



Friends of the Regina Public Library

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September 1, 2021

Executive Committee
Queen Elizabeth II Court
2476 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK Canada
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Re: EX22-82 Regina Public Library Proposed Development

The following will be the key points of a presentation to Executive Committee on September 7, 2022, regarding EX22-82 Regina Public Library Proposed Development presentation.

These points were prepared in advance of hearing the RPL presentation. The PDF submitted by the Board in advance of the meeting is short on details, I hope that more detail will come out in their presentation, and may wish to comment on that on September 7th.

PRESENTATION NOTES

I am Joanne Havelock, chair of the Friends of the Regina Public Library. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this meeting.

The RPL document contains a number of aspirational positive messages about the value of libraries, with which I would agree. However, the report lacks detail about the actual proposal. And photos stress newly built libraries, without, for example, the approach of renovation and addition used by the renowned Winnipeg Centennial Library and other libraries around the world.

It is very concerning that the next steps listed by the RPL are so brief.

- Bring the project to the community at a public board meeting and call for a Board vote
- Retain a design consultant
- Continue with fundraising

FRPL and many City Councillors have stressed the importance of the RPL providing options for any improvements to the public before any decisions are made. The RPL has stated that it will do so.

Where is the step where the RPL will put any proposals forward to the public for discussion at a public meeting and other options for input? Even though the Board uses the Teams program, they do not allow the public to see RPL Board meeting presentations online. The public can only attend Board meetings by teleconference. Unlike City Council, the Board does not share its meeting reports in advance, only mostly referring to them obliquely in their discussions.

The results of the random polling survey conducted in the spring of 2021 have not been released, in spite of inquiries for this information.

With regard to the Central Library renovation process - will there be a design competition? What are the parameters? Will options be explored? They should be.

Where are the facts and figures that contribute to the currently stated renovation cost of \$50 million? This figure has already been released to the media without a backup report. The last publicly released figures cited a total cost of \$28.5 million, spent by 2030 and beyond.

Central Library is nationally recognized as an iconic example of a modernist building, well built on a strong foundation.

The current building is legally designated by a City of Regina bylaw as being in the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District. An option to retain and expand it must be explored. This must be written into the consultant terms of reference.

Over the years, many suggestions have come forward from the public about ways to handle any renovations needed to Central Library. We hope that these ideas would receive full and serious consideration by the RPL and the merits of these proposals would be fully discussed in any review of options.

- Maintaining the current building.
- Adding a third storey to the current building, as engineering reports have said is possible.
- Constructing a tower on the west section of the library property, as was envisioned by the library's original architects.
- Creating a structure that goes "up and over" the current library building, as was elegantly done with the Centennial Library in Winnipeg.

- Putting resources into local branches in our many neighbourhoods rather than building a large edifice downtown.

There is embodied energy in this building that will be lost if the building is demolished. Maintaining the building, and not letting it decline, would contribute positively to Regina's goal of being a sustainable city.

Conclusion

Libraries are about preserving and sharing knowledge. This knowledge is contained in books, in digital formats, in art, in music and in buildings and landscapes. Thus, preserving the public heritage embodied in the Central Library building is within the role of the Regina Public Library.

Not every library building will necessarily have significant historical and cultural value, but the Central Library building does.

Let's work together to identify and share the options available, before decisions are made.

Joanne Havelock
Chair, Friends of the Regina Public Library