

AGENDA
Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee
To be held in Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams,
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue,
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

The District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the WSÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

1. CHAIR'S REMARKS

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- October 25, 2023

3. POINT IN TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT

- Shelley Cook, Executive Director, Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria

4. WINTER FESTIVAL PROPOSAL

- Sarah Faria, Community Programmer II - Events, Volunteers and Film, Community Services Division

5. UPDATE ON THE RECREATION DIVISION

- Tiana Solares, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Adjournment

Next meeting: March 27, 2024

To ensure quorum, please contact Angela Hawkshaw at 250-475-5494 ext. 3505 or angela.hawkshaw@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

MINUTES
ARTS, CULTURE, & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Committee Rm. 2 and via Microsoft Teams
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
October 25, 2023 at 5:07 p.m.

- Present: Councillor Karen Harper, Jim Hesser (via Teams); Mark Leiren-Young (via Teams); Chris Poirier-Skelton.
- Staff: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services (via Teams); Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability (via Teams); Kathy Graham, Community Programmer II, Community Services Division; and Vivian Cheung, Committee Clerk Assistant.
- Guests: Corrine Hilton, Executive Director, Saanich Neighbourhood Place; Donna-Lynne Thorpe
- Regrets: Clare Atwell, Ian Kopp, Arianna Marie Scott, Robert Randall, Kimberly Van Nieuvenhuysse.
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Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked the presenters for attending.

SAANICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLACE

The representatives gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- Saanich Neighbourhood Place (SNP) began in 1993 as a place for families, children, and youth to gather for support and to provide a wide range of community-based services. SNP is the only organization in the District of Saanich that provides these services. Many of the districts outside of Saanich come to SNP for help. This is a strain on resources and staff.
- In 1997, SNP was formally established as a registered non-profit family resource centre.
- It is important for Saanich residents to become familiar with SNP because there is a lack of recognition and understanding of what programs and support are available.
- SNP is a member of the Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses which is a group of 10 local organizations.
- The goal is to have a neighbourhood house available to all residents of Saanich that is within a 15-minute walking distance.
- SNP has many community partnerships including rental space at Broadview United, Boys & Girls Club, and TransCare BC: SAFER Youth and Family Programs.
- Broadview United location has been renovated and offers a designated space with more room to expand. There is a family support worker on site.
- Full o' Beans Preschool opened in September 2013 at the Pearkes Recreation Centre.
- SNP provides a fee reduction initiative for childcare needs.

The members made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Designating a percentage of space in new developments will allow for organic growth.
- Saanich provides different funding models.
- This presentation has shown the importance of working together and the incredible resources that are available at SNP.
- The amount of people that require this service is not achievable with one house.
- SNP supports the Westshore. There is no house designated to this area.
- A space with a low rental charge is needed.

LIFE Financial Assistance Program

The Financial Development Programmer gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- The Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) financial assistance program exists to provide opportunities for all individuals and families to participate and access Saanich's services regardless of their financial situation.
- The changes in the Financial Development in 2023 are:
 - o Full-time Programmer II
 - o L.I.F.E. program enhancements
 - o Grant/funding identification and support for Division.
 - o Partnership building.
- The Greater Victoria Regional Program started in 1996 to provide low-income families access to regional facilities and to drop-in programs. All regional municipalities are involved and have the same basic requirements for program eligibility.
- Proof of residency and income are required.
- Low-income levels are determined by Statistic Canada. A regionally approved percentage increase is based on the higher cost of living for Greater Victoria residents. This number is reviewed annually.
- The L.I.F.E program offers three scenarios of assistance:
- 52 free drop-in passes for the year. This gives access to 13 Greater Victoria Recreation Centres.
- 50% off the regular annual pass cost which includes unlimited drop-in services at the four Saanich Recreation Centres.
- 50% off the regional annual pass cost which includes unlimited drop-in services at the 13 Regional Recreation Centres.
- The L.I.F.E. program in Saanich seeks to reduce barriers for new immigrants and refugees and offers free membership to Seniors Centres.
- Supporting youth through school connections can build community and better health practices.
- A survey in 2019 found that:
 - 59% of clients would not be able to recreate without the L.I.F.E. program.
 - Free admissions held the highest value.
 - The discounted annual pass is not helpful when finances are already strained.
 - Post secondary students and Aboriginal applicants feel excluded.
 - The low-income cutoff provided from Statistic Canada does not capture all struggling citizens.
- Providing more ways to apply and be accepted to the program will reduce anxiety for clients and staff.

- Changes coming on November 15, 2023, include:
 - o Increase from a one to a two-year term.
 - o Increase from 52 visits per year to unlimited.
 - o Allow access to post secondary students that reside in Saanich.
 - o \$50.00 coupons with set credit amount. Greater credits will be given to children and youth.

The members made the following comments:

- This program will help support youth with mental health issues.
- The new model for reapplying will reduce stress.
- The flexibility with credits is helpful.
- These improvements will have a positive impact on clients.
- Grants are available.

