friends of the New Hanover County Library are aware of public interest in the proposed development known as "Project Grace" and desire to be transparent with the community while advising the New Hanover County Commissioners on issues related to our library system, we wish to make known our general approval of the project while noting areas we would like to see addressed in the RFP process.

The proposed capital investment which would accompany a plan resembling the conception rendering known as "Scenario 4" of Project Grace provides many opportunities for the New Hanover County Public Library to fulfill its goal of "Creating Library Experiences That Matter":

First, relocating the Cape Fear Museum adjacent to the library and its local history collection will create a unique destination for residents and tourists alike to learn about our heritage while creating economies of scale in shared resources between the library and museum such as meeting spaces.

Additionally, the proposed level of investment creates an opportunity to have a conversation about the future of library services in our community; staking out resources for the needs which are accompanying local growth as well as the changing role and resources of a modern library.

Also, it is important to recognize that the facilities which currently house the library and museum are aging. Without moving forward on Project Grace, investments would be needed at both sites to maintain their suitability for public use. Project Grace offers the opportunity to build a state-of-the-art library and museum without maintenance backlogs.

Recognizing that the County Commissioners are interested in flexible RFP guidelines to allow for innovation in proposals, the undersigned recommend the following specific criteria by which to judge the path forward:

- A transparent process, building trust with residents through ensuring the phases of Project Grace remain in the public eye and providing time for community input prior to finalizing decisions
- Adequate resources to maintain uninterrupted core library services, including public computers, in a temporary space downtown throughout construction, as well as the resources to build facilities that will meaningfully serve residents now and in the future
- Free parking for patrons and educational groups while using library services, along with planning for the increasingly multimodal transportation preferences of our residents

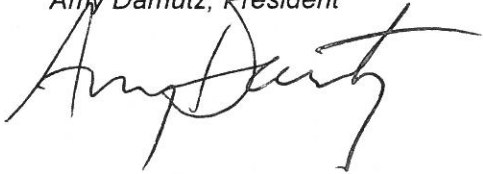
- Preservation of ground-level greenspace and park investments in our increasingly developed downtown
- An exterior design that maintains the economic and intrinsic value of Wilmington's historic downtown

Our boards appreciate the partnership and support of the County Commissioners in maintaining a high-quality, fiscally responsible library system dedicated to meeting the needs of New Hanover County residents. As the community continues the conversation surrounding this proposed development, we will continue to work together to ensure an excellent library experience for New Hanover County residents regardless of the final decision regarding Project Grace.

Sincerely,

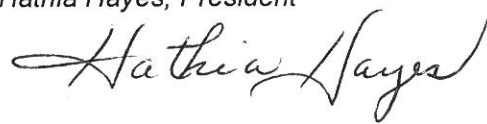
New Hanover County Library Board

*Amy Damutz, President*

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Friends of the New Hanover County Library

*Hathia Hayes, President*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hathia Hayes". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a large initial "H" and "H".