

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2016 March 29

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 2125 20
Reference: UBCM

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2016

PURPOSE: To propose activities for Burnaby's participation in Local Government Awareness Week 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2016, as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Local Government Awareness Week (LGAW) is an annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) initiative held in May to educate the public about the roles and responsibilities of local government, and to encourage public participation in local government processes.

LGAW was undertaken as a regular program item of the UBCM from 1987 to 2003. In 2010, following an endorsed resolution at the 2009 UBCM Convention, the initiative was reinstated with additional support provided by the UBCM for associated activities. UBCM now delivers LGAW in partnership with CivicInfo BC¹, the Local Government Management Association², the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the Ministry of Education, the BC School Trustees Association and the Public Works Association of BC³. Burnaby has participated since 2011.

¹ CivicInfo BC is a co-operative information service for those who work, or have an interest in British Columbia's local government sector. The main goal of CivicInfo BC is to facilitate the free and open exchange of local government information, which is done primarily through the web site: www.civicinfo.bc.ca.

² The Local Government Management Association works to promote professional management and leadership excellence in local government in BC: www.lgma.ca.

³ The Public Works Association of BC is a non-profit organization that supports individuals working for municipalities, utility companies and engineering consulting firms by providing opportunities for information sharing, education and professional development: <http://pwabc.cpwa.net/Index.html>.

Last year, LGAW took place from 2015 May 17 – 23. The City continued its effort to increase citizen awareness of the many avenues for Burnaby residents to get involved in their local government and community. The “Be Involved” portal developed in 2014 was promoted through the City Hall tours program. In addition to the presentations offered at City Hall, City staff extended presentations to various community organizations at their chosen locations. The presentations are now more accessible to groups who cannot meet at City Hall.

The purpose of this report is to propose activities for Burnaby’s participation in Local Government Awareness Week 2016. The UBCM is encouraging municipalities to develop their own theme.

2.0 PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2016 IN BURNABY

This year, LGAW will take place from 2016 May 15 – 21. The *Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy* supports the City’s continued participation in Local Government Awareness Week. Two of the seven strategic priorities identified in the Strategy were ‘Getting Involved’ and ‘Learning for Life’. Through the Strategy’s development process, it became evident that Burnaby residents place great value on the many existing opportunities in Burnaby to be involved, aware and engaged in civic matters and to have access to opportunities for informal learning.

In support of the Social Sustainability Strategy, Local Government Awareness Week provides an appropriate opportunity for the City to highlight its history, roles and functions and to encourage and educate its citizens about how to become involved civically, socially and culturally.

With Council’s approval, this would be the sixth annual observance of LGAW in Burnaby.

2.1 Proposed Theme

The proposed theme for Local Government Awareness Week 2016 is ‘*Accessing Information*’. This theme would seek to promote access to online information with a focus on increasing residents’ knowledge about Burnaby’s heritage, their understanding about the role and functions of local government, as well as, increasing access to online information in general through the public Wi-Fi network.

2.2 Suggested Activities for Local Government Awareness Week 2016

Based on the ‘*Accessing Information*’ theme, the following activities are proposed to recognize LGAW 2016 in Burnaby:

- City Proclamation: issue an official City proclamation recognizing 2016 May 15 – 21 as Local Government Awareness Week in Burnaby.
- Heritage Scavenger Hunt: encourage exploration of the City’s new Heritage website to search for answers to a set of questions developed by staff at the City’s Archives. This activity would

To: Social Planning Committee
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Local Government Awareness Week 2016
2016 March 29 Page 3

run during Local Government Awareness Week and be promoted through an article in InfoBurnaby, on the City's website and social media.

- Promote Public Wi-Fi Network: inform the public about the locations of the City's public Wi-Fi network in an issue of InfoBurnaby.
- Refresh the 'Be Involved' portal: develop a new, dynamic interface and update for information in the 'Be involved' portal. The new portal would then be promoted through an InfoBurnaby article, on social media, and through the City Hall Tours program.

All of the suggested activities would be undertaken with existing staff and budget resources.

3.0 CONCLUSION

As demonstrated through the development of the *Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy*, Burnaby residents place great value on the opportunity to be civically engaged and active in their community, and for life long learning. Local Government Awareness Week (LGAW) is an opportunity for the City to build upon this strong base to develop greater awareness among the public of the roles and responsibilities of local government and improve access to this information.

The proposed 2016 theme of '*Accessing Information*' would focus on promoting online information about Burnaby's heritage, opportunities for civic involvement, and the City's public Wi-Fi network.

As such, this report recommends that Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2016 through four proposed activities, as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.



Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

CS:sa/sla

cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
OIC – RCMP
Chief Librarian
City Clerk