

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Kenneth Wood - Downtown Event and Entertainment District – Conceptual Design - CK 4130-14
Attachments: letter to council feb 12 2024.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Sunday, February 11, 2024 12:06 PM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

Subject: Email - Communication - Kenneth Wood - Downtown Event and Entertainment District – Conceptual Design - CK 4130-14

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED]

Submitted on Sunday, February 11, 2024 - 11:59

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Sunday, February 11, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Kenneth

Last Name: Wood

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] 37th St W

Ward: Ward 4

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: GPC Wednesday, February 14, 2024

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 8.3.4

Comments:

Comments are in the submitted pdf

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

The Downtown Events and Entertainment District (DEED) is being badly mishandled by Council and administration.

This whole process began with a comparison of a \$100 million renovation price tag for Sasktel Centre versus a less than \$400 million price tag for a new events centre and convention centre. It also included promises from Council that property taxes would not be used to pay for this project.

As the conceptual designs have moved forward it became patently obvious that the development costs would be far greater than the initial number. However, Council has indicated to the public that they do not have a final cost estimate to share. To get to the current project progress position, Council must have a reasonable macro budget for the project. If you do not you are derelict in your duties as council.

I am therefore assuming you have a reasonable estimate of the project cost. Based on my own knowledge of similar projects around Canada and the United States it seems clear to me that costs will be well over a billion dollars. Yet you do not reveal this number to the public and explain why Sasktel renovations might be a more fiscally responsible way forward.

You must be transparent and disclose to the public your latest macro cost estimate.

There are no examples in Canada, other than Toronto, where an entertainment complex has been built without government contributions and some property tax effects. We are a city of around 300,000 people and most likely decades away from 500,000. In Calgary and Edmonton, the NHL teams are contributing about 50% of the cost. Who will cover that void in Saskatoon? Yet we are looking at an NHL sized project for a city at least four times our size. There are other mid sized cities in Canada larger than Saskatoon doing just fine (indeed better than Saskatoon) without an over sized sports and entertainment facility in their down town.

It should be noted that during your considerations of this project the provincial government applied PST to tickets becoming, I believe, the only province with such a tax. This has a very adverse effect on project financing options.

There is no economic or social benefit argument to justify this project. For every expert study and report espousing these benefits, I can site other independent studies indicating the benefits are not there.

Council needs to be more transparent with the public. Administration needs to stop cheer leading and start speaking the truth to Council and the public.