

Inconsistencies in library move issue?

In reference to moving the Westfield Library, here are a few inconsistencies and did-you-knows for Washington Township taxpayers. I hope this sheds some light on why there's a remonstrance

Did you know the proposed location isn't 191st and Tomlinson, as so often stated by the board, but really at 196th and Tomlinson? This error seems to be made in an attempt to lessen the actual distance moved from the current location.

Did you know the current library building originally was planned to become a two-story? The foundation and building were designed and built to allow for on-site, upward expansion (stated by a board member). Yet, the library claims there's no room to expand.

Did you know the much-talked-about YMCA has yet to purchase land at the 196th Street site?

Did you know the Library Board has seven members? Did you know the seven positions consist of four appointed by Westfield Washington Schools, one by the Town Council, one by the township trustee and one by the county? Did you know the county's appointee is the husband of a School Board member? Did you know the Town Council's appointee is a teacher from the school district?

Did you know the agreement between the library and schools isn't a simple land purchase? The school district will be required to provide long-term services for the library? This isn't factored into the cost.

Why are these points important? Clearly, the board's majority is appointed by and/or affiliated with the school district, the entity it's voted to enter into this long-term, multimillion-dollar agreement with, an agreement where some hidden costs will fall on the school district's already over-burdened budget.

Did you know the board claims that Duane Lutz, of the accounting firm of Katz, Sapper and Miller, was hired to provide a financial analysis of the various options (library's Web site)? Did you know the board later stated that the accounting firm had no "hard numbers" to support the opinion it presented as the best option (library's minutes)?

I believe that if a reputable firm such as Katz were hired, it would have provided, in a timely manner, all the documentation contractually obligated. Yet, more than a year after the Library Board claims to have had the analysis presented, it had to state, "The consultant (Integra) want(ed) the numbers that Katz, etc., used. However Katz, Sapper & Miller said that (it) didn't have hard numbers to back up (its) statements (library's minutes)."

Makes me wonder if a reputable firm such as Katz actually was under contract to perform a financial analysis, and if the firm's name was included just to add credibility to this decision.

There are inconsistencies in statements and verifiable facts. There are questions of conflicts and due diligence. Wouldn't it be appropriate to take another, more thorough, look before spending millions of taxpayers' dollars?

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