From:
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 12:12 PM
To:
Subject: Re: Executive Policy Committee meeting - March 16, 2023

Hi Kathy - Below is a shortened version of what I meant to present at the EPC meeting on Thursday:

"Good afternoon Mr. Mayor and Counsellors. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the EPC this afternoon considering the City's 2023-24 Budget."

Unfortunately I was unable to begin my presentation that way because of the technical difficulties experience at City Hall on Thursday. I have been unable to speak during the regular meeting at the EPC and at the Public Works Committee in the past (not this current year) for whatever reason and what has happened in those cases is either the meeting was continued on another day or there was a short break for supper, and the meeting was continued in the evening. I can understand why the EPC did not want to use either of those two options because your members are involved in so many meetings at this stage of the budget process that there really wasn't a good time to meet again before the Budget is put before the full City Council. Since delegations are the principal way the public can respond to the proposed budget, would it not be possible to schedule the hearings of delagations at an earlier stage of the budget process so that all who wished to speak to the Budget would have the opportunity to do so at an additional meeting if one was needed because of the large number of delegations?

Instead those of us who hadn't had the opportunity to speak to the EPC were asked to submit something in writing by today at noon. Speaking for myself, I find it more efficient to speak rather than type because I can say more in 10 minutes than I can write, as I am not a speedy typist. At almost 72 yeares of age, I'm of an age where keyboarding is neither quick or easy! And, with respect, I am not confident that members of the EPC will have a chance or make the time to read what I'm submitting. Accordingly, whereas I wanted to raise points about public transit, quicker implementation of the poverty reduction plan, greening of the City including the need to increase further the budget for maintaining our tree canopy and such green spaces as we already have, fast forwarding the Transportation Master Plan, and much more (at least 10 minutes worth), I will limit myself to speaking about our Public Libraries. There were many presentations, notably Kate Kehler's on behalf of the Social Planning Council, the presentation from Make Poverty History, Brian Pincott and Anny Chen's, Joe Curnow's and Arielle Villarin and the doctor's to name a few, that expressed my views better than I would have myself.

But I did want to make one comment based on my own experience. For the past five years since I retired I have been a classroom volunteer with Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network Network in their English as a Second or Alternative Language Program. The students are either new immigrants or refugees, many of whom have

directly experience the effects of war on civilian populations. Prior to my schedules speaking opportunity, I askec my class first if they or their children used the library. Most of the students live in the core area so for them the Millennium Library is their "home branch". I asked whether security measures such as bag searches and being "wanded" down was comfortable for them or made them secure. One student from Afghanistan said he had been stopped frequently in his home country either by NATO forces or insurgent forces both of which made him fearful and that the presence of such security meant he wouldn't use the library or take his children there. An Eritrean student said basically the same thing. Only one student in a class of 16 said she would feel safer because she had heard about the tragic killing that took place at Millennium recently.

On this basis I am totally opposed to the reimposition of these security measures. Like many other cities, we can make our libraries safer for library workers and the public byhiring more staff, fully funding the Community Safety Hosts and Community Connexions space and the other measures that many delegations have already mentioned. If there is insufficient funds, perhaps the police helicopter could only buzz our neighbourhoods on the weekends instead of every day, just as an example. A budget speaks for what are the City's priorities. We need to be thinking more of the future for our children and grandchildren as well as for the most marginalized and vulnerable in our community.

Thank you for your attention.

Wendy Boyd