



Masonic Library of Detroit

Thursday, July 16th, 2026

TO:

Masonic Temple Association of Detroit Owner Bodies
Masonic Temple Association of Detroit Trustees

Brethren,

We are writing to inform you that the Detroit Masonic Temple Library, Archive, & Research Center (now officially known by our original 1882 name, Masonic Library of Detroit) will no longer be operating inside of the Detroit Masonic Temple, nor will we be providing tours of the building going forward. The Library's extensive collection has been relocated to a secure, climate-controlled office space while we work out the details for our next permanent location.

The reason for this change is quite simple; the Masonic Temple Association of Detroit refused to renew our long-standing lease agreement. In order to fulfill its fiduciary duties, the Library board of directors could not allow the collection to remain in a space with no landlord-tenant protections, particularly those involving unauthorized access and proper notice. Despite the legal requirement for reasonable notice (24 hours) being given prior to entry by a Landlord, the Library has witnessed, via security camera footage, the unauthorized entry by MTA staff and officials over a dozen times just in the past 8 months alone. In some instances, MTA staff has been observed handling delicate books or artifacts belonging to the Library, or taking photos and video of sensitive materials. As it is our obligation to safeguard these items from improper handling, damage, and theft, we could not allow the collection to become legally vulnerable.

The MTA offered the former Scottish Rite offices on the West side of the 6th floor to the Library rent-free in exchange for relinquishing the 4th floor Egyptian Lodge Room & adjacent rooms which the Library has paid rent to occupy for many years. After a verbal agreement with General Manager Ryan Groat that a new lease for the 6th floor would be forthcoming, the Library agreed and, in good-faith, proceeded to spend over \$8000 to install new carpet and high-security locks on the 6th floor in October of 2025. During this time, the Library began packing its entire collection in anticipation of this move, a monumental task.

When the Library requested the new lease from General Manager Groat in January of 2026, we were informed that he would need to discuss with MTA President John Kashinsky. General Manager Groat also informed the Library that no further rent would be due for 2026. We received nothing until February 3rd, when a letter was sent by President Kashinsky on behalf of the MTA Board of Trustees thanking the Library for our "commitment, expertise, and enthusiasm" while also suspending tour operations with no explanation. As tours were the primary funding source for the Library, this was extremely concerning given the amount of money we had spent on renovations, and still needed to spend for new book shelving.

On February 4th, the Library responded with a letter to the MTA trustees asking for an explanation for this suspension, and detailing all of the internal changes and improvements already made by the new Library board. No official response was received, though several MTA trustees reached out privately, indicating that they had not heard of any issues with the Library, and had no prior knowledge of this letter or the decision to suspend tours. The Library did however receive rent invoices for January-April 2026 on March 4th, contrary to the agreement with GM Groat. In addition to these invoices, the MTA withheld payment on the ticket sales for 2 buildings tours conducted by the Library in January and March, with no notice or explanation. These payments remain withheld by the MTA as of this writing.

On March 9th, Library President Brandon Langford called MTA President John Kashinsky to attempt to dispel or resolve whatever his perceived issues with the Library were. President Langford requested a meeting with President Kashinsky, which he declined. President Kashinsky stated that he felt the MTA needed to take control of the Library again, citing long-resolved and in some cases decades old issues with the previous Library board. Kashinsky was adamant that a new lease would not be given to the Library. He also voiced extreme displeasure with the Library having sent the response letters to the entire MTA board vs. just the "Executive Board" (MTA Officers). The phone call ended with no resolution, and President Kashinsky indicated the Library would be discussed at the April 16th MTA meeting.

On April 15th, the day prior to the quarterly MTA meeting, President Langford received a phone call from President Kashinsky and General Manager Ryan Groat. During the call, President Kashinsky again offered the 6th floor to the Library - with no lease. With no assurance afforded by a lease agreement that the Library's collection would be safe or that we would not be asked to leave without notice, the Library had no choice but to insist on a lease agreement, which President Kashinsky again refused to entertain.

