

## PRESS RELEASE

### Library Building Project Status and Next Steps

Many in the community have asked what the next steps for the library project are. At the March 10, 2014 City Council meeting, a motion “to *look for further information on both sites, that the council have greater access to information regarding the proposed costs, that both sites be evaluated by not only the City Council, the Library Board, members of staff, but that the community be invited to those also so that they are getting a first-hand look at exactly what each site has to offer or does not*” was made, seconded and carried.

The focus of City staff, Library Board members, and the City Council is to ensure that dialogue continues over the next several weeks. Most recently, members of the City Council and the Mayor personally met with residents near the existing library, as well as those that provided comments during the public hearing, to better understand their concerns and suggestions. This week, Library Director Kim Hennings and City Administrator Mike Darrow updated members of Rotary on the library project and provided information related to the next steps in the process. Additionally, the issues of the library building project and possible shared costs were discussed at the last Government Entities Network (GEN) meeting.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be looking at other options at each of the proposed sites. These options may include removal of the entire Commons building (if approved by the School District) and the construction of a new multi-purpose building on that site. We will be working with neighbors, the School District of New Richmond, and the community to ensure the approved motion from the meeting earlier this month is addressed. We will also be looking at financial information for both sites since this information wasn't received and vetted in a timely manner during the presentation earlier this month. Lastly, we will be keeping the community updated on our progress during the month of April. Our hope is to have a joint meeting the first part of May to recap alternatives, review updated financial information, and inform the community in a timely manner.

The library building project and understanding the needs of our community is a high priority. It shouldn't be forgotten that a lot of support from the City Council, Library Board, Friends of the Library, and staff have brought us to this exciting time. Whether it was Council approval on ensuring that a portion of impact fees be directed to supporting the library beginning in 2003, to a long-term commitment from members of the Library Board in highlighting the need for a new library, a collaborative-spirit from both sides has allowed this issue to be front and center. It has also given us an opportunity to set aside roughly \$1,000,000 to be utilized for the library's new building.

We are committed to ensuring the community has an opportunity to discuss this issue and bring suggestions to the forefront. The success of our library, and the potential for a new library building, requires all of us to work together.

Mayor Fred Horne

Library Board President Jeff Peplau

City Administrator Mike Darrow

Library Director Kim Hennings