

81

ADDED COMMUNICATIONS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Council Chambers  
City Hall

Wednesday, 4:00 p.m.  
February 2, 2011

2011 BUDGET – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

ADDED PRESENTATIONS

- 5:40 p.m. Laura Hetu, Nancy McSloy, Teresa Armstrong representing Argyle Indoor Pool and Community Centre Committee
- 5:50 p.m. Nancy McSloy, Argyle Business Improvement Association
- 6:00 p.m. Cynthia Ethridge
- 6:30 p.m. DINNER BREAK

ADDED COMMUNICATIONS

- 4. V. White, 3739 Harry White Drive – 2011 Budget. ←
- 5. B. Quesnel – 2011 Budget – Accessible Transit.
- 6. Discussion – Additional Committee of the Whole Meetings to be held February 23, 2011 and March 30, 2011.

**A Message to City Council from Glanworth and London's Annexed South regarding the Glanworth Branch of the London Public Library**

While the importance of literacy is probably the best argument to put forth against reducing any library's budget, I want to bring "community" and "cultural heritage" to the discussion today because I think the City of London needs to take both into consideration before making a decision that could result in the closure of the Glanworth Branch of the London Public Library.

There was a library in village of Glanworth long before the City of London swept in and annexed the area south of the 401 in the 1990s. First established in 1912, our tiny library survived for decades under county and township jurisdiction, and quite successfully I might add. It has always had the support of the local residents. Funds to build the present structure that houses the library were in fact raised by a hardworking committee of volunteers in 1923.

Since annexation, the village and its environs have seen essential local services pulled and moved into London. Not only did we lose a nearby police station, we also lost our fire station and our post office. So to lose our library now simply because the municipality that annexed us wants to save some money is an insult. It's also the final nail in the coffin of an independent community that has been here since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Our branch is tiny, that's true, and in the greater scheme of things it might seem that it could be easily dispensed with. But the Glanworth Library is so much more than a building and a few books: it represents "community," something that has been systematically stripped from us in the years since annexation. That library is one of the last connections we have to our local history.

Moreover, it is also the only real connection we have to the greater community of London to which we now belong. Quaint and charming as it is, it still serves a purpose and it still means something to the people who call Glanworth home. It is actively used by young and old alike—newcomers to the village with children have enthusiastically embraced it and older adults who grew up in the area cherish its continued presence.

It's been too easy for the City of London to dismiss us, those of us who call the annexed rural south end home. Indeed, London tends to remember us only when it needs something from us, like land for the city's dump. City Hall forgets that people actually live and work here, people whose families have deep roots in the region. As the city grows and builds for the future, it should not destroy its past. It's local history that makes us unique and distinct from other cities.

Furthermore, it would be extremely hypocritical of the city to boast about the big, new Stoney Creek facility serving its community in one breath yet turn its back on another community that supports and needs its little library every bit as much. Geography, demographics and a skewed perception of what is valuable shouldn't decide the fate of Glanworth's library.

All of London will be the poorer if you decide to close this country library. If anything, you should be ensuring that it remains, that it is repaired, that it is valued. It's part of our collective heritage. I ask that you remember us and respect us as you make your budget decision. If indeed libraries inspire, educate and inform us, then let's put some of that creative thinking we have acquired to good use; together I am sure that we can find ways to keep the Glanworth branch open for many years to come.

Thank you,  
Victoria White  
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