



Nanaimo Pride Society  
Presentation to City of Nanaimo Finance & Audit Committee  
Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*Rick Dagg: NPS Secretary:*  
[secretary@nanaimopride.ca](mailto:secretary@nanaimopride.ca)  
*Mike Scott: Director*

On behalf of the Nanaimo Pride Society, I would like to thank-you your Worship, and through you to Council, for the opportunity to talk with you this morning.

Nanaimo Pride Society [NPS] is a non-profit registered society of British Columbia whose focus is on providing safe spaces and resources to all the communities that fall under the LGBTQ2 or “Queer” umbrella.

NPS works towards these goals by educating our allies about the histories of our people with the historical and existing challenges we face. We organize events for rainbow community members to meet, discuss common issues and socialize. NPS is an advocate for our community speaking for the rainbow communities and for members unable to speak for themselves.

When I first came out in the early 1980's it was still legal to fire us from our jobs, discharge us from serving our country, evict us from homes we were renting etc with no legal options or rights. I personally saw members of my community assaulted, insulted, harassed by law enforcement and rejected by their families simply because of whom they love.

Since the 80's there has been a many positive changes in Canada regarding the societal understanding of the Queer communities. We now have legal marriage, spousal benefit recognition and legal protections on Human Rights legislation and improved societal understanding and acceptance of the value of our communities.

But there is still a long road ahead for us. Some members of our communities are struggling to move forward such as our 2-spirited, people of colour and trans community members. Our youth have a much higher rate of homelessness than non-queer and gender-conforming youth. The rate of suicide in our communities is higher than from groups outside of our rainbow umbrella.

Recently there has been a resurgence of attacks within Canada and the US on the acceptance and rights we have struggled to achieve over the past decades. Globally our community members are being denied basic human rights, tortured and murdered showing the level of misunderstanding and hatred still directed at our rainbow families.

The Queer community has a long history of activism in Nanaimo that was not very welcoming until recent years.



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The first Pride March / Parade in Nanaimo was in 1997 with some brave people walking with banners and flags.

The next Pride Parade was not held until June 2016.

Nanaimo showed their support with a large colorful noisy parade with thousands of people lining the parade route through downtown Nanaimo cheering. Most of those onlookers followed the parade in to Maffeo Sutton Park to join in the Pride Festival.

Pride Week was again well supported in 2017 & 2018. Nanaimo Pride Society is now making plans for another week of activities for 2019!!

With an estimated attendance of 10,000+ people in 2016 and numbers increasing yearly the annual Pride Parade & Festival have become one of the premier events for Nanaimo. Pride Week which draws visitors from across Vancouver Island as well as the mainland. Nanaimo Pride Week is promoted as the “Kick Off to Pride” as we are the first Pride celebration in BC.

The revenue generated by hosting a gathering this large is substantial from hotel rooms, restaurants, vehicle rentals etc. It also showcases this beautiful place we live in and shows how welcoming a community we are increasing the appeal and marketability of Nanaimo.

NPS has had a positive relationship with Council since we first approached Council in 2016 when Council agreed to paint and maintain the two Pride crosswalks on Commercial St & Bastion St. NPS shared video of the crosswalks being painted and, as reported by City staff, the videos were shared more than any other City social media event, providing a very positive message about our city.

Council agreed in 2017 to add two new crosswalks to the existing two to complete the intersection.

Council also agreed that the City would take responsibility for supplying, installing and removing all required signage and barricades needed for staging the Pride Parade.

Council agreed in 2018 to repaint the crosswalks as needed and again take responsibility for the required Pride Parade barricades and signage.

NPS is here today to make some requests both for helping us achieve our short & long-term goals. We feel that not only will this be invaluable for the local Queer community but also be very beneficial for The City of Nanaimo. We feel that this partnership between NPS and Nanaimo City Council would demonstrate that persons of all walks of life are welcome in Nanaimo. The spirit of PRIDE after all is inclusivity.



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We are asking for a multi-year agreement for the following:

- 1] The CoN take ownership again, of maintaining and repainting as needed the Pride Crosswalks on Commercial & Bastion.  
*This is something our communities nationally and internationally value as a visible sign of support for us.*
- 2] The CoN take ownership again, of supplying, installing & removing all required barricades and signage along the Pride Parade route.
- 3] The CoN grant permission for a standing reservation of Maffeo Sutton Park for the second Sunday of June to assist in planning the Pride Festival going forward.
- 4] The cost to stage the Pride Week has averaged about \$20,000, with costs rising each year.  
NPS has fundraisers and reaches out to businesses and groups in the community for support and grants to help cover the cost. To help ensure the long-term viability of Nanaimo Pride Week and allow the NPS Board to focus on some of the other urgent needs in our communities we are asking for an annual grant of \$10,000 to help ensure the future and growth of Nanaimo Pride Week. Council's support would be a strong positive statement about Council and the City of Nanaimo about inclusion of all.
- 5] Currently there is no place for our community to meet and support each other. NPS would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the City of Nanaimo on the establishment of an adequate building space, centrally located, that could be used as a permanent central resource and social space for the LGBTQ+ community.

The idea would be to model these on similar centres in Vancouver and Victoria.

If City Council decides to re-establish advisory committees, NPS would be interested to be a part of any advisory committee that addresses LGBTQ+ community issues.