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Johnson passes message to library board: 'Don't put main door on Market St.'

Library expansion plans concern neighbours

CYNTHIA GAMBLE
Staff Writer

Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson requested Halton Hills Library Board avoid putting the main entrance to the soon-to-be expanded Georgetown branch of the library on Market St.

Johnson said constituents living in the neighbourhood adjacent to the library requested the main entrance remain on the more commercial Church St.

"It's an issue that the residents feel strongly about," said Johnson at last week's council meeting.

Director of Halton Hills Public Library Jane Diamanti said the library board is aware of that concern and will be taking it into account as the work progresses.

The library board received approval from Halton Hills council to hire a consultant for \$5,300 to develop a request for proposal for an architect. The project involves expanding the library branch onto a residential property, 50 Market St., recently purchased by the Town, and renovating the existing library space.

Regional Councillor Jane Fogal wondered why the library board needed a special consultant, instead of Town staff, to advertise for an architect.

Diamanti said library facility development is a specialized area and requirements have changed dramatically over the years.

"We want to make sure that we have the proper expertise on board so that we get a modern, highly functional, very attractive public library," she said.

Council also approved the spending of \$50,000 for the first phase of the architectural work including the completion of a concept and site plan and cost estimates.

An April study by The Ventin Group architects concluded a "seamless expansion of 14,000 sq. ft. could be done... that would complement the character of the surrounding neighbourhood."

The study also indicated the need for an extensive renovation of the existing space, involving the relocation of the loading dock area, the mechanical/electrical room and the creation of a street level entrance.

With the existing space, the square footage of the library will be increased to 26,000 sq. ft., sufficient, the library board says, to service the Georgetown area for the next 10 years.

Johnson also requested that the architects keep in mind the potential to expand on the existing site, if more library services are needed in the future.

Diamanti said there would be a number of opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process.

The first will be in September when the library board plans to host a public information session. That meeting will introduce the architect and ask for the public's vision of the library. As well throughout 2007 the public will get other opportunities to provide input, she said.

A detailed costing and tentative site plan will come back for council's perusal by the end of the year. Construction is expected to begin in 2009.

(Cynthia Gamble can be reached at cgamble@independentfreepress.com)



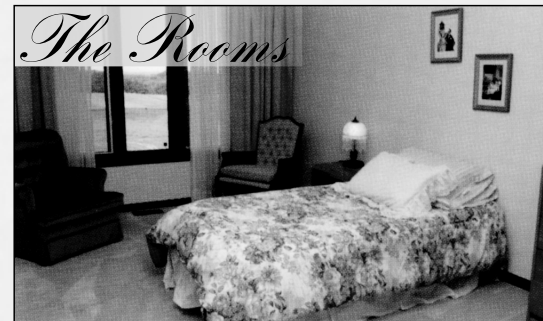
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