



REPORT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

PRESENTED:	FEBRUARY 11, 2019 - REGULAR AFTERNOON MEETING	REPORT:	19-15
FROM:	ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES	FILE:	1850-20
SUBJECT:	COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDING		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council having considered the breadth and scope of community engagement mechanisms and opportunities it has established and undertaken, consider the three (3) options proposed below in response to the two (2) delegations who came to the January 29, 2018 Regular Evening Meeting of Township of Langley Council requesting funding for the activities of their respective Community Associations:

1. **That** Council direct staff to inform and encourage registered non-profit community groups, including Community Associations, to consider existing Township of Langley grant criteria and submit future applications for funding with qualifying proposals that include outcome specific projects and events; or
2. **That** Council, direct staff to investigate further mechanisms and opportunities for community engagement and enhanced online public information gathering and report back to Council with their findings; or
3. **That** Council consider the 2018 recommendation of staff to provide grants to Community Associations that are prorated according to attendance at qualifying information/forum style events such as all candidates meetings and to direct staff to continue implementing grant criteria and policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Community Grants Program presently exists to support the events and projects of various non-profit organizations that provide a direct and substantive benefit to the community that the Municipal Government could not otherwise achieve without considerable cost to taxpayers. It is understood that all proposed events and projects put forward, by organizations and groups be open to all members of the wider community and that such initiatives benefit a minimum 250 residents. As some events and projects benefit a greater number of citizens than the stated minimum, a prorated funding amount is often recommended for those activities that benefit fewer residents.

Two out of five community associations that applied for grants in 2018 were approved for funding, having met existing criteria in the categories in which they made applications for support. Those Council approved grant awards were for Langley Meadows Community Association and Milner Community Association, under the General category and the Capital Improvements to Halls category.

Three of the five organizations proposed initiatives that did not meet all criteria, but were still recommended for prorated funding, with a condition attached. The groups were the Fort Langley Community Association, the Willoughby Residents Association and the Brookwood / Fernridge Community Association. Each was a part of the delegations who made presentations to Council on January 29, 2018, seeking funding for their operations.

A grant is not presently provided to any community organization for monthly meetings, or day-to-day operating expenses. A community grant is not intended to be an organization's major revenue stream. One of the criteria for funding established by Council is that an application for a grant must demonstrate that all other avenues of income generation have been pursued. For some of the Community Associations who made application, the funding would have formed a high percentage of revenues had the full grant been awarded.

In an analysis of the proposed projects, events and activities of each of the "Community Association" applicants, there is a commonality of good for community. However, there is a notable difference in that some of the projects proposed are "Action" based, while others are "Advocacy or Issues" based. Staff believe that preference should be given to projects where a great number of volunteers and citizens are actively improving their communities and neighbourhoods by way of special community enhancement projects or by way of organizing celebrations and events that connect or bring neighbours together for a singular purpose. Council has funded numerous celebratory events, community gardens, neighbourhood playgrounds and projects where volunteer participation was a key ingredient to the success of such initiatives. Under the grants' criteria it is stated that preference will be given to groups, whose applications show a great deal of volunteer participation and effort.

The Community Grants Program function is to support the events and projects of non-profit organizations that provide a benefit to the community that the Municipal Government could not otherwise achieve directly.

Township of Langley Council has developed several mechanisms for public engagement. Council has adopted a full range public input and engagement procedures, reaffirmed by policies, charter, strategy and the Official Community Plan. The establishment of a Community Input Group Task Force, provided for consultation with Township of Langley residents and stakeholders to identify common concerns and priorities that the Township of Langley Council members may include as components in future budget and resource planning.

In consideration of the established grants criteria that support events and projects that are action based, staff would not recommend the \$2,500 grants to fund monthly meetings of community organizations wanting to undertake processes that duplicate the Council adopted methods of consultation and engagement of stakeholders. Council has the authority to further enhance this function by directing staff to undertake studies, and reports, engage citizens by survey or polling, hold open houses, consult specific groups and Council committees, strike task forces and develop plans in consultation with the entire community.

