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April 13, 2022

Dear library board,

My name is Paul Cram. I've written in the past, so hello again!

As a reminder, in addition to being a resident of Columbia Heights for over 19 years, I've been volunteering at the library since Barb Kondrich was the Adult Services Librarian at the old library location off of 40th Avenue. I first began volunteering with the Buddy up-and-read literacy program and now host the Monday evening ESL Conversation Circle.

Why I am writing is to ask that the \$25/hour Community Room rental fee be reconsidered and/or evaluated by the board and the board give City Council an official recommendation. It's my understanding that this fee was implemented by City Council without input from you, and possibly without input from its tax-paying residents - which seems to be an oversight.

Here's an example of how this fee impacts me:

I started a non-fiction book club "Men-Who-Read" back in 2019 with an eye on fostering a love of reading for men, pursuing knowledge, having it in a neutral and sober place, for us to come together and dialogue. The library has been such an asset for us as it is neutral and welcoming - we've grown to the max capacity of 12 that the History

room provides. (Jay growth!) But now if we want to continue growing we are faced with the hurdle of location. We have these options:

1. Charge participants a fee to attend so we can cover the \$25 Community Room fee
2. Limit the book club to only 12 people so we can remain in the history room
3. Congregate in the library without a meeting room. (We wound up doing this once because of a mix-up in reserving the History Room... I think general library patrons were bothered by how loud we were?)
4. Go somewhere else.

And how sad would it be to do #4 and not meet at the library?!

It is my request that the library Board make an official recommendation to City Council on the Community Room Rental fee. (Hopefully residents will have access to it during normal business hours for "free")

I'll write City Council about this too.

With warm regards,

Paul Crain
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