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ANC1D Asks the DC Council and Mayor to Delay Reconstruction of the Mount Pleasant Library and Insist on Local Engagement

ANC1D resolves to ask the DC Council, DC Public Libraries and Mayor to Delay Reconstruction of the Mount Pleasant Library and Insist on Local Engagement.

Further, ANC1D asks that the ANC law mandating acknowledgement and response to ANC1D resolutions be adhered to.

ANC1D advises the DC Council, the Mayor, the DC Public Library (DCPL) Board and administration to assure that DCPL changes its misleading practice of holding "community design" meetings that do not seriously engage residents and other users (like schools) in finding needs and interests.

ANC1D authorizes its staff to set a high priority for these changes, and authorizes an expenditure of up to \$3000 to clarify the legal situation sufficiently so that users can decide upon appropriate legal responses. The staff should advertise for and select consultant services to assist towards the success of this project, and seek other partners (on a matching fund basis) and participants.

Why: DCPL has ignored its duty and the law by not responding to ANC1D resolutions on this matter. Instead, DCPL at great expense has put on so-called "community design" meetings which have mostly been top-down lectures with negligible participation by users and residents, and with small and unrepresentative response from local residents. At the second such meeting, June 10th, Director Cooper noted that almost all of the decisions had already been made, and that much of the presentation by the architects had already been ruled out by her decisions. Similarly, there has been no response to the petitions by local civic groups.

This kind of pseudo public meetings appears Machiavellian and would be a farce except for the expense, and for the distraction away from a sincere effort at understanding and providing for the needs of potential users.

ANC1D notes that this misbehavior by DCPL seems to be part of a larger pattern around five branches and not just Mount Pleasant, a pattern that has aroused law suits, protests by other ANCs, and the mobilization of neighborhood groups.

ANC1D invites participation by other ANCs and civic groups to encourage or force DCPL to obey the law, and start to reap the benefits from a more progressive policy: Encouraging

participation from all parts of the city towards greater literacy, public education, and an imaginative engagement in a creative civilization.

DCPL's current behavior belies its intended public purpose. We call on other organs of government and civic groups to persuade DCPL away from its patterns of misbehavior that so misrepresent the ideals of civilization supposedly carried in its collections and by its dedicated staff.

Passed by 5 to 0 vote at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANCID on July 1, 2008, with a quorum present (a quorum being four commissioners). Voting "yes": Commissioners Zara, McKay, Edwards, Bosserman, Tunda.