In a review of grants to Community Associations in other BC municipalities, staff found that many of the grant programs were comparable with the Township's "Nothing Without Effort Grant" and the "Neighbourhood Initiatives" program. Much like TOL, many jurisdictions have grants that are action and incentive based, with an objective of improvements and enhancements. There are two municipal governments out of those surveyed, that provide base support for the activities of Community Associations. Saanich provides an operating grant to Community and Social Services groups based on population served, and the District of North Vancouver provides grants of \$50 to \$500 to neighbourhood and community groups for communication and engagement activities. Staff suggest that if Council chooses to create an additional grant category to fund the operations of Community, Neighbourhood and Residents Associations, a further analysis be undertaken to identify the impact this category would have on future budgets.

Staff believe that creating a new grant category that provides operational funding to community associations may result in increasing funding obligations as multiple smaller associations in each community may form, each declaring that they represent the particular interests of their

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neighbourhoods or communities. All groups seeking operational support for advocacy related to other community causes and interests would have to be considered. Potentially, Council would be unable to determine which groups speak on behalf of the citizens in a specific area and on specific issues.

Staff contend that the current grants program and mechanisms for community engagement and input are inclusive and fair to all organizations and citizens.

PURPOSE:

To provide Council information and seek Council direction in regards to the operational funding requests of Community Associations.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

At the January 29, 2018 Regular Evening Meeting of Township of Langley Council, two delegations representing Community Associations came forward to present requests for funding support of their operations. In the first delegation to Council, Andy Schildhorn, Fort Langley Community Association stated that Community Associations represent the opinions of residents within their areas as well as provide information of interest to both residents and businesses. Amy Morose, Brookwood/Fernridge Community Association, further commented that the goal of Community Associations is to be a communication link between residents, staff, and Council.

Barbara Sharp on behalf of the Township of Langley Community Associations (TOLCA) appeared before Council as a second delegation, to discuss public engagement and how Community Associations could contribute to that process. Ms. Sharp gave a slide presentation that outlined the many contributions that associations could make, and provided a few examples of other municipalities supporting community, neighbourhood and or ratepayers associations through the provision of a grant. She then asked Council to endorse a slight change to the grants application under "Public Participation Engagement" that would allow their associations to apply and receive funding for their ongoing community engagement. Much of Ms. Sharp's presentation focused on the Township's current public engagement processes, and how Community Associations aligned and could become greater contributors to those processes.

At that meeting, the following motion was moved by Councillor Richter, and seconded by Councillor Long:

That the delegation from Andy Schildhorn and Barb Sharp be referred to staff for a report on funding of Community Associations.

CARRIED

As the delegations to Council focused on the activities and purposes of Community Associations, staff are providing background information for the Community Engagement and Public Input processes that the Township of Langley undertakes, and an overview of funding opportunities that all non-profit community organizations are eligible to receive if all criteria for funding is met.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION

The Township of Langley has several policies for public engagement, including the Official Community Plan, Public Engagement Strategy, Public Engagement Charter, Council Consultation Policy for the Official Community Plan, and policy for public information meetings.

Official Community Plan

In 2016, Council adopted a new Official Community Plan (OCP). One of the goals of the OCP is to "support meaningful community engagement." Good planning requires transparent and collective decision making for the long-term good of the community. Meaningful community engagement during the planning process promotes greater understanding and more responsive decisions. Ongoing and long-term partnerships with agencies such as Metro Vancouver, TransLink, Langley School District, neighbouring municipalities, Township Council Advisory Committees and First Nations will be supported and strengthened.

Public Engagement Strategy

Also in 2016, Council endorsed a Public Engagement Strategy (PES) for Planning and Development. Prepared by the Mayor's Standing Committee on Public Engagement, the PES outlines a set of guiding principles and recommended actions to enhance engagement and practices in planning and development activities. Most of the recommended actions were

implemented concurrent with the planning process for the Brookwood-Fernridge Community Plan update that took place between 2016 and 2017.

