



October 21, 2014

Mayor Steve Pougnet,
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: Welwood Murray Memorial Library

Dear Mayor Pougnet,

Throughout the long process of the rehabilitation of the Welwood Murray Memorial Library (WMML) the Foundation has espoused a single guiding principle, i.e., that only the “best and highest uses” be made of the library and library site. This is a principle that city council members have likewise espoused in their public comments.

Accordingly, we have watched with interest the recent proposal to extend a bar-restaurant from Plaza Las Flores into the WMML site. We have expected that the city’s normal administrative processes would reject this ill-advised proposal.

Unfortunately, it was revealed at the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) meeting on Tuesday, October 14th that the city appears to be circumventing its own normal processes. At its September meeting the HSPB had requested a briefing on the WMML, and impliedly the bar-restaurant proposal. At the HSPB’s meeting this week, the city’s representative (Al Smoot) informed the HSPB that he had been “removed” from that aspect of the WMML project and could not brief HSPB members on that critical aspect of the WMML rehabilitation. While we can only speculate as to why Mr. Smoot was removed from this aspect of the project, the result is clear: both the HSPB members and the public remain largely in the dark about the details of this important issue.

We fail to understand why this proposal was not rejected outright; certainly there is compelling legal precedent to do so. Why would the city permit a project virtually identical to the one previously proposed by this same developer a generation ago, especially when that earlier project was so soundly rejected after lengthy litigation? (See *Save the Welwood Murray Memorial Library Committee v. City Council*, 215 Cal.App.3d 1004(1989)). This appellate decision resolved the issue that is presented by the current proposal.

If you have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact us at (760) 837-7117 or info@pspreservationfoundation.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erik Rosenow". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Erik Rosenow
President

Copy to: Desert Sun (Skip Descant)