J. Hesser exited the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- The *Local Government Act* provides authority to designate Development Permit (DP) Guidelines to establish form and character objectives and to designate areas of land as Development Permit Areas (DPA) for certain purposes. DPAs must specify guidelines for how proposals in that area can address the special conditions or objectives of the DPA.
- DP Guidelines support staff in an efficient review of applications, as well as provide direction and guidance to applicants, review committees (e.g., Advisory Design Panel) and Council to support a common understanding of expectations.
- The guidelines should be educative, descriptive, consistent, and clear on intent.
- The existing Saanich Development Permit Areas (DPA): Justification and Guidelines document is a patchwork of Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and guidelines that have not undergone a comprehensive review since before the Official Community Plan (OCP) was approved in 2008.
- Many policies and plans have been approved by Council including the 2008 OCP and multiple planning documents that contain design guidelines. For example, garden suites have their own.
- The purpose is to develop a simplified, consolidated Guidelines document that is aligned with the OCP and recent policies, plans and bylaws that have been approved by Council. The goal is a harmonized, easy to use document with clear language, explanatory visual illustrations, and alignment with other goals.
- The guidelines will be updated more frequently as new policies are approved.
- The new simplified and consolidated document will improve efficiency and aid staff in achieving targets as laid out in various plans.
- A descriptive (vs. prescriptive) approach has been taken, with clear statements of design intent including strategies and best practices for implementation.
- More prescriptive guidance such as metrics have been added, for built form, scale, orientation, and relationship to public spaces. A more descriptive and educative approach

was taken for character, composition, and site planning.

The members made the following comments:

- The draft plan could be more visible and accessible on the Saanich website.
- The DPA Guidelines are intended to build our community and assist with the development process.
- Simplifying the process to attain development permits could assist with the housing crisis.
- More guidelines will bring significant results within the District.
- The document is more fluid than the 2008 version.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Councillor Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

1410-04
Report -
Council

COLD WEATHER PROTOCOL FOR UNHOUSED RESIDENTS

Notice of Motion of Councillor Chambers from the Council meeting of January 22, 2024 that Council direct staff to review options for unhoused residents' personal effects storage when individuals opt to go into a warming shelter; and request the Saanich Police Department to report back on decamping procedures of unhoused population and their belongings.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That:

WHEREAS during the 2024 winter season, it has been reported that 36 people in the unhoused population have died in British Columbia:

AND WHEREAS the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich hit a 61-year record low temperature of -10 degrees;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council:

- **Direct the Arts, Culture and Community Well-Being Advisory Committee to review options for personal effects storage when individuals opt to go into a warming shelter; and**
- **Request the Saanich Police Department report back on decamping procedures of the unhoused population and their belongings."**

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the item be referred to the Arts, Culture and Community Well-Being Advisory Committee."

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- It is important that Advisory Committees have the opportunity to provide input and recommendations to Council.

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor Plant: "That the referral motion be amended to add: "and the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee."

The Amendment was CARRIED

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- Emergency Preparedness could be asked to provide information on current protocols.

The Motion, as Amended, to Refer was CARRIED

The Main Motion, as Amended:

"That the item – Cold Weather Protocols for Unhouses Residents – be referred to the Arts, Culture and Community Well-Being Advisory Committee and the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee."



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Committee
From: Sarah Faria, Programmer II: Events, Volunteers & Film, Community Services Division
Date: 2023-11-29T00:00:00
Subject: Winter Festival Proposal

RECOMMENDATION

That the Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Committee recommends a Winter Festival option for Council's consideration.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a potential winter festival event is to provide a free, inclusive community activity that celebrates winter holiday traditions. Saanich residents form a culturally diverse community, in which there are many traditional winter holiday activities. This event will highlight and celebrate a selection of them, including but not limited to, Solstice, Christmas, Diwali, Hannukah and Kwanzaa. The final determination of which events to include will reflect community interest.

BACKGROUND

The District of Saanich hosted *Deck the Hall* at Saanich Municipal Hall from 2008 to 2019. The event featured school choirs performing in the council chambers, horse and carriage rides, food, photos with Santa, art activities, and displays from Saanich Police and Saanich Fire.

The event was held mid-week in early years, and in later years it was held on a weekend. Events have a lifecycle. *Deck the Hall* experienced declining attendance and school participation. It was indicated to event staff that Municipal Hall was not an ideal event location because of the acoustics, layout, and disruption to Hall staff during working hours when the event was held during school hours. Additionally, recent changes to Municipal Hall further impacted the site as an event venue. Use of the council chambers for performances is difficult and costly because of the sensitive technical upgrades. Security improvements, including plexiglass security barriers impact acoustics and restrict space for members of the public to gather. The limited space also impacts safe egress in the case of emergency. The Hall is a good space for smaller-sized events and receptions, but not as ideal for larger events and festivals.

In 2020 and 2021, the event was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

In 2022 and 2023, staff re-focused energies on other winter events and festivals, including Diwali, Ice Fest at Pearkes, and a more culturally diverse Remembrance Day Ceremony. During this time, attendance at these events grew, and no complaints were received from schools or the public seeking a return of Deck the Hall. Staff received only one inquiry from the public about Deck the Hall in 2022, and one from a school choir in 2023.

