

Frequently Asked Questions Zoé Vallé Memorial Library (ZVML)

The Chester Village Commission will fully implement the requirements of the 1928 Warranty Deed to operate a community library and civic centre. The Village's plans are all addressed in our Proposal, available on our website [here](#).



Will the Zoé Vallé remain as a Library?

YES! The Library will not only continue to exist in its present configuration of the front two rooms on the ground floor, but will be expanded to include more areas of the building.

Are Village of Chester offices moving to the building?

YES, the Commission's two permanent staff will occupy non-library space.

The Commission will occupy one room on the second floor for the Clerk-Treasurer's office. Our part-time Administrative Assistant will occupy a space on the first floor so that, in addition to her regular duties, she will assist in greeting library patrons when needed. Having staff in the building enables longer and regular opening hours.

The task of assisting library patrons will be led by South Shore Public Libraries (SSPL) professional librarians, who will train Village staff and volunteers.

Does the Village occupancy change the building's heritage designation? What about accessibility?

NO. Heritage designations remain with a property, regardless of the owner or operator. The Municipality will continue to hold the title.

ALL public buildings – government offices, libraries, etc. – must be accessible by 2030 under legislation. What this will mean for the ZVML is an accessible entrance at the side door leading into the Ondaatje Room, and enlarging the single washroom there.

Will groups and associations be able to use the space for meetings?

YES. The Library's facilities will be available for groups and associations for meetings. The space is not suitable for large groups, but we will accommodate all appropriate requests.

We look forward to continuing the long tradition of providing a welcoming community resource and gathering place. Stay tuned for an online booking calendar.

Will the Lightfoot Tower and gardens be utilized and available?

YES. The Lightfoot Tower and the gardens will be available for all customary uses and programming, and we will actively invite innovative suggestions from the community.

Will volunteers and programming suggestions be welcome?

ABSOLUTELY! Volunteers and community suggestions will be solicited and welcomed.

Is South Shore Public Libraries involved? Will we have the services of a librarian?

YES. The South Shore Public Libraries (SSPL) is excited to work with the Village of Chester. The Commission anticipates a partnership that provides expanded access to a broad collection of resources from across the region and province.

Initially, there will be a part-time librarian for two half days to support specific programs. The cost for this is \$10,000/year. We will expand librarian time as finances permit. In addition, the SSPL will conduct training for volunteers and Commission staff to ensure effective support for library patrons.

Will we offer community programming?

YES. We are planning a Saturday morning children's reading and activity program to be run by the SSPL, and we look forward to continuing children's art workshops. Book clubs and authors' readings are also being planned.

Will we offer free internet access and availability for folks to print?

YES. We will install internet in the building for Village and Library staff and will also have public Wi-Fi available.

It is also our intention to have at least one computer station in the library available to the public. This will be a full-service station with internet access and print availability.

Will we be able to offer tax receipts for donations?

YES. Revenue Canada's charitable status for the ZVML Endowment Fund will continue intact.

Is it odd to house a library and other offices in the same building?

NO, not at all. In Canada, many public libraries are supported in part or in whole by municipal/local governments. It is very common for municipal offices and public libraries to occupy the same building.

The Commission's main office will be on the second floor (the former caretakers' living quarters), and the Administrative Assistant's office will be on the first floor but will not intrude on library space.

Can a Village Commission run a library?

YES. Part XVIII "Villages" of the Municipal Government Act (MGA), Section 423(1)(t), explicitly gives villages the power to "expend money" to operate "public libraries". Additionally, Sections 60 and 61 of the MGA provide municipalities and villages with the power to provide or administer municipal services previously provided by another municipal unit.

Can you explain the finances in a nutshell?

The Village will bring the money we now pay in rent of approx. \$20,000/year to support the ZVML's physical plant (the building and grounds) such as heat, insurance, maintenance, etc. so those costs will no longer come out of the Endowment Fund. In addition, the Village pays another approximately \$12,000/year for internet, phones, lights, cleaning, etc. for our current location, so these utility costs will transfer and will also not need to come out of the Endowment Fund.

Library and Village Commission funds will be kept entirely separate. The Endowment Fund itself will be in an investment account to provide better protection of the capital and better returns.

In short, this means that the ZVML Endowment Fund will not need to support the physical plant but can be dedicated to supporting new and exciting library and civic activities.

Have a question we didn't answer here or a great idea?

Contact us directly!

The Village Commission will ensure that ZVML operations are sustainable for the future, long after those of us involved today are gone.

March 6, 2026