

The Elmhurst Library Board of Trustees and the Director of the Elmhurst Public Library wish to respond to the letter to the Editor posted by Elaine Fleming on February 21, 2013. Ms. Fleming and four other Elmhurst residents attended the Library Board meeting on February 19, 2013. This group of Elmhurst residents had previously submitted Materials Reconsideration Requests to the Board of Trustees, asking the Board to reconsider loaning M or mature-rated video games to Library patrons. Four members of the group spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting. They asked the Board to consider re-examining their Collection Management Plan to provide an extra level of scrutiny when deciding whether to purchase M-rated games. Several members of the Board expressed their opinions about this request. At the end of the discussion, the Library Director summarized the discussion and clarified the next steps that the Board of Trustees wanted her to take regarding this request. Because the account in the letter to the editor of what transpired at the meeting didn't concur with what the Board of Trustees and the Library Director recalled, the Library Director and several staff members listened to the audio recording of the meeting. We want to clarify what steps the Board of Trustees has directed the staff to take in examining this issue. The Board has directed Ms. Campe, the Library Director, to form a staff committee to look at the Collection Management Plan. The staff will provide a report to the Board with recommendations for revisions or additions to the Collection Management Plan. The staff will also provide the Board with a detailed account of the procedures that staff members follow when choosing materials for the collection. The Board of Trustees will use this information to decide what they will do next in examining this request.

To further clarify, the Board of Trustees and the Library Director are taking these requests very seriously. The issue has been on the agenda of the last two Board Meetings, staff members have met with one of the concerned patrons, and the Library Director has compiled information for the Board about M-rated video games. To present all sides of the issue, she also provided the Board with information about censorship and included checkout statistics for the M-rated games.

In the letter to the editor it was also stated that the Board and the Director did not see the importance of having policies in place that govern materials selection that are similar to other top-rated libraries. Like other area libraries, the Elmhurst Public Library has a detailed Collection Management Plan, a Materials Selection Policy and a Materials Reconsideration Request Policy. All these policies can be found on our web site. Policies are reviewed and revised by the Board every three years or as needed.

The Elmhurst Public Library employs 21 professional librarians who select materials, all with a Master of Library Science. Materials selection decisions are thoughtful, informed and responsive to the community we serve. Selectors use their education, experience, knowledge of the community, circulation statistics, patron requests, the Collection Management Plan, and review journals to build a collection that is used by Elmhurst residents at a rate seven times higher than the national average.

As always, the Board of Trustees and the staff of the Elmhurst Public Library are here to serve the community by ensuring that the Library continues to enrich life in Elmhurst by providing opportunities to explore, learn and grow.