

**From:** Elsbeth Mehrer <emehrer@bgcc.ab.ca>  
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**To:** Rowe, Timothy S.  
**Subject:** [EXT] Speaking notes on Social Wellbeing

### **Social Well Being Policy - SPC on CPS - Wednesday, March 13**

- Members of Council, thank you for this opportunity. My name is Elsbeth Mehrer and I'm a volunteer member of the new Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee. Our committee has met three times since we were appointed late last year and has been working with City staff to review drafts of the policy before you this morning.
- Our committee includes members of various other Boards, Committees and Commissions as well as citizens at large. We each bring the best of ourselves to the table and seek to question and learn from the perspectives of others. At the core, our mandate is to illuminate blind spots.
- This past Sunday, my son and I had opportunity to spend part of the afternoon in the spectacular New Central Library. It was packed with a cross section of people: some were practicing dance with their club in the atrium, some were working on resumes at computer terminals, others were chasing toddlers through the kids zone.
- The library on this afternoon -- indeed each time I've had opportunity to visit -- was bustling with people of all walks of life enjoying beautiful, dignified space. None of us were asked to demonstrate our income, or our ancestry, or our age or our ability on the way in the door. This motley assembly of people did not and does not happen by accident.
- In the performance hall, Mayor Nenshi was speaking Sunday afternoon to a group of young people who came together to ask him about transportation, civic participation and issues of mental health and addiction. Youth developed and asked the questions and, in the time I was there, most focused at their core on questions of fairness and access.
- In his remarks Mayor Nenshi referenced snow clearing as an example of a way in which the details make a difference. He described watching four older women leaving a theatrical performance: three stomping on a snow bank in an effort to pack it down and make it passable for their friend who used a mobility aid.
- This Social Well Being Policy is about the details. It's about applying a systematic approach to ensuring civic volunteers, employees and elected officials actively ask the question "who is missing" from their planning and deliberation.
- This policy may cause discomfort and push well intentioned folks to think differently about everything from the time of their meeting to the angle of the ramp on their bus. Or, as we heard this morning, the accessibility of a artists application or the availability of benches along the pathways. - It will require more thoughtful approaches to data collection and analysis such that we can effectively measure how differences in gender, age, ability and income have an impact
- Taken together with the commitment of people to building an ever more workable city for all Calgarians, this policy will lay the foundation for more intentional work to improve equitable access to City services, address our shared commitment to settler-indigenous Reconciliation, support and grow culture and address social issues before they begin.
- Members of Committee, the Social Wellbeing Committee supports this policy. We encourage you to vote in favour of it today and we look forward to partnering with you to ensure its implementation and activation across the corporation.
- Thank you

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Sent from my iPhone - please excuse errors

