

Donna Conkling

From: Mayor
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 4:47 PM
To: Donna Conkling
Cc: Steve Pappalardo; Robert Cole; David Lee (dlee.trustee@gmail.com); Bill Stern; dpekarek@verizon.net; Marc Samwick (marc.samwick@verizon.net); Carl Finger; Matt Callaghan
Subject: Fw: Library Renovation

FYI. JM

From: Mayor
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 4:46 PM
To: Robert Berg
Subject: Re: Library Renovation

Dear Mr. Berg -- Thank you for your email.

Very truly yours, Jon Mark

From: Robert Berg <rberg@denleacarton.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 4:21 PM
To: Mayor
Subject: Library Renovation

Dear Mayor Mark and Village Trustees,

I have attended the Library presentation regarding its planned renovation, I have read the correspondence provided to you and the Trustees, and I have followed the issue in the local press. I share below my thoughts. While the Village Library is unquestionably an important community institution, I do not think that the Library Board and Administration have justified, to date, the enormous cost of the proposed renovation. The project has morphed from the \$12 million range to over \$19 million. I agree fully that the Library needs to be updated and renovated. But I am greatly concerned with the cost of the proposed project and the resulting impact on property taxes. This is particularly so because apparently the Library Board has not provided any alternatives to its dream project – for instance, the cost of constructing a brand new library rather than massively renovating the existing one, or undertaking a less ambitious (and less costly) renovation project. It seems to me that instead, the Library Board and Administration have strategically determined to present a “take it or leave it” proposal. I would feel much more comfortable if several options are presented – similar to what the School District is doing regarding the Greenacres School.

In a vacuum, perhaps the project cost does not appear onerous (though, even in a vacuum, it seems pretty onerous to me). But the School District is about to engage in a major reconstruction program (already approved by taxpayers), and is contemplating a tremendous new capital project at the Greenacres School. The Village, too, has substantial capital needs to maintain our crumbling infrastructure. All of this has to be paid for by the same taxpayers, regardless of whether the project is a Village, Library, or School District project. Consequently, I believe the Village should take a cautious approach regarding the library project.

I recommend that once the Library Board has finalized its proposed project – with solid cost estimates – a public referendum should be held to determine whether the public wants to undertake a project of this magnitude (or any

alternatives proposed). Moreover, before committing to bonding a significant chunk of the cost of the project, the Village should require the Library Board first to obtain private donations of at least \$9-\$10 million. Given the difficulties faced by the Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corp in raising funds for its new headquarters, the Village should not be left holding the bag if sufficient donations to fund the Library reconstruction do not materialize. Finally, the Village needs to cap its commitment to the project at a fixed number. Given how uncertain construction cost estimates are, the Village must not be burdened with covering any cost overruns.

I truly wish the Library Board and Administration well in raising funds privately, and I hope they can secure major contributions at an early stage. But unfortunately, we've seen how early optimism for new community assets has been really just wishful thinking—e.g., the indoor pool/community center. Before taxpayers are on the hook for the library project, we need community support (as demonstrated by a positive outcome in a Village referendum), substantial private donations in the bank, and a cap on the Village's funding contribution. Thank you, as always, for your dedicated service to our community. Best regards, Bob.

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