MEMORANDUM

To:	**Newmarket Public Library Board**
From:	Todd Kyle
Date:	**December 16, 2015**
Re:	**Community use of meeting room space**

Background:

The Library's makes meeting room space available on a fee for rental basis, with lower rates for non-profit agencies. Exceptions to this include:

- study rooms, which may be used for meetings for free on a drop-in basis only;
- organizations with which the Library has a mutual exemption from room rental fees, namely the Town of Newmarket and the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce;
- public programs where the Library and a community partner cooperatively plan and deliver the program, as specified in the Programming Policy.

The latter tends to involve Library staff collaborating, to differing degrees, on planning, hosting, and marketing the program. The event is presented as a Library offering, and the Library takes responsibility for the content. However, limited staff resources may limit the amount of this type of programming.

This has prompted a re-imagining of the Library's role as one of a facilitator of community-based programming through a less onerous partnership arrangement. This is consistent with the Strategic Plan and the Programming Policy, and fulfills the goal in the 2015 Business Plan to "explore offering space to community groups to present public programs supporting community development and dialogue".

As part of this exploration, the Library had occasion to pilot a number of community partnership programs that loosened the responsibilities. In the first, the Humber River Shakespeare Company approached the Library about organizing Shakespeare Allowed, in which one professional Company actor leads a play reading with all interested attendees. The Library provided all marketing, but its planning and hosting duties were limited. In the second, the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce was looking for a larger space for its LEARN marketing seminars, and offered to allow the Library to introduce each seminar with a brief presentation on Library resources. The Library hosted, but planning and marketing, and even some room set-up, was done by the Chamber.

Both programs have provided excellent value to the community and to the Library. Shakespeare Allowed brought an enriching literary experience and fulfilled both the learning and community

dialogue goals of the Library. LEARN brought professional business learning and a new audience to the Library, building on the Chamber's existing marketing and member network.

Conclusions:
It is proposed that in order to facilitate more programming partnerships, this broader view of cooperative planning and delivery of programming be taken. For some programs, this may mean that the Library's participation would be limited to approving the program's purpose and content. For others, the Library's hosting duties would be limited to providing a Library display or presentation to attendees. In some cases, the partner might do the bulk of the marketing, with the Library approving the copy and assuring its support is acknowledged; the Library would always at minimum place the program on its online Event Calendar. Finally, responsibility for room set-up and take down could in some cases rest with the partner rather than with Library staff.

The Programming Policy would allow the current safeguards to the Library's reputation and to open access to be preserved:
- The Library reserves the sole right to pursue the program or not (and therefore to determine the parameters of its involvement)
- The program must involve a wide spectrum of viewpoints, preventing the partner from using it to engage in political advocacy
- Programs must be open and accessible to all members of the public
- Fees may be charged only where there is a net revenue to the Library (this is usually only when a paid contracted programmer is engaged by the Library)
- Promotion of a business cannot be the primary purpose of the program

In a way, this model could be called an exchange: in exchange for a waiver of rental fees, a community group agrees to provide public programming supporting the Library's role as a centre of dialogue and discovery. One of the areas in which this "exchange" model would be particularly useful is in giving an opportunity for interest groups that arise from IdeaMarket discussions a place to continue their discussion. However, this would have to be restricted in order to prevent the Library offering space for political advocacy planning. In addition, this model would be of use in collaborating with cultural agencies such as the Newmarket Arts Council, in order to deepen the Library's relevance to the ongoing development of Ontario's "culture strategy".

The following motion is recommended:

THAT the Library Board receive the report on Community Use of Meeting Room Space.