

STATEMENT OF THE GOODNOW LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR

Goodnow Library Board of Trustees Chair Ingrid J. Mayyasi wishes to provide an update on behalf of the board.

“Today we made the difficult decision to end the Goodnow Library’s working relationship with the independent Friends of the Goodnow Library organization.

“While we are grateful for the support the organization has provided the library in the past, the time has unfortunately come to part ways given the difficulty in our relationship that has developed over the course of several years. Over that time, the Friends of the Goodnow Library group has grown to be incompatible with key library stakeholders, including staff, the Goodnow Library Foundation and the library’s Trustees.

“The Board did not make this decision lightly but rather after deliberate consideration over a period of many months and after reflecting on a relationship that continues to deteriorate despite efforts to repair it. The decision was also made after diligent consultation with legal counsel.

“Unfortunately, the Friends’ organization has felt that along with their library support efforts, they were empowered with influence over the library’s operational decision making. While community input is a value of our public library, the management and Trustees are professionals who are hand-picked, often with specialized training, to make day-to-day decisions as well as long term plans around capital improvements, library programming, and our collection.

“The Board and management are proud of the work we do that ensures the Goodnow is a successful and respected institution and which is reflective of the needs of our community as a whole.

“Of most concern has been the organization’s attempt to leverage its role as a beneficiary of the library — made possible by its donors — to exert inappropriate influence over library programming by withholding its donors’ contributions intended for the library. Throughout the last year, the Trustees and library staff have made repeated outreach to the Friends in an effort to reach a shared understanding about our organizations’ roles and working relationship. The organization was not receptive to these efforts.

“Ultimately, the donors who support the Friends’ efforts do so out of care and concern for the library. The withholding of these donations, often pending our agreement to myriad conditions, is inappropriate and goes against donors’ intent.

“We have asked that the Friends organization turns over any remaining funds it has received that were intended for the library. The work and programming of the Goodnow Library continues unabated. I am pleased to share that the Trustees have secured alternative funding sources for important programs historically supported by the Friends, including museum passes and assorted programming.

“A continued relationship between the Library and the Friends is untenable and counterproductive, and we have elected to move forward without their future support, albeit with gratitude for their contributions in the past.”