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# SWYSTUN

**FOR MAYOR**  
Wed. Oct. 28, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**A CASE OF TRANSPARENCY...**

**October 16, 2009**

## **OCTOBER 16, 2009 – 45<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE MENDEL ART GALLERY**

Lenore Swystun, Mayoral Candidate, shares concerns with residents over the proposed move of the Mendel Art Gallery to River Landing. Today is the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mendel's opening. Save for a letter to the editor in the Star Phoenix by a grandson of Fred Mendel, October 15, 09, there is no mention of this occasion on either the Mendel Art Gallery's website or the City of Saskatoon's website. Yet, the topic of the Mendel's future continues to be top of mind for residents across Saskatoon. The cost and lack of transparency associated with the move of the Mendel is upsetting for many residents and taxpayers of Saskatoon and patrons of the Mendel beyond the borders of this city.

At mayoral forums held this week, Atchison stated that the Federal and Provincial governments did not want to fund the expansion of the Mendel. The problem is, we have no way of really knowing the full rationale behind this. "The decision to move the Mendel Art Gallery to River Landing and rename it the Art Gallery of Saskatchewan happened without any public consultation," mayoral candidate Lenore Swystun said, "At no point was this issue debated publicly by City Council."

At an in-camera meeting on March 23, 2009, the City's Executive Committee approved in principle, a new art gallery as the anchor facility at River Landing Destination Centre. This information came to be known because a private citizen made a Freedom of Information request. On April 3, 2009, Atchison participated in a press conference announcing plans to move the nationally recognized Mendel Art Gallery into a new building located at River Landing. On September 23, 2009, Atchison participated in a press conference announcing funding for the \$58-million facility. The City's contribution is approximately \$17-million, plus \$7-million for an underground parkade. Atchison was quoted by *CBC News* as saying the city's portion "will come out of our capital projects."

"As mayor, I can assure you that on a project of this size and civic importance involving publicly owned land and significant public dollars, there would be public debate before Council made a decision," Swystun stated, "as Mayor, I will work to improve transparency and accountability at City Hall. One of my first measures will be implementation of a public engagement policy." Similar policies have been advanced in other Canadian cities. It is time Saskatoon took a similar step."

Specific to the Mendel, as Mayor, Swystun will work closely with the new council and members of the public to review the full cost and long-term implications of the current decision to move the Mendel. Issues of transparency and accountability are hot on the campaign trail especially coupled with the issue of spending.

*Source: COS River Landing Project Funding Update, Aug. 26, 2009; COS Corporate Services Department; Provincial and Federal Government New Releases.*

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