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THE CITY OF VICTORIA



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Barbara Desjardins  
1229 Esquimalt Road  
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

August 8, 2017

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT		
For Information:		
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corp Services		
RECEIVED: AUG 14 2017		
Referred: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW
<input type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> IC

Dear Mayor Desjardins,

As you know, the City of Victoria has sought your advice in considering the future of the McPherson Playhouse, and subsequently the Royal Theatre.

In the last four months, members of a working group comprised of Royal and McPherson Theatre Society (RMTS) Board Directors and staff, my Deputy City manager and staff, and Councillors Pam Madoff and Marianne Alto, have appeared at your Council to present ideas about the future of the McPherson and Royal Theatres, and ask for your guidance.

Having heard your questions and counsel, the working group has prepared a compendium of your comments, which I would like to share with you, and have attached for your information.

In a few weeks, I'll reach out to you again to invite you to participate in the next round of this work – a small focus group whose task will be to create a specific plan to guide the theatres' future governance and operations. That letter will provide you with details of the process, including dates, times, and expectations. I will also ask you to identify or confirm the Councillors who will participate from your municipality.

I thank you for the time you have already given to this work, and appreciate your future contributions.

Thank you, in advance, for your continued consideration and assistance.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Helps".

Lisa Helps  
Victoria Mayor

## **Compendium of Comments from 12 Municipalities on the Future of the Royal & McPherson Theatres**

Over the months of April, May and June 2017, Victoria Councilors Marianne Alto and Pam Madoff; and representatives from the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society were delegates at eleven Capital Region District Municipalities' Council or Committee meetings. The purpose of these delegations were to deliver a presentation, which provided information on the region's historic theatres, the McPherson Playhouse and the Royal Theatre. Each presentation concluded with an offer to take questions and a request for each municipality to join a conversation about the future of the theatres.

In July, Councillors Alto and Madoff reported on these delegations to Victoria Council.

These notes capture comments, questions and directions from these meetings.

### **View Royal, Committee of the Whole – April 11 2017**

The committee noted that View Royal is already part of the CRD Arts Development service and asked the delegation if funding for the theatres is separate from this. The delegates clarified that funding for the theatres is separate. Committee members commented that they would like to see additional budget details as the conversation moves forward and that the theatres are beautifully maintained.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, View Royal Committee of the Whole agreed that they will participate in the conversation about the future of the theatres.**

### **Highlands, Council – April 18 2017**

Council members noted that there are other theatres in the region and wondered if the process could be expanded to include all of regions' theatres. They also commented that the outdoor stage attached to the McPherson Playhouse creates a problem for sound bleeding into the theatre when there's a performance on the outdoor stage.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, the following motion was passed:**

**MOTION: 116/ 2017**

**MOVED BY: COUNCILLOR GORD BAIRD**

**SECONDED: COUNCILLOR ROESSINGH**

**That it be relayed to the delegation that Council is interested in continuing the conversation/ discussion regarding the future of the McPherson Theatre. CARRIED**

### **Metchosin, Council – April 24 2017**

Council members commented that Metchosin has a very small budget compared to other municipalities and already participates in the CRD Arts Development service. It was noted that Metchosin may want to

## **Compendium of Comments from 12 Municipalities on the Future of the Royal & McPherson Theatres**

invest in their own arts facilities in the near future. Council commented that public support for theatres is valuable and should be viewed the same way as it is for libraries and recreation centres.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, Metchosin Council agreed that they will participate in the conversation about the future of the theatres.**

### **Saanich, Committee of the Whole – May 1 2017**

Committee members had a fulsome discussion about the request to participate in a conversation about the future of the theatres. It was noted that Saanich already has a representative on the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society Board and that Saanich has its own infrastructure to support. There was a desire expressed to hear more about the design of the conversation process. Committee members commented that there has been no increase in public funding for the theatres for twenty years and that Saanich should be a part of the conversation as they are already invested through their support of the Royal Theatre.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, the following motion was passed:**

#### **MOTION**

**MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Mayor Atwell: "That Council express an initial interest in discussions with the City of Victoria on the future of the McPherson Playhouse."**

**MOVED by Councillor Brownoff and Seconded by Councillor Sanders: "That the motion be amended to add and participation will be considered following the receipt of information from the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society detailing their discussions with other municipalities and future expectations."**

**The Main Motion, as Amended, was then Put and CARRIED with Councillor Wergeland OPPOSED**

### **Colwood, Council – May 8 2017**

Council noted that there's a new theatre at Royal Bay High and a new theatre under construction at View Royal Casino, in addition to facilities in other schools. Council wondered if this process would include these other venues. The delegates responded that though this was not envisioned at the outset of the process, consideration will be given as to if this can be incorporated.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, Colwood Council agreed that they will participate in the conversation about the future of the theatres.**

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### **Langford, Administration and Finance Committee – May 9 2017**

