

Committee: **London Public Library Board**

Organization/Sector represented: **Civil Society**

Name: **James Chan**

Occupation: **Self-employed freelance**

Work experience: **For the past three years, I was the Civic Programming Lead at Impact Hub Ottawa, a creative and entrepreneurial community of social changemakers not unlike London's own Innovation Works. As part of the leadership team, I oversaw our capacity-building and civic engagement programs and events, and supported strategic partnerships as well as our expansion. Prior to that, I was the Manager of Partnerships and Community Engagement at MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, one of the world's largest urban innovation hubs.**

Education: **I hold an HBA from the Ivey Business School. You can learn more about my professional credentials through my LinkedIn and my personal website at jameschan.ca.**

Skills: **Libraries around the world are evolving from their traditional roles as keepers of knowledge in the form of books and materials, to facilitators of curiosity and capacity-building in citizens -- in other words, helping people realize their full potential through equitable and open access to skills, resources, peer networks, and civic and digital literacy in order for them to participate fully in our economy and society. My career has been all about creating the conditions for this capacity to flourish, and turning buildings and physical environments into places where a sense of community belonging thrives. Libraries are more than just places with books -- they are often refuges for parents with limited transportation, sanctuaries for marginalized populations with nowhere else to turn, a lifeline for newcomers trying to navigate bureaucracies from multiple levels of government, and a place of discovery and passion for youth who excel more at creating things than studying from a textbook. The point is: I can help the London Public Library Board realize its own potential as more than just a collection of well-designed, well-maintained, and well-stocked buildings, but as true gathering places where people are the main asset.**

Interest reason: **I have recently made London my home after living in Calgary, Toronto, and Ottawa. I have served on Boards of Directors of community organizations working in areas that I am passionate about, and wish to continue that service here in my new home. Public libraries represent to me the very best ideal of community-building: the transformation of space to place, the inherent lack of barriers to access, and the high value society places on its existence and future success. I know I have a lot to offer and would be grateful for the opportunity to contribute to London's future success through serving on the Board.**

Contributions: **London is on the cusp of transitioning from a 'big small city' to a 'small big city'. With this growth comes both challenges and opportunities, which I have witnessed and participated in from my experiences in other major urban centres in Canada. I bring the ability to translate between big picture vision and the need to keep what makes London a unique and special place. In other words, learning from best practices from elsewhere but knowing when and how to tailor its strategy and implementation for our local context.**

There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to building a culture of civic participation and a sense of community where everyone belongs.

Past contributions: **I have served on the Boards of community organizations with significant budgets, headcount, and geographic scope, and have been regarded as someone who can always be counted on to represent the interests of the people the organization is meant to serve. In this case, my fiduciary responsibilities are first and foremost to the residents of London, particularly the ones who most depend on the Library and those who may not have the privilege of time, access, networks, or agency to advocate for themselves.**

Interpersonal: **I have made a career in the social innovation sector which believes in and intentionally seeks out relationships, partnerships, and a physical environment with people and organizations from different perspectives, backgrounds, and sectors. I have also spent my life in diverse cities where interacting with, appreciating, and leveraging the diversity of abilities and lived experiences of people around me are a daily fact of life.**

Interview interest: **Yes**