The Southbank Residents Association (SRA) is impressed with the alacrity with which this project is being progressed.

However, SRA is disappointed that the document did not acknowledge the role of SRA in advocating for this project, against the wishes of the City of Melbourne at the time, to sell the whole block for a housing development where the funds were directed to the redevelopment of the Queen Victoria Market, yet here we are today with funding short-falls for the City Road Masterplan.

At this very forum on 18 March 2018 we made a submission to the Boyd park agenda item rezoning the space to make way for this development. In that meeting we specifically requested the entirety of the ground and first floors of the anticipated development for community space. After that meeting I consciously engaged with the then deputy Lord Mayor, Nicholas Reece, to further spruik this concept, which at the time appeared to be well received. When the space was officially negotiated Nicholas Reece had great pleasure to inform me/SRA personally of this outcome and the work he did behind the scenes.

From the onset SRA requested, verbally and by email, to be engaged with how this new community space, in conjunction with the current Boyd space, would be allocated. Only to find on release of this meeting agenda that the key decision has already been made, that is, the whole new community space will be allocated to the library and that any consultation will be about what to do with the leftovers. This does not instill confidence in the word of the City of Melbourne in regard to consultation. But this is not the first time we have seen such lack of consideration and communication with SRA. Who decided not to engage with SRA during this critical design phase?

May we also remind you, this very space currently known as Boyd community Hub, came about from significant lobbying by SRA as far back as 2006. Our lobbying is recorded in council records from the time.

We have played a significant role in where we are today and it hurts us that this is continually not recognised. We couldn’t even garnish a

mention in this report that we suggested this in 2018. Does this council not want to acknowledge the achievements of Southbank Residents Association role with this and the Boyd Community Hub? Maybe, is it too much to ask for something to be named after Southbank Residents Association, maybe a room, to acknowledge our role in getting us to where we are?

However there seems to be a number of anomalies and concerns, which suggest that this alacrity has been accompanied by some lack of oversight.

We have outlined these in our written submission and we hoped you councillors have read the submission as it provides valuable insight with why we cannot support this motion as there is inadequate allocated time for us to outline here. In any case, a key note is that 1000sqm was always spruiked, yet we now learn it is actually 900m2.

If the anomalies listed had not been identified, then the timeline for consultation was achievable and the scope of the consultation is sufficiently well designed to achieve its purpose. However, addressing those anomalies may push back the timeline.

Given the unanswered questions in this plan, the SRA is not able to support this proposal and requests the officers revisit draft functional layout.

This is a compromised plan. It is regrettable that a plan with the new library, all on one floor was not proposed. It appears the City of Melbourne has come off second best in the negotiation for this project. The negotiating team should explain to Council, and the community, why they accepted a two-floor solution when a one-floor solution was always spruiked. This is so wasteful of council funds and does not deliver to ratepayers an appropriate bang for buck.