

**Region of Queens Municipality Special Council
Tuesday, July 5, 2022, 5:30 p.m. Council Chambers**

Minutes

Present: Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair
Deputy Mayor Kevin Muise
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Vicki Amirault
Councillor Maddie Charlton
Councillor Ralph Gidney
Councillor Carl Hawkes
Chris McNeill, CAO
Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk

Absent: Councillor Jack Fancy

1.0 Call to Order

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes that the Agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

2.0 Public Question /Comment Session

There were no public questions or comments to come before this meeting.

3.0 Library Site Selection

Mayor Norman stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the site of a new library.

Councillor Brown stated that Council had voted on a potential site and the vote resulted in a tie, and that site selection was to be brought back as a discussion item. He also noted that an Advisory Committee was struck and they recommended the best site that met all criteria on land owned by the municipality. The committee revisited the site selection on the

recommendation of Council, and agreed again that the proposed site was the best site. The Committee consists of teachers, homeschoolers, and people with education in library sciences, and a librarian. They have extensive experience and were asked to make a recommendation to Council, which they have.

Deputy Mayor Muise stated that he was glad there was a library committee and acknowledged their work. He spoke to residents who did not think the site was a good choice. He forwarded an email from Peter Ripple to Council about the potential to purchase the current library site. He indicated that others have also expressed interested to have a library on the waterfront.

Councillor Charlton stated that the last time there was a discussion about the library site that the motion wasn't tied, and it was defeated 5 to 3. The tied motion was to refer the site selection back to the steering committee to put the library on the other side of town. She spoke to her constituents, many of whom are teachers, principals, daycare operators and staff, who expressed concerns about the proposed location. She does not wish to see a daycare, which is going to expand, not have easily access the library.

She further stated she did not have a specific place where she thinks the library should be located, but it should be centralized to schools.

Councillor Brown apologized for his mistake in stating that the previous motion on this matter resulted in a tie. As to Deputy Mayor Muise's point, he noted the current library building has significant issues, including water and electrical issues, and that a rebuild on that location is not preferred, but if it is Council's will, it would need further exploration. As far as a downtown location, he stated that he spoke with library staff who have indicated that they've tried to engage with schools, but have had little to no success.

He further stated that a lot of this conversation has centered on children having access to the library, but there is a large population of seniors who probably use the library more, who would greatly benefit by having the library near Queens Place Emera Centre. The other locations would raise the budget of the project or the new library may not be as good. Council would need to agree to increase the budget or not have a very good library.

Councillor Gidney stated at the last Council meeting there was a discussion about RQM being understaffed and questioned why Council is considering a new library when there are many other things going on. He suggested that perhaps the staff should be focused on current projects instead of a new project.

Councillor Amirault enquired if other locations were chosen on this side of the river.

Councillor Brown stated that all were discussed and rejected for various reasons; sites being near industrial spaces, no outdoor space, the Region did not own the land, requirements for a 2-storey building, etc. He further stated that the former legion site with the new Land Use Bylaw would need a 100 foot setback and was not sure about the elevation. This area could add \$1 Million to the budget in foundation costs, with the total current budget being \$3 Million.

Mayor Norman stated that when the Visitor Information Centre was built, the budget was about \$600,000, with money from ACOA, with the majority of that budget being used for the underground to compensate for water pressure and flood potential.

Council Charlton stated as per her initial statement, that Council was being bullied. The chosen site was defeated, and Council does not have the costing. She further stated there is a heavy emphasis placed on the library going near Queens Place Emera Centre along with a long-term care centre. The centre has transit options and the daycare does not. She cited poverty rates, development, and the need for more youth in libraries. It was great to see so many people come out over the last two weekends and the library could be a chance to help bring people out again. In representing a district with schools, daycares, and her constituents, she does not support this location. She enquired why Council wasn't talking about new site selection.

Mayor Norman agreed with Councillor Charlton in that there should be discussion about a new site and read a letter from Jessica Joudrey who is an avid library user and had concerns about Council defeating the proposed site. The committee has discussed sites at length and the proposed location is the best option. This library is for Queens County, not Liverpool's library. Council chose to have a committee and this site is the best option.

Councillor Gidney stated that he appreciated the comments in the letter. The Committee was formed to make recommendations and Council did not agree with the recommendation and this matter should go back to Committee for a new site selection.

Deputy Mayor Muise stated he received calls, and some residents were unhappy. Some indicated that the new library should be near Family & Children Services as there was always a plan to put a building there. Others indicated having it on the old legion property. Some former librarians indicated that a 2-stored building would work better so that the teen rooms could be upstairs so not to disturb downstairs users. People who walk to the library now will not use a library at the proposed site.

Councillor Charlton agreed with Councillor Gidney.

Councillor Brown stated that if this goes back to the committee, there would need to be changes to the Terms of Reference. The Committee would need to pick the best site or to pick the best site that Council likes.

Mayor Norman stated that if it is the will of Council to send it back to the Committee, the Committee could resign, Council could send the letter as suggested with the current site, or the Committee could look for a second best site. She further commented that one Councillor feels that a library should not be built at this time, and another Councillor will not attend meetings unless there is discussion about a combined library and pool facility.

Council Charlton stated she felt the Mayor's comments on the Committee resigning are unfair and that she has sat on a number of committees where recommendations have been denied and did not appreciate the comments.

Mayor Norman stated that many similar comments have been made in this chamber and they have been accepted.

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Deputy Mayor Muise to send the discussion back to the Committee.

Mr. McNeill stated that if the site selection is sent back to Committee, they may return with the same site selection unless they are given clear site selection criteria from Council. Councillor Charlton enquired why would they return with the same site location. Councillor Brown responded that in order for a change in location there would need be a change in the Terms of Reference.

Mr. McNeill further stated the Committee may suggest to put the library in Brooklyn or Milton, so if that is not acceptable, Council needs to advise them.

Deputy Mayor Muise stated that he has a problem with making a motion to keep the library on this side of the bridge, but the committee may know of another place that would work.

Councillor Charlton requested the CAOs input into what motion would be appropriate at this time.

Mr. McNeill stated that the Committee was tasked to find the best location and came up with for a site that meets criteria after an exhaustive search by staff. The only suitable location was put forth by the Committee. He further stated that regardless of the location, there will always be people who will have less access, and that it was shocking that the Committee was able to come to a unanimous decision.

Councillor Gidney called for a Point of Order stating that the CAO was asked how a motion could be made and that Council is aware of the history of the project. Mayor Norman replied saying it was not a Point of Order, the CAO was explaining why it was difficult to choose a location and suggested Council meet to select a location.

It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Deputy Mayor Muise:

THAT the motion be referred back to the Steering Committee to recommend a second best choice option for the library site.


MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

4.0 Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.



Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair



Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk



Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved: 