

To the Editor,

The Westfield/Washington Township Library Board met last week. Several of the library owners (tax payers), including three Town Councilors and future City Councilors, attempted to head off the bond remonstrance by asking that the Library folks sit down with leaders who want a different plan.

Immediately members of the staff and one other, began in very strong terms to tell us that the members of the Board are hardworking wonderful citizens and therefore we should not be challenging their intentions and decisions. I wholeheartedly agree on the first count. But what they don't understand is that this decision is not about them -nor the staff. It is about the owners -us, OUR taxes and OUR library's location. They all need to consider just who such boards are accountable to.

We first knew of the possibility of the proposed move at a public meeting at the high school less than two years ago, according to the president of The Friends of The Library. This was the first time the general public became informed of the plan. This is not to say that legal notices had not been published earlier. At that meeting the library move was given only a brief statement among many about the new school location at 196th Street.

Some of us objected and privately expressed that we hoped the public would be brought into the decisions. The next was at a Board meeting at the library where it was clear that the decision had, for all practical purposes, been made, an architect was being selected and that the forthcoming bond would double the library tax.

Nine spoke against the move away from where people now live in Westfield. One spoke for the move. All opposed were argued with by the staff. I stated that so many were opposed that a bond remonstrance seemed possible. Here is the rub; in spite of the above, NO effort to work with the objectors was forthcoming.

In the meantime the new Town Council hired a consultant to lead Westfield citizens in designing an old downtown redevelopment. Many participated. Three good preliminary proposals have been presented. Everyone I know (with noted exceptions) wants the library to be a part of this redevelopment for good reason.

Solution: The Library Board should agree to postpone their decision a year while responding to Councilman Bob Horkay's call for civil meetings to work together as though we were one community with common interest. And while at it avoid the divisive remonstrance, which will overwhelmingly stop the bond anyway.

What is wrong with that ???

Some will say it will cost more then. Yes, with inflation everything does, but perhaps other tax and location possibilities will work toward resolution.

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