In January 2024, Council directed staff to report on what a winter holiday event would look like if one were brought back. The amended referral motion, initially raised by Councillor Westhaver, stipulated that the event be held at Saanich Municipal Hall and be inclusive for all members of the community at zero cost to attend.

DISCUSSION

Greater Victoria has an abundance of winter holiday and Christmas-themed events in November and December. Several municipalities hold holiday events that typically focus on lighting up their downtown business core, and usually work with partners or an organizing committee made up of local businesses.

Victoria's Lights of Wonder is organized by the Downtown Victoria Business Association. Esquimalt's Celebration of Lights is organized by a committee of local businesses and organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, a non-profit and a grocery store. Oak Bay's Christmas Light Up is organized by the Oak Bay Business Improvement Association.

In addition, there are parades, light ups, tree displays, Santa runs, gingerbread house competitions and more in Greater Victoria. Almost all feature elements of Christmas, which remains the dominant religious holiday in greater Victoria. As a municipality with residents from many cultures, backgrounds, and religions, Saanich has made a commitment to celebrating and embracing the rich diversity of our community and the acknowledgement that doing so enriches the lives of all people.

To create a festival that is unique and inclusive, staff have looked to different types of winter holiday celebrations to shape the character of this event.

Options

1. Saanich Winter Warm Up – a multicultural winter festival

In November and December, there are five main holidays celebrated by different cultures in Canada. Diwali, Solstice, including both traditional winter solstice and local First Nations traditions, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hannukah. Staff will consult with a variety of Saanich-based community and cultural groups to ensure the activities, celebrations and programming are all appropriate and respectful. A municipal winter event that features these holidays could include information booths, art activities, traditional food, storytelling and music, spread out over the lobby, second floor mezzanine level and the patio.

Previously, school choirs performed at Deck the Hall for free. In late 2023, staff made an effort to reconnect with schools to get a sense of community interest in performing at the event again. It was difficult to get responses from schools, but the feedback received indicated choir directors were split on whether they preferred a weekend event or one held during school hours. Because the interest was lukewarm and split, staff envision that local bands and cultural performing groups would be hired, in addition to including any schools that may be interested. Staff would aim to hire bands and cultural groups who are representative of the cultures being celebrated at the event.

Staff envision a multicultural winter festival to be both celebratory and educational. A high-level estimate of costs for an event of this nature is approximately \$20,000. This includes staffing, infrastructure rentals such as staging, tents, tables and heaters, artist fees for live music, first aid, and other equipment and supplies necessary to produce an event, in addition to a 20% contingency.

2. Uptown Light Up

Emulating the highly popular and successful models of Esquimalt, Oak Bay and Victoria, staff propose partnering with local business organizations in their downtown core. Due to the unique geography of Saanich, the Uptown Shopping Centre is recognized as Saanich's downtown core. The venue is ideal for an event, and it has excellent proximity to Municipal Hall. Saanich already has an established partnership via the Uptown Multicultural Festival, and this can easily be expanded to include partnership on the Uptown Light Up.

The Light Up already features live entertainment, an appearance from Santa, a countdown to when the tree lights are turned on, and booths from non-profits and local businesses. The Uptown organizing committee are willing to explore the opportunity to have Mayor and Council attend the event and would be open to including a multicultural element, including representatives of additional holidays in the form of information booths and activities.

A high-level estimate of costs for an event of this nature is approximately \$7,500, including some staffing, Saanich's contribution to live music and entertainment honorariums, vendor support, and some equipment rentals, such as tents, tables, chairs and heaters.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering time and budget constraints and other festivals produced by staff in the holiday season, staff's preference is Option 2, the Uptown Light Up. This aligns with how many other municipalities produce holiday events, it will give Saanich the opportunity to celebrate its downtown core, the venue is ideal for a large-scale event, and Saanich will have the opportunity to enhance the existing light up with multicultural elements.

ALTERNATIVE

1. That the Committee provide direction to staff regarding the options presented above.
2. That Committee provide alternate direction to staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the event will be submitted to Council as part of its 2024 Financial Plan for consideration.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The event proposal option one (Saanich Winter Warm Up) supports Strategic Plan objective 2: Community Well-Being, specifically 2.1 in which diversity, equity, inclusion and respect will guide our decisions.

Proposal two (Uptown Light Up) is supported by objective 2.3: we invest in people and neighbourhoods to foster community health and a sense of belonging.

CONCLUSION

Saanich staff seek guidance on a winter event that will celebrate different cultural and seasonal holidays that take place over the winter period. Considering staff time, budget and venue location, staff recommend partnering with Uptown on the already-established Light Up. Staff would aim to enhance the existing celebrations with multicultural elements to create an inclusive and vibrant event to kick off the holiday season.

Prepared by



Sarah Faria
Community Programmer II: Events, Volunteers & Film

Reviewed by



Cristina Caravaca
Senior Manager of Community Services

Approved by



Suzanne Samborski
Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services