On April 16th 2026, the entire Library board of directors assembled to speak with the MTA during their regular quarterly meeting. MTA Vice President Jim Butt indicated to the Library President during a phone call on March 10th, 2026 that the Library would have an opportunity to present a case to the MTA during this meeting. However, when the Library board of directors entered the board room prior to the meeting to introduce themselves to MTA President John Kashinsky and politely asked to address the MTA, we were told plainly "absolutely not."

During the MTA meeting, when asked about the Library issue by an MTA trustee, President Kashinsky stated that no Library discussion would occur that day. A motion was made and supported during the MTA meeting to allow the Library board to speak, but President Kashinsky ruled the motion out of order. It was then suggested to give the Library a 1-year lease, but Kashinsky refused. Kashinsky ultimately tabled the discussion until the July 16th meeting, knowing that it would occur after the expiration of the Library's lease.

Following these events, and in response to a legal-style letter entitled "PRESERVATION AND NON-REMOVAL NOTICE" sent to the Library by President Kashinsky on April 16th warning the Library not to remove anything from the building, the Library retained legal counsel to interpret this letter and advise on the next steps, since the letter mentioned "court involvement." This "Preservation and Non-Removal Notice" included an inventory the Library created in 2002 as part of the legal separation of the Library and the MTA by a resolution voted on and passed by the MTA on March 21st, 2002. The property identified as belonging to the MTA in 2002 was a list of 35 pieces of furniture, as well as the Egyptian Lodge Room furniture.

The Library's attorney sent a response letter to the MTA trustees on May 1st indicating that those items which could be identified and located would be returned to the MTA. As of this writing, nearly all of the items in this inventory were located, catalogued, and stored in the Egyptian Lodge Room. In addition to these 35 items, the Library also identified over 70

additional items that it believes belong to the MTA, which have also been catalogued and stored in the Egyptian Lodge room. The letter also indicated our strong desire to remain in the building, and suggested a neutral mediator be brought in since our attempts at solving this as brother masons had not been fruitful. There were no threats of legal action by the Library whatsoever contained in this letter, nor at any other time to date.

Immediately following the letter of May 1st, General Manager Groat instructed an MTA employee to block all of the Library's surveillance cameras from the Masonic Temple wireless network. Given the ongoing concerns of unauthorized entry, the increasingly hostile environment, and spurious property ownership claims, the Library subsequently acquired private 5G internet service in order to continue monitoring the collection remotely.

In response to the Library's letter, the MTA's attorney sent a list of requirements for the Library to remain in the building, and requested that it not be shared with the rest of the MTA trustees. Many of the points were agreeable (such as "No use of premises for consumption of alcohol or any consumption of any controlled substances"), however some were unreasonable or objectionable, particularly those infringing on our autonomy as an entity predating the Masonic Temple Association of Detroit by 12 years (1882 vs. 1894) as well as our rights and responsibilities as an independent Michigan nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) status.

- *Limited hours no access from 11 pm to 8 am.*
- *Financial controls over collection of donations and expenditures. (Disclosures required of entire collection and donation source.).*
- *Non-competition with concessions otherwise operated by MTA or licensed by MTA to others (Tours, Sale of souvenirs, Other)*
- *Include artifact-specific insurance, inventory, and de-accessioning protocols.*
- *Agree that there is a disagreement over the ownership of the collection because to the dissolution of the entity that operated the library from 1981 to 2011.*

The MTA, apparently, believes that since a lapse in filing annual reports resulting in our previous 1981 non-profit corporation having been "dissolved by operation of law", the ownership of the property owned by the Library is in question, which is noted in another claim by the MTA from the same document:

Need assurance from the library operator that it has the right to the custody and control of its collection, resolving any issues of ownership that may be dispute due to the absence of a proper transfer, assignment or disposition from MTA (historically the owner and operator of the library) to a 1981 entity seemingly by a 2002 Board Resolution, Audit and Inventory to Detroit Masonic Temple Library and Museum which dissolved in 2011. The dissolution occurred without an approved transfer of charity assets.

In 2016 Detroit Masonic Temple Library, Archive & Research Center—was created with its own bylaws and corporate identity. It was formed as 505 (c)(3) entity.

There is no evidence of proper hand-off was made between the 1981 entity and the 2026 entity.

