

# Submission to the Planned Governance and Priorities Committee meeting on 5 Oct 2020 on arts and Culture

## Mayor and Council and Committee Chair

On an annual basis Council and Senior staff attend the UBCM. I have not attended such but I expect it is similar in structure to the Provincial Health Authority conventions I attended a chair of the Comox Valley Health Authority in the late 90s.

Of great benefit to participants are the break-out educational sessions which cover a variety of subjects relevant to procedures, policies, and staff functions. These sessions enable council and staff to interact with their counterparts from across the province to discuss common issues and possible solutions.

I think you will agree that conventions such as the UBCM enable council and staff at all levels of experience to improve their abilities and to creatively stimulate and broaden their approach to governance.

So why do I bring this up?

I do so in the hope that Council can relate to, and more fully understand the plight of the art sector in Nanaimo.

Without a city supported Centre for the Creative Arts, artists in Nanaimo are denied benefits similar to those that council and staff derive from conventions such as the UBCM.

They are denied:

The ability to conduct educational workshops to enable artists of all skill levels to grow and develop in a local, affordable environment.

They are denied:

The ability to discuss and to plan for future endeavors. While this activity may occur on an ad hoc basis in small silo groups, that is a poor substitute when compared to the ability to gather together as a sector on a regular basis.

They are denied:

The ability to exhibit and sell their work to the citizens and to visitors of this city in a professional gallery setting.

Nanaimo is the only city of its size in BC and possibly Canada that does not have a community art centre to serve the needs of its art sector and citizens.

IT IS TIME.

It is time - to move from verbal support of the arts into action.

The current OCP states as a goal:

“to make arts and culture visible and accessible. Nanaimo is a place where residents and visitors will encounter various forms of visual art as part of their daily experience. Ensure that exceptional facilities (underlining mine) are available for the creation, preservation and presentation of arts and culture within the city”

It is time to act upon those commitments.

The current Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo states:

“to support multi-use community arts space”

It is time to act upon that commitment.

The 2018 staff organised “Cultural Gathering” brought together 70 artists and art enthusiasts and concluded as their number one priority need:

“Dedicated community based, multi-use, affordable space(s) for gallery, display and performance use – arts/cultural centre”.

The resulting staff recommendation (in part) was to “explore viability of a dedicated multi-use arts space (arts centre) including how this could be financed and possible community partnerships”.

IT IS TIME

Council needs to follow its own lead. The need to update the public works facility was recognized and funding was approved to develop an architectural concept and cost estimate for upgrading.

In addition, Council approved funding for the Nanaimo Art Gallery to conduct a feasibility study of their planned expansion, funding for the improvements to the Loudon boat facility, and funding for an outside agency (oceanexp) to conduct a feasibility study for their proposal.

Mayor and Council, I want to be very clear on this point. The need for such an art facility is well established and I urge Council to make it a priority as you have done for the other aforementioned projects.

IT IS TIME

Respectfully submitted

Dennis McMahon

30 September 2020

## Endorsements

Claudia Lohman – President Nanaimo Chapter – Federation of Canadian Artists  
– 97 members

Bill Saffin – President Harbour City Photography Club – 80+ members

Cathy Galvin – Chair – Hammond Bay Studio Tour - John and Gerda Hoffman

Katherine Moore - Carmen Mongeau - Inge Riis McDonald

Sucha Ollek - Barbara Ann Scott - Karin Schieber - Karen Evans - Janice  
Evans - Sandra Johnman - Lavern Hillier - Janice Uvanile - Lauren and Brad  
Kent - Lynda and Pat Morrison - Trudy Broadley - Bonnie Stebbings – past  
president NFCA - Marilyn Strongitharm - Sharon and Alan Catto - Audrey  
Unwin - Ed and Nancy Redshaw - Maureen Nesbitt - Nanda Gano

Please note the above received over 3 days and more are expected. This list submitted incomplete due to the limited time frame available before the meeting