Public Engagement Charter

One of the deliverables of the PES is a Public Engagement Charter (PEC). Adopted by Council in 2016, the PEC commits the Township to strengthen the spirit of collaboration and ensure meaningful community consultation contributing to the best possible quality of life for all residents. It provides a high-level framework and principles for the Township to involve its residents in planning and development and a legacy beyond the implementation of the PES. As a high-level corporate policy, the PEC contains aspirations, principles and commitments for the Township to build organizational capacity and become an engagement-friendly and responsive community-serving institution.

Council Consultation Policy (07-160)

The Local Government Act (LGA) requires municipalities to provide one or more opportunities for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities during the development, repeal or amendment of an official community plan. Designed to meet and implement the LGA requirements, the Council Consultation Policy sets out the procedure and identifies stakeholders for community input. The policy was initially approved by Council in 2012 and last updated in 2016.

Public Information Meetings Policy (07-222)

The Public Information Meetings Policy specifies the requirements for holding public information meetings and gathering public input for certain (significant) development proposals. The main purpose of such meetings is to provide information to area residents and to obtain feedback to ensure issues and concerns are identified and addressed early in the process. The policy was first approved by Council in 1998 and last updated in 2016.

At the March 19, 2018 Regular Afternoon Meeting of Council a motion was moved and carried, establishing a Community Input Group Task Force with intended cross-sectoral representation from all communities. In the prelude to establishing the task force, the motion stated that input must come from all facets of the community including the business community, school district, concerned residents, and the recreation and cultural communities; and input from the community can be received from individuals or organizations who maintain a balanced, non-partisan, proactive, non-political approach to ensuring that residents' needs are taken into consideration as part of Council priority setting sessions.

In addition to these policies, the Township uses the corporate website (www.tol.ca) and social media (such as Twitter and Facebook) to publish Council agendas and minutes, inform interested parties of development activity, and update subscribers on various topics related to a wide range of projects. Generally, these web and social media offerings are beyond the legislative requirements for public consultation. However, they serve to inform stakeholder groups in a timely manner.

The Township of Langley has also built many new community engagement mechanisms into its website as part of an eGovernment strategy. Through this improved and updated platform, TOL can now host online surveys, answer questions from citizens in a timely manner, provide access to development information and other relevant community data sets, and respond to expressed concerns and/or setting the record straight.

COMMUNITY GRANTS INFORMATION

Township of Langley Council developed a Community Grants Policy – General (06-022) in 1998 and made revisions in 2014, 2016 and 2017 in an effort to ensure substantial benefit to the

community is achieved and improved accountability for funds provided to non-profit groups is required.

Based on that policy and the policy amendments made over time, grant-seeking applicants must meet the following general criteria in order to have their applications considered for general community grants funding:

1. The applicant must be a non-profit group or organization serving the Township of Langley and must provide proof of non-profit status with their application.
2. The majority of members, volunteers or directors of an applicant organization must be residents of the Township of Langley, and the majority of the individuals served by the project/initiative must be residents of the Township of Langley
3. Projects and initiatives must be accessible to the general public, and **must benefit a minimum 250 residents** to qualify community organizations for funding. The amount of the grant may be pro-rated from the maximum amount to reflect the percentage of Township of Langley residents benefiting from the project/initiative.
4. The application must demonstrate that all other avenues of income generation have been pursued.
5. The requested funding must not provide for administrative salaries; preference will be given to groups whose applications show a great deal of volunteer effort.
6. Only one grant per group or organization is permitted in each category: Community Grants - General, Major Festival Grant, Nothing Without Effort Community Matching Grant.
7. Each grant application must directly contribute to the Township's Sustainability Goals available at, **[tol.ca/About-the-Township/ Municipal-Government/Significant-Plans-and-Reports/Sustainability-Charter](http://tol.ca/About-the-Township/Municipal-Government/Significant-Plans-and-Reports/Sustainability-Charter)**. Successful applications would likely contribute to several of these goals.
8. All grant recipients are to acknowledge the financial contribution of the Township of Langley on their promotional material and website, and must provide proof of such recognition with attached scans of printed materials and exact links to web pages on which the Township is recognized.
9. All Township grant applicants are required to submit a copy of their most recent AGM minutes (including a list of executives) and a year-in-review report, which includes an overview of how the Township funding was utilized in the previous year.
10. Applications will be fully reviewed each year with respect to meeting the current grant criteria. No priority will be given to grant applicants based on an organization having received previous grant awards.
11. Applications for funding of grants must substantively meet four of five project eligibility requirements including:
 - Demonstrate benefit to the Township
 - Involve local residents
 - Be held in the Township of Langley
 - Promote the identity of Langley
 - Enhance the quality of life for Township residents

