

## Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 871 1702 3591

Passcode: 157376

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## TRI COUNCIL AGENDA

February 29, 2024

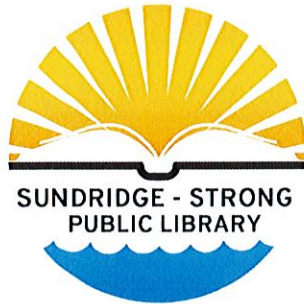
6:00 pm

### Village of Sundridge – Host Municipality

[followed by a Bi Council (Sundridge/Strong) meeting at 7:45pm]

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest
3. Delegation
4. Presentation
5. New Business/Follow Up Items
  - 5.1 Blue Box Transition update (Strong)
  - 5.2 SSJ Arena Agreement Update (Strong)
  - 5.3 Sundridge Strong Union Public Library Board: New Site
  - 5.4 Next Tri-Council Meeting Date
6. Adjournment

Item 5.3  
February 29, 2024  
Tri Council



## **A New Facility for the Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library**

### **Developing a Strategy and Plan**

Submitted to SSPL Library Board  
By Vicki Whitmell  
January 2024

The Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library's Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025 identifies the following strategic priorities:

1. To provide a library facility that meets the current and future needs of the community
2. To provide programs and services that meet current and future community needs
3. To work with the municipalities to find a larger and more accessible location
4. To maintain an open relationship with local schools and organizations
5. To increase awareness of Indigenous history and current Indigenous issues
6. To maintain and upgrade library technology and internet presence
7. To plan for the current and future staffing needs of the library.

This document outlines a possible approach and strategy for the Sundridge-Strong Library Board and staff to realize a new library facility. A new facility would result in a renewed and refreshed library able to offer new services, programming and connections.

Ideally the new space would bring together all members of the community, including children, students, adults, seniors, associations, groups and businesses. It would become a central hub gathering people together in a way that would allow them to discover and learn, interact and commune.

This central hub would strengthen the feeling of community, build knowledge and training skills and help to develop the local economy.

### **Why Action is Important**

Realistically it could take five to fifteen years to have a new library built for Sundridge-Strong. A local example of Callander, with a similar size library and population, has been working for over 20 years to find a new location to meet the needs of its community.

What is important now is beginning a sustained and prepared advocacy effort to get the word out that a new library is needed and why and to build the support for it. Funders, politicians, potential partners and resident and citizens have to be convinced of the need for and value of a new library to the community and area and that the proper thought, analysis and consultation has been done in order to move the project forward. That way, when opportunities arise or plans are made by others the library will be thought of and included.

A new library needs to be top of mind and priority for decision-makers and their advisors.



A municipal election is being held in 2026. This is a time to ask those running for office to support the idea and plans. It is a project which they can help to shepherd during their time in office.

Preparation is needed to be ready for any expected or unexpected funding opportunities or partnerships, either public or private, that might arise that could be tapped into.

A solid business plan that is ready at hand and has the full support of residents and governments will help to put the library at the front of the line and will perhaps make it possible for the library to gain a foothold to get the funding that is needed.

## **The Current Library Space**

The current library space has served both the Village of Sundridge and the Township of Strong since 1978 and has been under contract with the Township of Joly to provide services since 1987. While the Library is centrally located and has adequate parking, it has long outgrown its current space on the lower floor of the Village of Sundridge Municipal Building.

Limitations of the current space include:

- While an accessible elevator provides access to the library, once inside anyone using a wheelchair or mobile walker is unable to move easily through the library or its stacks and seating
- Room for only a small number of concurrent users to work in the library
- Lack of privacy for individual users conducting research at either the one six-seater table or one of the three computer workstations based on their size and close proximity
- The children's area is restricted to a few users at a time
- Shelves are full with no room for growth of the print collection
- The staff workspace is virtually non-existent with no adequate work surfaces, storage, privacy or areas for concentration
- There is only one emergency exit which could put users and staff at risk.

Overall, the limited space restricts library activities, programming and services and the ability of the library to grow or to expand its offerings.

A new facility must be large enough and well designed. Requirements include:

- Being centrally located with easy and accessible access to the building and adequate parking
- Adequate user seating and space to meet the needs of the community and its users that also allow for privacy and accessibility
- Continually updated technology services that meet the needs of all ages and groups
- Unique spaces that cater to children, group and team work, and meetings of local groups and organizations
- Adequate space for improved programming, demonstrations and training
- Shelving that provides easy and accessible access to the library's print collection, allowing for 10 to 15 year's growth
- Work areas for staff that provide accessible and adequate work surfaces, storage, privacy and areas for concentration
- Meeting of modern building standards for accessibility, safety and security.

