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ANC1D advises the DC Council to disapprove DCPL contracts for the Ward One (MtP) Library

Resolved, ANC 1D advises the DC Council – and in particular the Committee on Libraries, Parks & Recreation – to disapprove contracts submitted by the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) for the Mt Pleasant Branch Library, and to indicate that no contracts will be approved until several conditions are fulfilled, listed below:

1. Local needs: DCPL submits a revised design after serious consultation with the local ANCs that
 - Reflects the distinctive needs of the neighborhood and local users by asking ward one ANCs for their ideas, and funding a study of local needs and alternative approaches.
 - Respects the almost unique historical traditions of this Carnegie library by not encumbering it with a distracting and discordant 'hunchback'. The two other Carnegie branch libraries (Southeast & Takoma Park) did not suffer such bloat.
 - Facilitates rather than hinders future emergency access by a ladder fire truck to about a dozen older apartment buildings, by using an expansion of the ground floor entrance reduces the difficulty of access by seniors, handicapped, and families with infants and kids.

In particular, 1D urges the DC Council to make clear to DCPL that – compared to decades of better future benefits and the very large capital costs – designs must be based on local needs and neighborhood distinctiveness, not a DC-wide template. 1D urges the DC Council to give priority to the safety needs of neighbors by waiving the "by-right" development of this government agency so that these issues may be addressed, say by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, and by the Historic Preservation Review Board.

Specifically, 1D advises the DC Council to require that the design be developed in collaboration not only with ANCs but the Department of Transportation, the Office of Planning, and the Department of Parks and Recreation so that this investment can be leveraged with the neighboring facilities for greater public benefit. The Office of Planning (and 1D) has observed that this could be a gateway that would greatly enhance cross-ANC traffic, and aid the smallest main commercial corridor of ward one's four ANCs.

2. Uphold the law: DCPL fulfills its legal duty of DCPL to notify and give Great Weight to local ANCs of planning and design process, and does so by demonstrating utmost respect for code and case law to answer each point raised by ANCs in particularity from the perspective of the ANC and with evidence-based arguments.

In particular, 1D urges the DC Council to make clear to DCPL that there are no rewards for shirking or skirting the ANC and other laws. 1D urges the DC Council to insist that the law be upheld – the main entrance of any substantially rehabbed public building must be accessible to all.

3. Larger, longer-term benefits: DCPL revises the design and process to facilitate adapting to major changes of the next half century in technology and public engagement.

In particular, 1D urges the DC Council to make clear to DCPL that an approved design must provide for low-cost and high flexibility to adjust spaces to meet the needs of future studies that have been promised but not done. Similar flexibility is needed for DCPL to anticipate and adjust to the radical changes now arising from new technologies and patterns of information development and application.

Already, arguments for using better present practices to increase effectiveness by a factor of ten has been brought to DCPL's attention, which they have ignored. A further gain in cost-effectiveness seem possible and even likely. It appears that the DC Council need require changes in DCPL's management culture, and in the facility plan to facilitate systematic learning.

Passed by 3 to 2 vote at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANCID on March 16, 2010, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Edwards, Tunda, Scott. Voting "no": Commissioners Lepanto, Bosserman. Abstaining: Commissioner McKay.