Additional and more specific criteria were developed for the more specialized grants offerings including: Major Festivals, Capital Improvement grants, Banner grants and Nothing without Effort grants. Another program, the Neighbourhood Initiatives Program, administered by Parks Design and Development provides further opportunities to fund project specific improvements in communities.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS INFORMATION

Staff are aware of seven (7) groups in the Township of Langley that currently use the title of Community and or Resident Associations. Each group claims to represent the residents of their respective communities including Aldergrove, Brookwood/Fernridge, Fort Langley, Langley Meadows, Milner, Murrayville and Willoughby.

Unlike Business Improvement Associations in the Township of Langley, that are duly authorized to providing a voice for their respective business districts, there is no bylaw establishing Community Associations and no Council deputation of such self-proclaimed groups in the Municipality. While some of these organizations have been established for a number of years, a few have been formed recently.

Of those seven (7) groups mentioned above, five (5) applied for a grant from the Township of Langley in 2018. The groups requesting 2018 funding were the Brookwood/Fernridge Community Association (BFCA), the Willoughby Residents Association (WRA), the Fort Langley Community Association (FLCA), the Milner Community Association, and the Langley Meadows Community Association.

At the April 9th Meeting of Council staff recommended:

That Council approve a payment of \$200 to each of the following three Community Associations: Brookwood/Fernridge Community Association, Fort Langley Community Association, and Willoughby Residents Association.

At that same meeting an amendment was moved by Councillor Richter, and seconded by Councillor Davis:

That the motion above be struck and read as follows: That Council approve a new category of community grants oriented towards registered Community Associations, and that each registered association be eligible to receive \$1,000 per year to fund and host events in their community.

After a discussion at this meeting it was moved by Councillor Richter, and seconded by Councillor Arnason:

That this motion and amendment be deferred until after Council has received a report from staff on the concept of grants to registered non-profit entities to provide community services, and a receipt of input from the Community Associations.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The Community Grants Program exists to support the events and projects of various non-profit organizations that provide a direct and substantive benefit to the community that the Municipal Government could not achieve without considerable cost to taxpayers. It is understood that all proposed events and projects put forward by organizations and groups, be open to all members of the wider community and that such initiatives **benefit a minimum 250 residents**. When numbers come closer to the minimum, Staff often recommend prorated funding for such events that are drawing smaller numbers.

Staff are aware of the efforts that Brookwood-Fernridge Community Association, and Fort Langley Community Association took to attempt to conform and adapt their applications to the stated grants criteria. Staff believe that each group may have misunderstood and believed that a series of monthly meetings, on specific topics and presentations aligned with the objectives of the community grants programs.

Information meetings, development presentations, dissemination of information online or at community events, surveys and communication with the Township of Langley, along with other many things that the groups defined broadly under the Project/Event/Initiative description portion of the grant applications are not considered as community events or project focused. The FLCA application for grants funding clearly articulated that they “*aim to fulfil the project objectives of facilitating ongoing communications and involvement of the Fort Langley Community with TOL by encouraging public engagement and serving as a conduit to TOL for the residents of the Community*”. Staff suggest that based on that statement in the project description, this is an operations and/or an advocacy based request rather than a project/event specific request.

