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Working Session on the Library Lot Proposal


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Dear Neighbors

This is all about the Library Lot, the proposal for a publicly owned conference center, a private hotel/condominium/office building, and the working session on whether the City Council should approve a letter of intent. If this doesn't interest you, please delete. Life is too short to fill your mailbox with boring stuff.

The Library Lot Proposal

A working session will be held tomorrow, Monday, March 14th at 7:00 PM

The City Council will hold a working session on the Library Lot tomorrow, Monday, March 14th at 7:00 pm at the Washtenaw County Board Room, 220 N. Main Street.

During this working session, the City Council will hear from the Roxbury Group about its recommendation that the City issue a Letter of Intent to Valiant, LLC to build a private hotel and public conference center above the underground parking structure now being constructed on the library lot.

This is the original RFP that resulted in the Valiant proposal:

http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/Documents/RFP_743_2009.pdf

Below is a link to the Roxbury Report:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/319%20S%205th%20Ave%20Lot%20-%20RFP/Documents/Library%20Lot%20Report%20-%20Final%2023NOV10.pdf>



Morning Coffee?

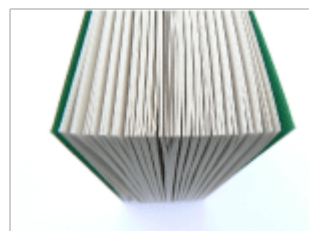
For the last three years, I've resisted requests to host 'office hours'. I'm not a professor. I don't have an office. And I've been able to meet with nearly anyone, anytime it's been convenient for us both.

But recently the Council caucuses have been hard to get to, and I've not heard from as many people about issues as I'd like to. So, here's a not-very-secret.

I'll be having breakfast every Monday morning at The Northside Grill between 7:30 am and 9:00 am. For many people, that's before you go to work. For others, it might fit into your before school/after gym schedule.

Of course, if this doesn't fit your schedule and you want to talk, just call or write.

And please, join me for coffee and a chat.



What am I reading?

I spend a lot of time reading. I read about other communities, Lansing government, development and planning policy, transportation planning . . .

I understand that Valiant has revised its proposal. However, I haven't seen the revised proposal, cannot find a link to it anywhere, and therefore cannot share it with you.

Here's a link to the original Valiant proposal:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/Documents/Valiant%20HQ.pdf>

The Letter of Intent

Council members will be hearing from the staff about the terms in the Letter of Intent as well as from the Roxbury Group about why they recommend the selection of Valiant's proposal. I am paying particular attention to the financial aspects of this letter. I'm also comparing those aspects to the financials in the original proposal.

Below is a link to the Letter of Intent:

<http://annarborchronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/City-Council-Resolution-Developer-Selection-LOI.pdf>

Background reading

There are a lot of people providing comments and opinions about the Library Lot, conference center and hotel. Here's some of what I've been reading: The Skelton Report -- Chuck Skelton wrote this on his own. There's this rumor that he was paid to do this by a local hotelier. There's also a statement that he owns (at least part of) a hotel in Chelsea, and therefore wrote this because a new hotel in downtown Ann Arbor would be damaging to his business. The first assertion he denies.

http://localannarbor.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/skelton_111010_report.pdf

There is a blog that has been very interested in the process. Vivienne Armentrout ran for Council in the Fifth Ward a few years ago. She used to write for the Ann Arbor Observer. She also served as a Washtenaw County Commissioner. Here is a link:

<http://localannarbor.wordpress.com/library-lot-conference-center/>

These are two articles on the meeting of the RFP advisory committee that approved the Letter of Intent.

<http://annarborchronicle.com/2011/03/11/work-session-called-on-conference-center/>

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/>

[library-lot-committee-recommends-proceeding-with-](http://www.annarbor.com/news/library-lot-committee-recommends-proceeding-with-)

The Roxbury Report.
An independent report on
conference centers, with a
focus on the Library Lot, by
Charles Skelton.

Just because I read it, doesn't mean
I agree with it.

[downtown-ann-arbor-conference-center-proposal/](#)

My concerns

I have been asking folks to send me questions and the answers they think I should be expecting. I'll be asking questions tomorrow at the working session. If you have questions about the proposed conference center/hotel project, please let me know.

I'm particularly interested in the City's financial risk. Other issues that relate to good design are important, but only after a decision is reached that this project should go ahead, based on the City's financial exposure.

I'd like to hear your concerns, as well.



Talking about the Budget

Here's a link to all the information I've seen on the budget so far:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/budgetguide/Pages/BudgetPublicProcess.aspx>

Please let me know if you have any problems with understanding this information from the City. I will send out more on the budget after March 28th.



On the horizon

There are a number of upcoming issues you might find important.

On Monday, March 21st The Street Outreach (panhandling) Task Force will report to Council.

Medical Marijuana will again be on the agenda.

The Fuller Road Transit Station continues to be in discussion. At the Council's dinner with the Regents, Mary Sue Coleman praised the design of this 'parking structure' and spoke about its value to the University. The Mayor

was quick to point out afterward that according to him its real value is as a transit station.

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