

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2017 January 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 2125 20
Reference: UBCM

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2017

PURPOSE: To propose activities for Burnaby's participation in Local Government Awareness Week 2017.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2017, 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.

Over the past few years, the City of Burnaby has implemented civic engagement and awareness initiatives that are ongoing today: City Hall stays open late on Thursdays in order to better serve

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>.

the public and staff and the mayor's office offer tours to the general public and elementary students to introduce them to City Hall and civic government.

Last year, LGAW took place from 2016 May 15 – 21. 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 City issued an official proclamation recognizing 2016 May 15 – 21 as LGAW, encouraged exploration of the new Heritage website through an online scavenger hunt and hosted a joint Open House with the RCMP. Information on the Heritage Scavenger Hunt was included in the Spring edition of InfoBurnaby. Between 2016 April 1 and June 30, 73 per cent of visitors to the Heritage website were new, which indicates a strong level of engagement. The Burnaby City Hall and RCMP Open House happened on 2016 September 17. This well attended event provided an opportunity for residents to have fun while learning about City services and for City Council, the RCMP and City staff to enjoy a day engaging with citizens.

The purpose of this report is to propose activities for Burnaby's participation in Local Government Awareness Week 2017. The UBCM is encouraging municipalities to develop their own theme.

2.0 PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2017 IN BURNABY

The dates for LGAW in 2017 have not yet been announced. Typically, LGAW takes place the third week of May. 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 seventh annual observance of LGAW in Burnaby.

2.1 Proposed Theme

The proposed theme for Local Government Awareness Week 2017 is '*Celebrating and Connecting Burnaby*'. This theme would promote local government awareness and opportunities to be engaged in civic life through the City's public celebratory events and online resources. As 2017 marks Burnaby's 125th birthday, LGAW and its activities can be co-ordinated to highlight the 125th birthday activities.

2.2 Suggested Activities for Local Government Awareness Week 2017

Based on the 'Celebrating and Connecting Burnaby' theme, the following activities are proposed to recognize LGAW in 2017:

- City Proclamation: issue an official City proclamation recognizing Local Government Awareness Week in Burnaby.
- Drawing contest: develop and implement a themed drawing contest for school aged children, related to larger City initiatives such as either asking children to draw what they love about Burnaby or how they are going to celebrate Burnaby's 125th/Canada's 150th Birthdays. In keeping with the 'Celebrating and Connecting Burnaby' theme, winning drawings will be featured in social media, the City's website and in InfoBurnaby. To further engage children in local government, the winners will be invited to attend a Council meeting where their art work will be officially recognized by the Mayor. In the future, staff could also choose to use these drawings to promote other civic initiatives.
- Civic Awareness videos: explore the creation of short information videos to promote civic awareness and engagement. The aim of the videos would be to reach new (younger) residents and foster stronger online connections. This larger initiative would be explored in 2017 with potential delivery in 2018.
- Refresh of the 'Be Involved' portal: develop a new, more dynamic interface and update information in the 'Be Involved' portal of the City's website. The new portal would then be promoted through an InfoBurnaby article, on social media, and through the City Hall Tours program.
- Public Wi-Fi Network and Open Data Portal: inform the public about the locations of the City's public Wi-Fi network and about the City of Burnaby's online open data resources in an issue of InfoBurnaby. The Wi-Fi network will also be mapped and featured on the City's website.
- 125th/150th Birthday Celebration Promotional Support: celebrating civic and federal birthdays will help create stronger connections amongst residents. Celebratory related initiatives will be promoted through InfoBurnaby articles and other social media.

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 (June 2011)*, Burnaby residents place great value on the opportunity to be civically engaged and active in their community, and pursue 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

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the public of the roles and responsibilities of local government and improve access to this information.

The proposed 2017 theme of '*Celebrating and Connecting Burnaby*' would focus on engaging children through a drawing contest, exploring the creation of civic awareness and engagement videos, updating the Be Involved portal, promoting the City's Public Wi-Fi network and Open Data Portal and supporting celebratory initiatives through articles in InfoBurnaby and social media.

As such, this report recommends that Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2017 through six proposed activities, as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.


Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

KL/sa

Copied to: City Manager
Deputy City Manager
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