Staff review applications on the merit of what is written by the applicant, against an understanding of criteria and the purpose for which Council established the Community Grants Program. Staff then make a recommendation to Council to either support or reject the funding request. Determination is also based on the supporting documentation found in the minutes of the AGM, or the financials provided by these organizations who are requesting that tax dollars be given them. Staff took note of the low attendance at the Annual General Meetings of these associations in accessing whether meetings could be considered events. Since that original assessment of those two applications, staff have obtained the attendance totals of recent past meetings for both and while they varied, they did not meet the 250 citizens’ threshold. Staff from the Arts, Culture and Community Initiatives Division made an informational presentation on Thursday April 19th to one of the two groups and staff estimated that 25 individuals were in attendance.

The two community associations that were recommended by Township of Langley (TOL) Staff for funding under the Community Grants program were the Milner Community Association (MCA) who applied for a Capital Improvement Grant for the Hall that they operate, and the Langley Meadows Community Association (LMCA) who applied for a Community Grant (general category) for their 18th Annual Fun Fall Fair. The projects and events that these two groups proposed provide a direct and substantive benefit to the community that the Municipal Government could not otherwise achieve without considerable cost to taxpayers. Community Halls, found in the various neighbourhoods of the TOL are considered important community assets. The fact that volunteer based Societies, Groups and Associations are taking care of these halls rather than TOL owning, operating and maintaining these buildings provides a significant benefit to the community and substantial savings for the Township.

LMCA applied for funding to host an annual event in the form of a Community Fall Fair that not only attracts and engages many residents but also includes numerous activities and event components that cater to a range of interests and ages. At past Fall Fairs, there have been public information booths, food and music, games and other fun activities, educational opportunities and the participation of other groups and organizations in their community. A grant is not provided to LMCA for their monthly meetings, or day to day operating expenses, although many of their activities as a community association are significant in that they contribute substantially to the improvement, enjoyment and liveability of their community. As part of their ongoing operations, this group offers a variety of programs and services supporting families including day care, afterschool and summer programs, literacy, adult fitness and other social based activities, that improve the lives of the residents in their neighbourhoods.

A community grant is not intended to be an organization’s primary or major revenue stream and as such one of the criteria for funding established by Council is that an application for a grant must demonstrate that all other avenues of income generation have been pursued. In the case of LCMA and MCA, each organization pursues multiple funding sources for their base operating expenses, and association activities. It should be noted that dollars received through a community grant should not constitute the highest percentage of total revenues.

In an analysis of the proposed projects, events and activities of each of the “Community Association” applicants, there is a commonality of good for community. However, there is a notable difference in that some of the projects proposed are “Action” based, while others are “Advocacy or Issues” based. Staff believe that preference should be given to projects where a great number of volunteers and citizens are actively improving their communities and neighbourhoods by way of special community enhancement projects or by way of organizing celebrations and events, that connect or bring neighbours together for a singular purpose. Council has funded numerous celebratory events, community gardens, neighbourhood playgrounds and projects where volunteer participation was a key ingredient to the success of such initiatives. Under the grants’ criteria it is stated that preference will be given to groups, whose applications show a great deal of volunteer participation and effort.

Projects intended to facilitate ongoing communications and involvement of a community or neighbourhood with the Township of Langley and the encouragement of public engagement by a group of like-minded citizens would be more in line with “Advocacy” than activity based projects and events typically funded through the community grants program. Any group of like-minded citizens can approach the Township in relationship to their concerns or requests, but it does not ensure that all citizens agree with the group. Public input workshops and community surveys are very much issue driven, and often result in decisions and actions required by Council and staff. The Township of Langley already seeks public input on many broad issues that result in decisions and actions.

The Community Grants Program as it presently exists supports the events and projects of non-profit organizations that provide a direct and substantive benefit to the community that the Municipal Government could not otherwise, achieve on its own.

Township of Langley Council has developed several mechanisms for public engagement. Council has developed and adopted a full range of public input and engagement procedures, reaffirmed by policies, charter, strategy and the Official Community Plan. Along with the establishment of a Community Input Group Task Force, (the purpose of which is to consult with Township of Langley residents and stakeholders to identify common concerns and priorities that the Township of Langley Council members may include as important and significant components in future budget and resource planning), staff believe that our Municipal Government is fully active in the areas that these groups are now seeking funding.