## **A Possible Strategy to Move Forward**

A strategy is needed to persuade the Village of Sundridge, Township of Strong, Township of Joly, local citizens and businesses, and the provincial government that a new facility is essential and key to the livability and continued viability of the Sundridge and area community.

### **Development of a Business Case**

As a first step, a strong business case needs to be developed for a new library facility. It will be the foundation piece that will include such things as:

- A clear tie-in with the goals and strategies of the local municipalities and the Almaguin area and an outline of how a renewed library and facility will support those goals
- Input from the local community and citizens on what they need from the library
- Comparisons of the library with other area library facilities, services, hours, programming and staffing
- The qualitative/financial impact and value that the new facility and resulting improved services are likely to have on the community
- Details on the requirements for the facility and expected costs based on possible options for retrofitting or modernizing existing space(s) or a new build
- Possible options for funding, including grants, donations and fundraising and contributions from local and provincial governments
- Ongoing costs related to the new physical space and improved services and programming
- Possible revenue from non-library use of the new facility.

The business case also needs to recognize and consider solutions for the obstacles that currently make it difficult to see the realization of a new library facility over both the short and the long term.

These include:

- The approval and commitment that is required from the Library's two funding municipalities
- Lack of available funding from local governments
- Unfamiliarity with possible grants, programs and funding opportunities and lack of knowledge in preparing grant and funding submissions
- Impact of a new facility on ongoing maintenance, technology and staffing costs
- Limited direct fundraising opportunities in the local rural area
- Limited available time to devote to the project from staff, Library Board members and volunteers
- No current involvement from local businesses, seasonal residents, champions and/or influencers
- Knowing the right time to bring this idea forward and have it approved
- Being able to frame the idea in a way that can gain acceptance and excitement.

## **Possible Next Steps**



It is hoped that within the next 18 months that the Library Board and staff, working with the local municipalities, volunteers and consultants will develop a thorough business case that would lead to a general acceptance and approval for a new facility for the Sundridge-Strong Public Library.

Work to be completed:

- Survey and conduct focus groups of library and non-library users to determine their needs and dreams for a new library facility
- Conduct an environmental scan and comparison of other local public libraries and their facilities, programming and staff
- Identification of successful library facility improvement projects in similar sized communities in Ontario and lessons to be learned
- Creation of a “New Sundridge-Strong Public Library Working Group” that will include representatives from the community, councils, local businesses, seasonal residents, influencers, and potential donors. A fundraising committee could be part of this working group
- Meeting with Village of Sundridge and Strong and Joly Township councils to outline the work being completed and timelines and to ask for their advice and support
- Identify any funding needed to assist in gathering information on other libraries, planning and presenting focus groups, costing and development of the business plan
- Review possible funding opportunities at local, provincial and national levels
- Identification of possible local existing or planned facilities/buildings that might, with modification, be able to house an expanded library facility
- Investigation and creation of possible partnerships with local organizations and groups to assist in this project
- Completion of the business plan and continued advocacy for the project.

## Possible Activity Timeline

Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments
<b>Survey of community and focus groups</b>	Vicki Whitmell and Library staff	June to September 2024	Time to include survey of seasonal residents
<b>Environmental scan and comparison of other local public libraries</b>	Library Board		Would include visits to local libraries and meetings with other library boards
<b>Identification of successful projects with lessons to be learned</b>	Library staff Vicki Whitmell	January to May 2024	
<b>Creation of Working Group and Fundraising Committee</b>	Library Board	By June 2024	

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Review of possible funding opportunities and grants at local, provincial and national levels.</b>	Library staff working with staff from Village of Sundridge and Township of Strong with advice from Ontario Library Service.	By June 2024	
<b>Meet with Sundridge Strong and Joly Councils and provincial and national governments</b>	Library Board and Working Group	By December 2024 and ongoing	May include visits with local MP and MPP.
<b>Identification of costs and needed funding to complete Business Plan</b>	Library Board and Working Group		During municipal and library budgeting processes
<b>Identification of possible existing or planned facilities that could be modified/used</b>	Library Board Council Representatives working with Council and municipal staff	By September 2024	
<b>Identification and development of local partnerships</b>	Library Board and staff	By September 2024	
<b>Writing of Business Plan</b>	Consultant, Staff, Library Board	By mid-2025	