

VPL BOARD Community Relations Committee Regular Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 13, 2022

Minutes of the VPL Board Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, June 13, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video call.

Present: Kurt Heinrich – Chair
Kevin Lowe
Abeer Yusuf

Absent: Harlan Pruden
Karen Spears

Management

Present: Christina de Castell – Chief Librarian & CEO
Maryn Ashdown – Incoming Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
Kay Cahill – Director, Information Technology & Collections
Julie Iannacone – Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
Dawn Ibey – Director, Central Library & Public Services
Carol Nelson – Director, Planning & Communications

Guests: Patricia Chong – Manager, Policy & Planning
Scott Fraser – Manager, Marketing & Communications
Jenny Marsh – Executive Director, VPL Foundation
Liza Saayman – President, CUPE 391

Recording Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino – Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Committee Chair Heinrich acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Abeer Yusuf

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 held May 11, 2022 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Kevin Lowe

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held May 11, 2022 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

3. Civic Election Candidate Orientation

Carol Nelson, Director of Planning & Communications provided a report that outlined a proposed approach and provided key dates for the 2022 civic election process. Staff is proposing to hold an open house on Sept 22 or 23 from 8-9am, inviting all declared candidates (i.e. those running for any of: Mayor, Council, Park Board, or School Board) to hear how VPL is contributing to Vancouver and asked trustees if there are candidates that they want to connect with individually.

Board Chair Lowe appreciated the overall approach and noted that it could be beneficial to connect with the parties directly, with the potential of library issues being added to their platform. For the event itself, he asked what would motivate candidates to attend and whether this should be a public event. Director Nelson explained that civic parties tend to have unofficial platforms and staff will provide a list of VPL priorities and align them with known platforms as they are available. Manager Scott Fraser echoed that many parties are developing positions. Director Nelson noted candidates are motivated to be visible, and this is an opportunity for them to promote their messaging. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that the past conversations indicated that councillors are generally pleased to learn about the positive messages about the library, and these are something they can then share.

Committee Chair Heinrich asked if the Vancouver Park Board holds an event of this nature. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that their Board is elected officials.

Committee Chair Heinrich noted that a risk of reaching out to candidates is a perception of favouring certain candidates, and preferred working through parties. He suggested using general party contacts to share our key messages on various issues, that candidates could then select from. Board Chair Lowe agreed with this approach and noted that the candidate event in September could then reinforce the information we have provided. He added that it might be beneficial to invite allies such as the VPL Foundation and Friends of VPL Board members to the September event.

Trustee Yusuf commented on potential risks of the library becoming an election issue in a negative way, and noted that she is in favour of a private event.

Committee Chair Heinrich summarized the discussion and encouraged staff to be innovative regarding the September event, think about broad engagement early on and share positive messages.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING

4. Draft Interim Naming Policy

Carol Nelson, Director of Planning & Communications, noted that the Committee discussed principles for a naming policy in July 2021, and summarized the discussion of that meeting, and the issues arising related to naming policies in organizations. She noted that the City of Vancouver is developing a comprehensive commemoration and naming policy, and is working with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on a process. VPL will plan to follow the approach that arises from work for Indigenous language names. Staff is recommending an interim policy in order to provide time for discussions related to naming process between the City of Vancouver and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to reach a conclusion. Once the Board approves the interim policy, staff are suggesting a discussion on guidelines for the proportion of spaces that VPL will allot for philanthropic naming.

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell shared feedback received through consultation related to the West End Community Hub with Indigenous communities and the local Nations, and noted that they have identified interest in naming for prominent spaces, and opportunities that naming provide to learn about language and culture. The ideas shared in the consultation are consistent with the Board's discussion last year.

Trustee Yusuf identified the importance of clearly identifying that this is an interim policy, and sought clarification around the wording "useful life" under in the Philanthropic Naming section. Chief Librarian & CEO and Jenny Marsh, Executive Director of VPL Foundation provided some examples.

Board Chair Lowe thanked staff for their work in drafting the interim policy. He asked how a naming committee would fit within our governance structure, and whether we had formed similar committees in the past. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell confirmed that the Board has the ability to create committees in the Board Procedure Policy, and noted she is not aware of previous similar committees. She suggested that the proposed naming committee would be

formed under CRPD, with a role to review and provide recommendations to CRPD, and that decisions would then go to the Board. Board Chair Lowe suggested that the CRPD Committee create the sub-committee, appoint its members, and approve the terms of reference and that this could happen through a motion. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell suggested ways to incorporate this into the process.

Trustee Yusuf suggested that the section “Removal and re-naming” be moved above the public engagement item to convey its importance.

Committee Chair Heinrich congratulated staff for a terrific job on a complicated policy, and on incorporating diverse comments provided by the Committee last year. He asked about process for naming among local Nations. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that she understands that the process would likely be to send a request to the local Nations as a group, and that they will decide between them.

Committee Chair Heinrich suggested edits to the “Goals of Naming” bullet on equity, diversion, and inclusion, and following discussion among trustees, the Committee decided to keep the item as provided. He also suggested that the line “To thank and recognize donors” add “and to support VPL fundraising activities”. He noted that he appreciated that naming was not in perpetuity and suggesting increasing the prominence of this point by adding another reference.

The Committee discussed whether to refer the policy to the Board for further discussion, with Committee edits incorporated by staff, or whether to discuss it again at Committee in September. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that the report could be referred to the Board with the discussion questions as provided to the Committee, encouraging a fulsome discussion. She noted that committee attendance is small and may not provide an opportunity for a robust discussion at the next meeting. She also noted the value of moving forward as there may be further suggestions from the Board that would need to be considered. Jenny Marsh added that the VPL Foundation is ready to be actively fundraising for Central Library and is waiting for an approved policy, so the VPL Foundation has a degree of urgency.

Committee Chair Heinrich confirmed that the Board and Committee will focus on the policy, and that discussion of percentage allocation of philanthropic naming would wait until the policy is approved.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the following motion was raised:

Moved by Abeer Yusuf

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board receive the interim Naming Policy for discussion and information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Kurt Heinrich, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary

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