In consideration of the grants criteria established that support events and projects that are action and outcome based, staff would not recommend \$2,500 in grants to fund monthly meetings of community organizations wanting to undertake processes that duplicate the role of our local Government to consult and engage its citizens. Council has the authority to direct staff to undertake studies and reports, engage citizens by survey or polling, hold open houses, consult specific groups and Council committees, strike task forces and develop plans in consultation with the community.

In a staff review of grants to Community Associations in other BC municipalities, staff found that many of the grant programs discovered were comparable to what the Township offers through its “Nothing Without Effort Grant” and through the “Neighbourhood Initiatives” program. Much like TOL, many jurisdictions have grants that are action and incentive based, with an objective of improvements and enhancements. There are two municipal governments that appear to provide base support for the activities of Community Associations. Saanich provides an operating grant to Community and Social Services groups based on population served, and the District of North Vancouver provides grants of \$50 to \$500 to neighbourhood and community groups for communication and engagement activities. If Council chooses to create a grants category funding the operations of Community, Neighbourhood and Residents Associations, further analysis should be undertaken to identify the impact such a category would have on

budget and potential new qualifying requests from other community organizations for operational funding.

Staff believe that adopting an expanded criteria to a grant program that provides operational funding to community associations may result in small groups of citizens forming and declaring that they represent the interests of their neighbourhoods or communities. Other groups seeking operational support for advocacy related to other community specific causes and interests would have to be considered in the expanded criteria. At the Regular Afternoon Council Meeting held on April 9, 2018, a member of Council asked that staff (in this pending report), provide an example of an event that Community Associations could organize, that might meet grants criteria for funding, and might align with the objectives of local community associations. In keeping with the Block Watch Information meetings proposed by two of the applicants, staff would suggest that if a one-day Community Safety Fair and Forum was put forward for consideration of a community grant, it would likely be recommended to Council for support. Of course, such an event would need to be inclusive of a wide range of participants, groups and activities, be multi-faceted in approach including talks, presentations, information booths and demonstrations, be open to the broader community and have a potential to attract thousands of residents.

Topics should cover all aspects of community and/or personal safety and be broad and inclusive of non-profit groups, government agencies, health authorities and local businesses. Suggested topics and participating groups such as Bicycle Safety, Drug and Addiction Awareness, MedWatch Program, Community Policing, RCMP, Risk Management, Local Emergency Preparedness Program, Fire Safety, Local Fire Department, Personal Safety, Self Defense School, Blockwatch Program, ShakeOut BC, BC Emergency Alerting System, Summer Health Risks, local pharmacy, Home Security Systems, Fraud, Scams and Banking and Credit Security, TD or other Major Financial Institution could be part of an all encompassing community event meriting Council Support.

Applicable Policies:

Policy No. 06-022 – Community Grants
Policy No. 06-021 – Capital Improvement Grant
Policy No. 06-019 – Banner Program
Policy No. 07-160 – Council Consultation
Policy No. 07-222 – Public Information Meetings

Interdivisional Implications:

Community Development

Financial Implications:

Among the recommendation provided by staff, if Council chooses to pursue:

- Option 1, directing staff to encourage registered non-profit community groups, including Community Associations, to submit qualifying proposals that include outcome specific projects - there will be no budget impact.
- Option 2, directing staff to investigate further mechanisms and opportunities for community engagement and report back to Council - the impact will be minimal and can likely be absorbed within existing budget sources.
- Option 3, that Council consider the 2018 staff recommendation to provide pro-rated grants to Community Associations according to attendance at qualifying forum style events - there will be no budget impact.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Tulumello
DIRECTOR
For
ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES DIVISION

This report has been prepared in consultation with the following listed departments.

CONCURRENCES	
Division / Department	Name
Finance Division	K. Sinclair
Community Development Division	R. Seifi
Corporate Administration Division	S. Scheepmaker