

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2019 April 23

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 2125 20
Reference: UBCM

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2019

PURPOSE: To propose activities for Burnaby's participation in Local Government Awareness Week 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2019, as outlined in Section 3.2 of this report.
2. **THAT** Council approve an expenditure of \$750 from the 2019 Boards, Commissions and Committees budget for promotional materials.

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 Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 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>.

Over the past few years, the City of Burnaby has implemented several ongoing civic engagement and awareness initiatives. For example, City Hall stays open late on Thursdays in order to better serve the public. As well, Social Planning staff and the Mayor's Office offer tours to the general public and elementary students to introduce them to City Hall and City functions.

Last year, LGAW took place from 2018 May 19 – 26. Activities focussed on the theme of *Your Voice Counts*, in relation to the local government election:

- An official City proclamation recognizing Local Government Awareness Week in Burnaby;
- The initial promotion and distribution of the 2018 local government election basic voter guide, including both a regular and 'pocket' sized version, to correspond with LGAW; and
- Staff (Social Planning and Clerks) partnered with the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table (BIPT)⁴ to host two information workshops for new citizens and settlement support workers on the mechanics and responsibilities of local government. The workshops took place in Council Chambers and approximately 60 people attended.

The purpose of this report is to propose activities for Burnaby's participation in LGAW 2019. The UBCM is encouraging municipalities to develop their own theme.

2.0 POLICY

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 are '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 addition, the proposed 2019 Local Government Awareness Week activities are aligned with the City of Burnaby's Corporate Strategic Plan by supporting the following goals and sub-goals of the Plan:

- A 'Connected Community',
 - 'Provide online access to core City services and information'.
- A 'Healthy Community',
 - 'Improve upon and develop programs and services that enable ongoing learning';
 - 'Encourage residents and businesses to give back to and invest in the community'.

⁴ The BIPT was formed in 2007 to help immigrant and refugee service providers share resources and identify ways to better meet the needs of newcomers. The City has been a member of the BIPT since its inception.

3.0 PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS WEEK 2019 IN BURNABY

Local Government Awareness Week provides an appropriate opportunity for the City to highlight its history, roles and functions and to encourage its citizens to become involved civically, socially and culturally. In 2019, LGAW dates will occur from May 18 – 25. With Council's approval, this would be the ninth annual observance of LGAW in Burnaby.

3.1 *Proposed Theme*

The proposed theme for Local Government Awareness Week 2019 is '*Your Voice. Your Home*', to connect with the public engagement process on community housing. This theme seeks to raise citizen awareness of current community housing related projects and initiatives underway at the City, and highlight avenues for input into the current '*Your Voice. Your Home*' consultation and Mayor's Housing Task Force process.

3.2 *Suggested Activities for Local Government Awareness Week 2019*

Based on the '*Your Voice. Your Home*' theme, the following activities are proposed to recognize LGAW in 2019:

- City Proclamation: the City would issue an official proclamation recognizing Local Government Awareness Week in Burnaby.
- Development of 'Local Government 101' Training Kit: Social Planning staff will develop a 'train the trainer' kit of information and materials that will be provided to community agency staff working with newcomers and with long-time community residents. For example, this training kit will assist English-language teachers to incorporate content regarding local government into their curriculum, and for seniors-discussion circles at Burnaby Neighbourhood House to become more aware of the workings of local government. Staff will lead training sessions on the toolkit for interested parties.
- Promotion of 'Your Voice. Your Home' Public Input Opportunities: staff will utilize opportunities to present to community groups (e.g. Parent Advisory Committees), non-profit networks (e.g. the Burnaby Interagency Council), and to informal groups of Burnaby residents (e.g. Heights Neighbourhood Association) the opportunities to provide input to the '*Your Voice. Your Home.*' process and the Mayor's Housing Task Force. This includes the 'What We Heard' Report, a 'Quick Starts' Survey, and the 'Trade Offs and Solutions' materials prepared for the May 25th 'Community Recommendations' Workshop. Electronic opportunities to promote and highlight these avenues, including the City website and social media channels, will also be pursued.
- Community Housing Communications Focus: it is proposed that staff craft daily 'Did You Know?' community housing highlights for release on the City's website and social media channels for each day of the week. For example, one day could feature progress on the City's

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supportive housing project and another could highlight the amounts granted to-date from the City's Housing Fund.

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

The proposed 2019 theme of '*Your Voice. Your Home*' seeks to raise citizen awareness of current community housing related projects and initiatives underway at the City, and highlight avenues for input into the current '*Your Voice. Your Home*' consultation process.

As such, this report recommends that Council approve the City's involvement in Local Government Awareness Week 2019 through three proposed activities, as outlined in Section 3.2 of this report, and for an expenditure of \$750 from the 2019 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget for promotional materials.



E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM/sa

cc: City Manager
Director Corporate Services
Chief Librarian
Manager, Corporate Communications
City Clerk