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Nelson, Matthew

From: Nancy Woods [nancywoods68@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, December 02, 2012 9:29 PM
To: Davis, Henrietta (home); City Council
Subject: Rich Rossi's three year contract--Monday December 4th

Dear Mayor Davis and Members of the City Council,

I am so sorry that I cannot make my comments to you in person. I have a long-standing commitment Monday night, December 4th. But here is what I would say in support of you entering into a three-year contract with Rich Rossi to step into the City Manager position: I support it 100%. Please include these comments into the public record.

Although I support this contract in general, I will briefly recount my experience with Rich during the Library 21 process, from 1996 to 1998, that directly lead to the Cambridge Main library we have today so that you can see why I support Rich Rossi. In 1996, I volunteered to chair the committee that Bob Healy was setting up to re-start the Library expansion process. As is the usual custom, Rich is the co-chair of these citizen-based committees and, therefore, he and I were co-chairs of what became the Library 21 committee.

Rich's actions and commitment during that period demonstrated his civic savvy, good humor and specifically his knowledge of the construction process, his patience for sometimes pains-taking public process and communications, City finances as well as his commitment to public improvements. When cities all over the country are pulling back from supporting libraries, I, as the co-chair on the Library 21 committee, never felt a waiver of his or Bob Healy's commitment....not for a minute. My job as the co-chair, was to work directly with the Library 21 committee to produce a program for the proposed expanded library. We held about 30 public meetings all over the City, had a dedicated Web site and many articles in the Cambridge Chronicle. Rich reviewed every single press release and set of meeting notes. At the meetings, as co-chair, he provided the steady hand of reality as we designed and moved through a complex process of discovery. At no point did he micro manage us but he was always actively involved and available. We did, in fact, produce a program that helped guide the architects design both the new building and to renovate the original structure. Looking back, I can see that Rich's presence on the Library 21 committee demonstrated the City's commitment to citizen involvement and ultimately to making the City a better place to live.

Rich and Bob followed up this commitment with exquisite follow-through to determine the most advantageous site, to obtain the financing and to navigate through what, to my mind, was a tortuous construction bid process. During construction, Rich ensured that we had the best project manager, Alan Burne, and backed him all the way. The Library opened in November, 2009, on budget and not all that later than we expected. Thanks to the City's support, it has been a shining "civic heart" ever since then.

Again, I urge you to support the three year contract for Rich Rossi to continue the excellent work that he and Bob Healy have done.

Nancy Woods
Trustee, Cambridge Public Library