However, as the library has maintained sole legal custody of its assets since at least 2002, and since the Library as an entity has never ceased to exist or operate, this claim has no legal basis as outlined in the Library attorney's response to the above statement:

The Library has the right to custody and control of the involved assets initially based upon the Resolution of the Masonic Temple Association of Detroit, dated March 21, 2002, as well as the Inventory dated April 17, 2002, which would be incorporated by reference within such Resolution.

The fact that a predecessor organization was technically dissolved by operation of the Michigan Non-Profit Corporation Statute for failure to file annual reports or similar circumstances is abrogated by the continuing functioning of the Association, and its re-incorporation as a Michigan non-profit corporation in 2016. Since there were no intervening events, the Library continues to function as a successor-in-interest to the previously referred to organization and is entitled to all the property of the Association as established by the 2002 Resolution.

The continuous sole possession and control of the referred to items, in a manner akin to the concept of adverse possession as it impacts real estate, would after the expiration of the applicable statute of limitation (3 years in the case of conversion of personal property and 6 years maximum) would establish the ownership of same by the Library.

Since there was no "dissolution" of the prior entity there has been no requirement for the approval of the transfer of assets as such continued to be owned by the Library before and after its reincorporation.

The referred property separately owned by the "Scottish Rite" was previously abandoned by the Scottish Rite. When it was placed in a dumpster by the General Manager of the building, Representatives of the Library recognizing the historical significance retrieved same from the dumpster, and have preserved and maintained sole custody and control of such records from that time forward (since approximately 2019).

Following multiple exchanges between the 2 attorneys attempting to come to a resolution, on Friday, June 12th, President Kashinsky indicated that he wanted to meet with President Langford one-on-one. President Langford agreed to this, and at the recommendation of both attorneys, requested counsel to be present for the discussion. The meeting was summarily called off by Kashinsky, instead offering a 60-day extension to remain in the building while negotiations continued, with the stipulation that we had to move to the 6th floor. The Library once again explained that we could not spend the money to move to the 6th floor without a lease agreement. The Library suggested that we stay in the current 4th floor space for 60 days while continuing to attempt to come to a resolution. President Kashinsky's response was that the Egyptian Lodge Room had already been rented to Roseville Lodge and we could not remain in that space, however we have no evidence of this arrangement at present.

With no further communication, and the lease expiration days away, the Library hired a moving company to relocate most of its collection. The departure from our century-long home is not something we desired, and it is a disservice not only to the brothers in Detroit, but the fraternity and the community at large. This situation could have been avoided entirely had the MTA simply renewed the Library's lease as it has done many times in the past. We are remorseful that no reasonable agreement could be reached with the MTA for us to remain in the Temple.

In an apparent response to the announcement of the Library's relocation and re-adoption of its historic 1882 name on July 2nd, a letter from President Kashinsky was sent to all of the MTA Owner Bodies and Masonic tenants on July 6th which lacked the necessary details for brothers to fully understand this situation. The letter was distributed via email by MTA Treasurer Roger Sobran to some Masonic bodies with the added caveat "We asked that you not give any credit to what is being said by the Library. More will come to light" in the body of the email.

The letter goes on to state that “the decision to move their operations and materials within their spaces out of the Temple was made solely by the Library” - an assertion that is patently false. The letter also details plans for the MTA to start their own library and museum, which appears to correspond with plans already put into motion several months ago by the MTA to develop their own building tour program.

The Library has no interest or desire to continue on this path of escalation with the MTA, but we do intend to stand up to injustice and defamation, as well as uphold the truth and our Masonic obligations. Our mission is to preserve and promote the history of Freemasonry in Detroit, and we intend to continue to do so wherever we may end up. We look forward to inviting all brethren to visit the new Masonic Library of Detroit once we are able to recoup the substantial financial losses caused by this situation and secure a new permanent location.

Sincerely & Fraternally,

Board of Directors, Masonic Library of Detroit

Brandon P. C. Langford, PM (President)

Matthew R. Shelton, PM (Treasurer)

Stefan M. Dallakian, PM (Secretary)

Ryan M. Conn (Director)

Christopher L. Conrad (Director)

For additional information, please contact:

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