

Dear Mayor and City Council members,

Please consider this continuing effort to help your thinking about use of the Library Lot. I hope you will use your "members time" to address this subject.

It looks as though, in the short run there will be no sale, or request for proposals for building development on the Library Lot.

About a park, "**patience**" has been recommended. The City Council collectively seems content to wait and postpone any further consideration of the 5 properties and their connections, until after the Parks Advisory Commission has looked at all the properties from a parks perspective before taking further action.

The DDA is now more widely recognized as not a public planning body, and the feeling has grown among Council members that **other perspectives**, than strictly the economic, should enter the decision process.

One other, and important, perspective that has been missing is that focused on **the special objective of creating an Ann Arbor community "center," an active, ever-changing public venue, including significant park and green as well as other civic amenities.** It was proposed as a "town square," as a "community commons," as a "library green;" it is meant as a co-created heart place for Ann Arbor, engaging all the neighborhoods and civic organizations in designing and programming and volunteering, etc.

Intelligent public policy would be to **use the time of waiting to experiment on the ground** with how this perspective might express itself with different community uses of the Library Lot surface. For Instance:

1. Allow an **ice skating rink** to be built on part of the lot, using artificial ice on a level platform, through the winter, and longer if people like and it is working out. Authorize an experimental seed grant, likely from DDA grant funds, to match already pledged private resident donations. An overall budget of about \$50,000 would include at least 1 staff, at all open times, at a living wage, to oversee and help, with volunteers, and of course, liability insurance to protect the City.. (The platform and artificial ice could be disassembled and stored to be used again next winter, or in another location.) 2 weeks lead time and it could be made, with willing volunteer workers, and ice skating happening downtown, this year.

2. Schedule a **Spring Party for All Ann Arbor** March 21, 22, 23, 24. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Activities geared to the weather, food and planting.

3. Schedule an **Earth Day exhibition and festival** on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, April 20,21,22, 2013 Many groups will participate and liaison made with the Leslie Science Center programs.

4. Ask Junior Chamber of Commerce to consider routing the **Fourth of July parade** back East on Williams Street, to end at the Library Lot in a community gathering, picnic, frolic of some kind.

5. Allow to be set up on the Library Lot itself a **table, and a temporary yurt or long house, with a heater**, where people can bring ideas, discuss, post drawings, etc. and imagine brighter futures for

the Lot and the downtown surroundings as a whole.

Except for a matching grant for #1 the skating, **none of these openings need cost the City anything.** The talent and energy in this town is beyond measure. Allow the people, whoever we are, open and inviting everyone, to do the doing of these things, to build the skating platform and lay the artificial ice sheets, start a planning committee for the Spring Party, and likewise for an Earth Day festival, and for making an "imagination station."

**Invite all Ann Arbor** community, arts, fraternal, neighborhood and parents groups to consider the surface area for outdoor or tent events and activities they might intend or desire in the Spring and Summer.

Some things will work out, some won't so well. and along the way a **wealth of experience** will be gained (**priceless**) of what does work well in this area and what Ann Arborites are thinking and interested in doing. This will be invaluable when the Park Advisory Commission and City Council consider their recommendations and decisions.

A non-profit community group like the Library Green Conservancy could coordinate programming and maintain liaisons with the DDA, the City Council, relevant City commissions and staff, Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy, etc.. Or a new volunteer coordinating group could be created in an open meeting from whoever comes or drawn more formally from the 5 wards, neighborhood associations, business and civic groups, etc, invited future users of the public's place.

To open the space to the people, even for an experimental period, until the City is ready to come to a final decision as part of an integrated plan, does mean to remove the cars from most or all of the surface area now used for parking cars.

Fortunately, as i wrote in my last message, removing cars from the surface, would be no loss to the parking system or revenue, because there is excess capacity in the system generally and in the underground structure and the Y surface lot across Fifth Avenue specifically.

i wish Council members would speak of these ideas and show some enthusiasm to see what the people might do, if given use of the place we own.

i suggested/ requested before and at your last meeting that you make time on your agenda to hear and see a citizens report. Still a good idea, i wish you would, a lot of people would benefit.

i urged also that you give specific request and direction to the Parks Advisory Commission to consider the viability of the Library Lot as a central city park, and various scenarios of how it might be so developed, with associated mixed uses. You might want them to assess the Y Lot and Palios also, for park related uses, but the one space about which, for sure, you need "advice" is the Library Lot. Give them some questions about which you have worries or preconceptions.

And still i urge, get the cars off the roof-to-be-greened, and let people on. Let the greening begin. Just say Yes! See what might Spring forth.