

VPL BOARD Community Relations Committee Regular Meeting Minutes Monday, March 13, 2023

Minutes of the VPL Board Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee Regular Meeting held on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. via video call.

Present: Emily Lapper
Kevin Lowe
Raji Mangat
Harlan Pruden
Karen Spears – Chair
Abeer Yusuf

Management

Present: Christina de Castell – Chief Librarian & CEO
Kay Cahill – Director, Information Technology & Collections
Jennifer Lee – Acting Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
Dawn Ibey – Director, Central Library & Public Service
Julia Morrison – Director, Corporate Services & CFO
Carol Nelson – Director, Planning & Communications

Guest: Johnathan Dyer – Acting President, CUPE 391

Recording

Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino – Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Committee Chair Spears acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She shared that she is grateful to be on this land and for the stewardship that the Nations have shown time since time immemorial. In particular, she noted that she was grateful last week during International Women's Day for the role local First Nations women play in taking care of our land. She shared that at the Westcoast LEAF Equality breakfast held on March 8, it was an honour to hear from Musqueam Elder Doris Fox, who is on the LEAF advisory committee and does traditional healing and arts and crafts.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the Committee approve the regular meeting agenda as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Minutes

The Chief Librarian & CEO presented the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting November 14, 2022 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 14, 2022 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING

3. Provincial Library Grant Report

Carol Nelson, Director of Planning & Communication, noted that staff request that the Board approve the report for submission and that this is a new process this year. She shared the annual submission for the Provincial Libraries Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs which details the services delivered by VPL in 2022 that are partially supported by provincial funding and demonstrates how we support provincial programs and priorities.

Vice Chair Mangat asked if the Province ever engages the VPL about the report. Director Nelson responded that we know they read the report and there are typically no questions, but we regularly get positive feedback.

Trustee Yusuf asked if we have relationships with the grant officer and whether we can share honest, challenging situations with them. Director Nelson noted that the Chief Librarian & CEO and the Manager of Policy & Planning have relationships with the director in the Ministry who oversees this report. She added that we have been explicit in sharing our challenges in this report, and highlighted the content on financial pressures.

Board Chair Lowe reflected that there was a lot of good information and new facts for him in this report, especially on the removal of pay phones by TELUS and that we needed to install phones to replace them to meet community needs. These are tangible things that trustees could use when talking with Council liaisons. He asked that these highlights be made readily available for trustees. Director Ibey shared that ISV staff brought this need for phones forward and she asked them to collect data. Staff ran a public survey documenting how many people asked for phones, and the patrons voluntarily shared why they needed to use phones, e.g. problems with their COVID passport, problems with their shelters. It showed that there is a critical need for these phones, and it was a low investment for the Library. Board Chair Lowe thanked and congratulated staff for doing this critical work.

Committee Chair Spears noted that the report stated that the social worker position is unfunded and asked if we need to revise this since Council has approved funding for this position. Director Nelson noted that the funding had not passed at the time the report was produced.

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board approve the report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Branch Redevelopment Updates: West End Community Hub and WPG Move

Jennifer Lee, Acting Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services, provided a status update on the West End Community Hub Renewal noting that public engagement is starting in early May sharing high level concepts. The master plan is for renewal and growth of Joe Fortes Library, West End Community Centre and King George Secondary School. The high level concept design for the library has: co-location with the community centre, significant street level presence on Denman Street, a two-level floorplan at 14K sq.ft., an early learning space, inspiration lab and access to adjacent greenspace as well as adjacency to an Indigenous cultural space. The report is planned to return to Council in the Fall of 2023 and the Board will also receive an update. The development timeline is uncertain. Staff will provide CRPD with further updates in May or June.

Board Chair Lowe noted that in the Facilities Master Plan, the recommended footprint for Joe Fortes is 20K sq.ft. and asked about implications of not meeting the goal. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell clarified that staff has learned to be generous on the estimates of community needs, and noted that 20K sq.ft. is for a standalone branch, and when a branch is co-located with other facilities that we can reduce the size needed due to shared amenities. Board Chair Lowe followed up asking if the Board will need to advocate for funding. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that the City is committed to the redevelopment, and the issues will be the timeline and the funding. The funds that were in the capital plan for the West End have primarily been allocated to the aquatic centre, which was urgent. As we get a better understanding, we will update the Board on what will be needed for the next four year plan.

5. West Point Grey Move

Acting Director Lee shared that construction is underway on the new West Point Grey Branch (WPG) located at 4566 West 10th Avenue and is anticipated to be completed in early June 2023. VPL is working with the City's Real Estate and Facilities Management staff and Khora Architecture on this project. June 10 will be last day that patrons can use the old site and the branch will be closed to the public for approximately three weeks for the move of the collection and shelving to the new location. WPG staff will be redeployed to other branches during this period.

Vice Chair Mangat noted that she is liaison to Premier David Eby whose constituency is West Point Grey. She asked if VPL has a plan for communicating this move, especially for the three-week closure. Acting Director Lee answered that work is underway on the communication plan. Director Nelson added that we will give patrons adequate notice, and that our desire is to minimize service disruptions and for patrons to feel excited about the new location. We are looking for creative ways to bridge the three-week closure.

Board Chair Lowe asked how big the new location is relative to the current one and whether it is comparable in the layout. Director Nelson answered that the new location is more accessible and Director Morrison noted that the new location is about 300 sq.ft. bigger with a new programming room, that it is all on one level with parking at the back and has a roof that does not leak.

Trustee Lapper asked why the branch is moving. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell answered that the lease for the current location had ended and due to ongoing maintenance issues and potential for redevelopment of the old site, VPL had asked REFM to consider alternate locations. She also noted the potential impacts of the UBC sky train extension and Jericho Lands, and community interest in the former Safeway site.

GOVERNANCE

6. CRPD Terms of Reference

The Chief Librarian & CEO noted that the Terms of Reference are presented annually for review to remind Trustees of the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and as an opportunity to consider revisions or seek clarifications. The Terms of Reference were last reviewed and amended by the Committee in May 2022, clarifying item 6.

Moved by Emily Lapper

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Karen Spears, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary