

MINUTES

ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers and via MS Teams

770 Vernon Avenue

February 26, 2025, at 5:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Mena Westhaver (Chair), Pamela Carroll, James Hesser, Kristen Kay, Colin Newell, Peter Quinn and Isak Serhan (via Teams)

Regrets: Barbara Elson and Mark Leiren-Young

Staff: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Parks, Recreation and Community Services; Molly Rose, Agriculture and Food Security Planner and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Guests: Casey Edmunds, Executive Director, La Société Francophone de Victoria and Richard Michaels

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by P. Quinn and Seconded by J. Hesser: “That the Minutes of the Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee held September 25, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULTS: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Carroll, Westhaver, Hesser, Kay, Newell, Quinn, Serhan

OPPOSED: None

MOVED by J. Hesser and Seconded by P. Carroll: “That the Minutes of the Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee held November 27, 2024, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULTS: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Carroll, Westhaver, Hesser, Kay, Newell, Quinn, Serhan

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the members and the following was noted:

- The Terms of Reference and future meeting dates were reviewed.
- Introductions were made.
- Council places importance on hearing from the community and the Advisory Committees.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

The Agriculture and Food Security Planner gave a presentation on Edible Landscaping and Urban Agriculture (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Food literacy refers to understanding the origins of our food.
- Exploring incentives for planting food in Saanich could be beneficial.
- Public consumption of fruit from trees in Saanich Parks is permitted, and signage could encourage this practice.

- Clarifying whether a community garden is Saanich-owned or private could help address public inquiries. Informational signs or contact details could assist.
- Community gardens offer positive social benefits, though closures seem to be increasing. The social benefits could be further discussed.
- A balance is needed between land used for housing and parks. Church properties with larger plots could offer future opportunities for food growing.
- Local schools could provide volunteers to assist with planting food.

LA SOCIETE FRANCOPHONE DE VICTORIA

The representatives gave a presentation on the Uptown Multicultural Festival and the following was noted:

- The presentation to Council in November 2024 was encouraging, and a motion was made to bring this presentation to the committee.
- The vision is strong, and a lot of work went into organizing this festival, with involvement from both Victoria and Saanich.
- The event celebrates and strengthens diversity and culture, featuring traditional performers, dancers, and cuisines from various cultures (e.g., Greek, Mexican, Indian, Asian). Cultural goods, crafts, and various products were also available.
- Exhibits and vendors offered educational opportunities on cultural practices and 25 different cultures participated in the event.
- The event was a free family gathering, with community engagement from Saanich, including Saanich Police and Fire Department. Community services were showcased to highlight available resources.
- The festival had a significant potential economic impact, benefiting businesses with extended hours and higher sales. The event also created temporary jobs and fostered connections among businesses.
- Similar events in other cities have seen notable economic impact.
- The Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) of Victoria played a key role.
- The event helped form lasting alliances in the city.
- The Uptown Shopping Centre, as a business location, provided valuable support, covering logistical costs (tables, garbage, etc.).
- By 2027, a new venue will be needed due to upcoming construction at the Uptown Shopping Centre.
- This event could see growth with Saanich's support.

The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussions:

- This event aligns with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy (DEI).
- The festival has potential to grow further, and the goal is for it to be as successful as the Victoria Folk Fest.
- Uptown Multicultural Festival is seeking financial commitments from Saanich, with a long-term vision for the event.
- Uptown has committed for two more years, after which a transition to a new location and financial support is needed to maintain momentum.
- Recreation centers could be a potential venue option.
- The event is currently one day, but there is potential for extension.
- Scheduling the festival in July could give businesses time to prepare and encourage greater participation in their individual programs in the fall.
- The event could align with the "Music in the Park" festival and other community associations supported by Saanich.
- Council could explore ways to support cultural events like this.
- A clear commitment from Saanich could encourage the growth and success.
- This presentation could be made to the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC).

- The event’s budget is \$30,000 and community grants for the event total \$7,500.

MOVED P. Quinn and Seconded by J. Hesser: “That the Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee recommends that Council request staff to explore available resources to support La Société Francophone de Victoria in hosting the Uptown Multicultural Festival annually.”

RESULTS: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Carroll, Westhaver, Hesser, Kay, Newell, Quinn, Serhan

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from P. Carroll the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

COUNCILLOR MENA WESTHAVER

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK