



Friends of the Regina Public Library

2042 Garnet Street, Regina, SK. S4T 2Z6

www.friendsofrpl.ca

March 22, 2012

Mayor Fiacco and Council
City of Regina
Regina, SK, S4P 3C8

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: EX12-9 Changes to the Regina Administration Bylaw No. 2003-69, Schedule D "Purchasing Policy" Regina City Council Meeting – March 26, 2012

We appreciate the opportunity we had to discuss this proposed policy at Executive Committee on March 21. Further review of the policy has identified some points we wish to raise.

We would like to draw attention to Appendix A, Part 2 b & c.

b. Stakeholders have to be appropriately engaged to examine potential impacts of the P3 delivery model on service objectives and quality, affordability, public access, health and safety, user needs, security, privacy and public input.

c. The community has been appropriately informed about the project and the obligations of the city and the private sector partner through a well-defined communication process.

It will be very important to have effective practices for engaging the public and the ways in which the public should be engaged; that is, the steps in the engagement process, should be well- elaborated with input from the public.

While we recognize that the Central Library is not a City of Regina project, we would like to point out that we have found, for example, the current process for potentially developing a P3 project for the refurbishment of Central Library has not involved adequate consultation. A proposal has been developed and negotiations are taking place on the purchase of the Masonic Temple and land with the intent of removing that building and the Central Branch building for a large P3 operation. Yet, except for the brief proposal seen at City Council in June 2011, the public has not seen any plan or

been involved in any consultations since August of 2009. The City was involved with this project in that it lent its support to the project in principle so the P3 Canada Fund application could proceed.

On March 13, the Friends of the Regina Public Library held a public meeting about the Library Board's plans for the Central Library. (Library Board members were invited to that meeting, but did not attend. We will be giving a presentation to their next Board meeting on March 27, 2012.) A statement related to the March 13 meeting is attached. The participants were not supportive of a public private partnership for library services, due to the higher cost and the move of services and property into the private sector. Lack of further public information makes additional comments on this proposal difficult.

We understand that there are many types of P3s. In general for the various types of P3s, research has shown many examples of P3s that have not worked effectively. In determining whether to be involved in P3s, Council and the public need to be aware of these concerns.

At the Executive Committee meeting Council members said that the City of Regina procurement policy does not include private ownership of property, but it does include financing by the private sector – so presumably capital financing without ownership?.

It is important that the City is involved in services and projects that are really needed, and consider other funding arrangements and options – such as debentures. It would be valuable for us to look at federal granting policies that seem to only provide funding for public private partnership projects, rather than direct grants to municipal or other governing bodies.

We would be pleased to work with City Council, and of course the Library Board, in future about the ways to make the consultation process with stakeholders the most effective.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock
Chair
Friends of the Regina Public Library

**APPENDIX – Presentation to City of Regina Executive Committee
Re Item EX12-9, March 21, 2012**

P3s: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

My name is Florence Stratton. I'm speaking on behalf of the Friends of the Regina Public Library.

I am here today to express concerns about the P3 funding model. My brief presentation will refer specifically to the use of P3s to fund libraries. But I believe the points I make have a much wider application.

On March 13, the Friends of the Regina Public Library held a public meeting about the Library Board's plans for the Central Library. The meeting was held in the Library Film Theatre, which was filled almost to capacity.

Much of the meeting focused on the decision taken by the Library Board, without public consultation, to submit an application to the P3 Canada Fund in order to help finance the construction of a large multi-use facility where Central Library now stands – a facility which, if it is built, will house, among other things, a library.

Meeting participants spoke out against the P3 funding model. It is not in the interest of Regina citizens was the consensus of the meeting. Here are two of the reasons that were given:

- First, P3s cost more. This is because private sector borrowing has higher interest rates than public sector rates.
- Second, P3s transfer public property and services into private hands. Those at the meeting were adamant that this must not happen to “our library.”

These are the views of a number of Regina citizens and I ask you to keep them in mind when you consider changing the city's procurement policy.

Thank you for listening to my presentation.

