

Del Grande won't apologize for 'Blockbuster' comment

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TORONTO - Councillor Paul Ainslie blasted Budget Chief Mike Del Grande Wednesday for questioning whether the library should be a taxpayer-funded free video store.

Ainslie, chairman of the Toronto Public Library board, took to the council floor Wednesday and asked Del Grande to apologize for comments he made about the library on Tuesday.

“I don’t have any apologies to make,” responded Del Grande, who this week questioned whether a city library should become a “Blockbuster.”

“I think it is very appropriate for me to suggest we need to have dialogue — which is what I said — with respect to what we do in the library and how we do it.”

Del Grande questioned Tuesday the money the Toronto Public Library spends on Hollywood blockbusters and other movies, including foreign language films, adding “25% of our circulation budget in libraries is for DVDs and movies.”

Ainslie said the numbers Del Grande tossed around were “inaccurate and reflected poorly on the library.”

“About 9% of our total budget is spent on DVDs and CDs,” he said. “A far cry from the 25% he is talking about.”

Ainslie encouraged Del Grande to come to the library board and ask staff questions.

“I think the people of Toronto get excellent value for their tax dollars that go into material at the (library),” he added.

Councillor Cesar Palacio, a member of the library board, agreed that the library should question the number of Hollywood movies it buys. He pointed out around 23.3% of all library items checked out in 2010 were DVDs.

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