



## ***George Ashe Library Book Club***

The members of the George Ashe Library Book Club wish to express their concerns with the new '*Revision Policy*' currently being considered by the Pickering Public Library.

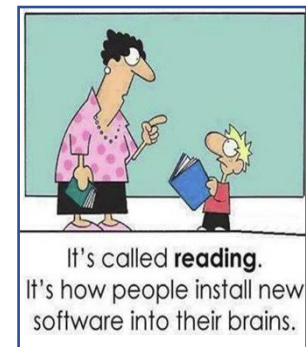
As per the Library Board meeting, January 25, 2018, "The Board Chair asked for a letter from the book clubs on this issue that outlines their concerns. The Library Board will respond in writing."

### ***Concerns, issues and reservations***

The George Ashe Library Book Club has serious concerns, issues and reservations with the new "revisions policy."

### ***Accessibility***

The library revision plan claims to improve and expand accessibility to a broader portion of the community by a 'lottery system.' However, the plan terminates this accessibility to the existing clubs which have already been recognized and authorized by the library.



Not only has the George Ashe Library Book Club been an active book club within the Pickering Public Library system, but it has developed rules, directions and structural guidelines based on the directives given by the library. The club has met monthly, consistently and regularly. Membership and attendance have been consistent and excellent as overseen and regulated by the library moderators assigned to the club. Additionally, the George Ashe Library Book Club newsletter has promoted public awareness of the book club, along with the Pickering Public library itself, by its openly accessible Internet presence. In short, without formal guidance from the Pickering Public Library, this book club has demonstrated itself as being real, dynamic and very active, and open and welcoming to any and all interested Pickering residents.

### ***Impact on staff resources***

The George Ashe Library Book Club submits book title selections from a library approved list *one year ahead* of club meetings, thus providing the library staff with adequate time to process and organize books for the club. Where titles were not available, the members have readily accepted whatever alternate book selections which were available.

### ***Meeting space***

The Pickering library space availability seems to be very practical, rather than limited. Using the George Ashe Library as an example, and assuming that the optimum time for book club meetings is the evening, there is a possibility of approximately 20+ sessions each month. Use by the 3 book clubs at the George Ashe Library leaves 17 sessions available for alternate use as the branch sees fit.

### ***Equal accessibility***

The George Ashe Library Book Club has been engaging members of the Pickering community for more than five years. Membership has always been near full capacity. When member openings have occurred, the club has always been encouraging of the addition of new members from the community.

### ***Lottery system***

The suggested lottery system for future book clubs has yet to be clearly defined or explained by the Pickering Public Library. It has been implied that this new lottery system would be based on a 'draw' in order to broaden the equitability and equality of access for Pickering residents. The misleading implication here is that the George Ashe Library Book Club somehow limits access to Pickering residents. This is very confusing as the club has openly and repeatedly informed branch staff of membership openings based on turnover and member absenteeism. The George Ashe Library Book Club exists now, meets regularly, and has a steadfast core of members who attend with consistency but remains open to recruitment of new members whenever membership space permits it. This book club unreservedly supports and always has supported the philosophy of the Pickering Public Library giving greater access to more members of the community. This book club has always been open to new members and will continue with that philosophy as long as it exists.

### ***Public input***

With all due respect, we urge that the Pickering Public Library Board hold public hearings to receive community input regarding book clubs and how they can support the library philosophy of greater accessibility.

Terminating the existence of any of the current Pickering Library book clubs seems contrary to the claimed aims of increasing accessibility of the Pickering residents. At the very least, given the longevity, integrity and dedication of the current book clubs, and the minimal impact that they have on the personnel and the space allotment available at the Pickering library branches, we respectfully suggest the Pickering Public Library '*grandfather*' these existing book clubs and that the *Revision Plan* be implemented as a partnership with the current book clubs, rather than becoming their replacement.

Sincerely,

*The George Ashe Library Book Club*

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Cc: John Sabeau, Library Board Chair  
Cathy Grant, Library CEO