

The News

Design looking at how to integrate library and theatre

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Creating the new Pictou Library design has turned out to be more complex than first expected. Originally expected in January, the design is now just about finalized.

Chief librarian for the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Eric Stackhouse said one of the things they heard from the public during consultations in November was that an integrated design between the deCoste Centre and the library is important, rather than a building “stuck to another building.”

“I think one of the things that’s safe to say (is) during consultations we did hear lots of ideas from the public and I think people will find pretty well all of those are in the design in some form.”

The architect – Archibald and Fraser Architects Limited – has been collaborating with acoustic engineers to work out the complexities of having a library next to a theatre, he said, and that’s part of the reason for the delay.

They didn’t have many examples to go on, with Stackhouse noting that some libraries exist in the United States that are attached to theatres, but on a much larger scale.

It has required a lot of discussions with the deCoste Centre to figure out what they need, what the library needs, what the public wants and making it flow well, he said.

“I think we’ve done that but it took a lot longer than we thought.”

Stackhouse noted that the architect has also been working with mechanical and electrical engineers in order to create an energy efficient and green design. They’ve also wanted to ensure the suggestions from the public were carefully considered and incorporated into the design.

The final design will first be presented to the committee in charge of the project, which Stackhouse is expecting to happen in mid July.

At that point, they expect to have the plan up to the “construction document phase,” so they can be ready to start building. They’ll also have a building cost figured out as well as operational costs.

They will then decide when to take to municipal councils and the public, but he anticipates the timeline being shortly after that presentation.

Stackhouse said they've already begun to look into possible funding opportunities, and will seek them out after soliciting feedback from the public, provided it's positive.

The design phase came at a cost of \$110,000, which was provided by the federal government via the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the provincial government, county and Pictou councils as well as the library itself.

The project began in July 2014, with the branch being noted as the third busiest for the PARL district and several issues arising including a lack of air conditioning that has forced the building to close on particularly warm days.