Committee members suggested that, as funding for the arts is often a challenge, the theatres could explore offering naming rights as an additional revenue source. It was also suggested that theatre capacity for the entire region could be examined. Committee members expressed appreciation for the beauty of the two theatres and would like additional details about the next stage of the process. The delegates said that the design of the next stage is underway and details will be finalized once there is a sense of how many municipalities will be participating.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, Langford Administration and Finance committee stated that they will recommend to Langford Council that they participate in the conversation about the future of the theatres.**

### **North Saanich, Council – May 15 2017**

Council noted that North Saanich is a smaller municipality and they are cognizant of financial and personnel capacity limitations as this process moves forward. Council asked if other theatres in the region are to be considered as part of this process. The delegates replied that this notion has come up at a number of council meetings and the scope of this process is being considered. Council looks forward to receiving further details about the design of the conversation.

**At the conclusion of the process, the following motions were passed:**

#### **Motion 279**

**MOVED BY: Councillor Gartshore**

**SECONDED BY: Councillor Stock**

**279 That the District of North Saanich join with the City of Victoria and other municipalities to have a conversation about the future of the facilities.**

**CARRIED**

#### **Motion 280**

**MOVED BY: Councillor Stock**

**SECONDED BY: Councillor Thornburgh**

**That staff be directed to advise the City of Victoria of its interest in participating and obtain details of the proposed meeting date.**

**CARRIED**

### **Oak Bay, Council – May 23 2017**

Council noted that Oak Bay is already involved in the conversation by virtue of their stake in and support of the Royal Theatre. It was also noted that Oak Bay recently made a sizeable investment in Dave Dunnet theatre. Council commented that Oak Bay's citizens attend the theatres in large numbers and they are interested in being part of looking at the business case for the theatres.

## **Compendium of Comments from 12 Municipalities on the Future of the Royal & McPherson Theatres**

**At the conclusion of the presentation, the following motion was passed:**

**MOVED and seconded: That, in response to the presentation by the City of Victoria on May 23, 2017, Council express interest in participating in future discussions on aligning the Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse.**

### **Sidney, Committee of the Whole – June 5 2017**

Committee members highlighted that Sidney supports the Mary Winspear centre in a significant way and would be interested in a conversation that looked at all of the regions' venues. The committee recognized that the Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse are uniquely suited to some performances, as the Mary Winspear and other venues are uniquely suited to others. The Committee asked what the relationship between the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society and the CRD Arts Development Service. Delegates replied that there is no formal relationship between the two bodies.

**At the conclusion of the presentation the Committee stated that they would take the issue forward to Council. The following motion was passed at meeting of Sidney Council on June 26, 2017:**

#### **Motion**

**That the Town participate in discussions regarding the future of the McPherson Playhouse Theatre and that Councillor B. Fallot be appointed as the Town's representative.**

### **Central Saanich, Council – June 5 2017**

Council highlighted that much of Central Saanich's land is designated agricultural so the municipality's tax base is quite small. They noted that there are number of schools with theatres in the region and wondered if school districts should be part of the conversation. There was a comment that Central Saanich should be part of the conversation. Recognizing that this meeting has a full agenda and there was interest in further discussion it was suggested that the request for participation in the conversation be referred to a Committee of the Whole meeting.

**At a Council meeting on June 19 2017, the following motion was passed:**

#### **Question on Main as Amended:**

**That (Resolution 411.17) Councillor Paltiel and Councillor Holman be appointed to represent Central Saanich Council at meetings regarding alignment of ownership funding of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.**

**CARRIED**

**Opposed: Councillor Paltiel**

## **Compendium of Comments from 12 Municipalities on the Future of the Royal & McPherson Theatres**

### **Esquimalt, Council – June 12 2017**

Council had a very full agenda and at the end of the presentation there was no discussion.

**At the conclusion of the presentation, Council asked that they receive further information and feedback from other municipalities to inform their decision if to participate in the conversation about the future of the theatres.**

### **Victoria, Committee of the Whole and Council – July 13 2017**

At a morning Committee of the Whole meeting, Councilors Alto and Madoff presented a report on the work to date of the process to engage other CRD municipalities in a conversation about the future of the McPherson Playhouse and Royal Theatre. Along with the report was a request for Victoria to endorse continuing with the second phase of the process; a facilitated conversation about the governance, ownership and funding of the McPherson Playhouse and the Royal theatre with those municipalities that agreed to take part.

The committee expressed their support for the process as the governance, funding and use of the McPherson Playhouse in particular, has been a concern for some members for a number of years.

The committee shared their appreciation of the work of their colleagues and the project team, while highlighting their expectation that the process be concluded by the end of November 2017.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the following Motion was put forward:

**That Council endorse the RMTS/City of Victoria Partners Project Phase Two as outlined in this report, and delegate Councilors Alto and Madoff to continue facilitating the Project.**

**At the evening Council meeting, the Motion was carried unanimously.**