



**Council Member Motion
Committee of the Whole of April 26, 2018**

Date: April 18, 2018

From: Mayor Lisa Helps (Victoria) Mayor Richard Atwell (Saanich)

Subject: Mayors' Joint Report on Citizens' Assembly

RECOMMENDATION

That Saanich and Victoria hold a joint Committee of the Whole meeting to determine which question both local governments will place on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot in order to receive elector assent to explore the costs and benefits of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria.

INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2018, Saanich Council passed the following motion:

"That Council call on the Province of British Columbia to establish and fund a Citizens' Assembly on amalgamation with interested municipalities."

On January 11, 2018, Victoria Council reciprocated and passed the same motion. Responding to the direction from our respective councils, we (Mayor Atwell and Mayor Helps) co-signed and addressed a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Hon. Selena Robinson (Attachment A).

We received a letter in response from the Minister inviting us to meet with her staff to learn more about the process for exploring amalgamation between our two communities (Attachment B).

On April 11, 2018 this meeting took place with ministry staff to gather information about what steps both Saanich and Victoria Councils could take should we collectively wish to spend time and resources to study the costs and benefits of amalgamation between our two municipalities.

The key advice received from Ministry staff was as follows:

- The process from start to finish must be thorough and objective
- Public engagement is key throughout the process
- It is the role of local government in partnership and with reliance on experienced consultants to design, host and steward the process
- An independent technical analysis should be performed in tandem to analyze the costs and benefits

NEXT STEPS

Should each council wish to place a non-binding referendum question on its municipal ballot, the next steps would likely be as follows:

1. To ensure there is a mandate from our citizens to undertake this work, develop a clear, concise and identical question to be placed on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot in Saanich and Victoria
2. Develop and disseminate educational information in advance of the October 20, 2018 vote to enable electors to cast an informed vote

POST-ELECTION

3. If a majority of the referendum ballot votes cast in both municipalities support moving forward, establish a joint steering committee comprised of elected officials and senior staff from both local governments
4. Develop a clear proposal outlining a citizen-led process and budget with terms of reference for studying the costs and benefits of amalgamation with the aim of asking the Province to co-fund the study with Saanich and Victoria.

DUNCAN-NORTH COWICHAN EXAMPLE

2014 ANNOUNCEMENT:

<https://duncan.ca/2014/09/amalgamation-and-boundary-realignment/>

BALLOT QUESTION:


Are you in favour of spending time and resources to study the costs and benefits of the amalgamation of the municipalities of North Cowichan and the City of Duncan?

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY WEBSITE:

<https://www.dnc-cama.ca/>

Prepared by

MAYOR RICHARD ATWELL (Saanich)



MAYOR LISA HELPS (Victoria)



List of Appendices

Appendix A - Joint Saanich/ Victoria letter dated January 22, 2018

Appendix B – Letter from Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated March 7, 2018



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office

770 Vernon Avenue Victoria BC V8X 2W7 | T 250-475-5510 | F 250-475-5440 | www.saanich.ca

January 22, 2018

The Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
P.O. Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia
V8W 9E2

Re: Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation

Dear Minister Robinson:

I am writing to you jointly with Mayor Lisa Helps, to respectfully request a meeting to discuss the recent motions passed by the City of Victoria Council and the District of Saanich Council, provided here respectively and for your convenience:

City of Victoria:

"Be It Resolved That Council call on the Province of British Columbia to establish and fund a Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation with interested municipalities from Greater Victoria And Be It Further Resolved That the City of Victoria remain receptive to any initiatives for the creation of a regional police service and that Council request that the Mayor participate in the discussions initiated by Saanich."

District of Saanich:

"That Council call on the Province of British Columbia to establish and fund a Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation with interested municipalities."

Mayor Lisa Helps and I would very appreciate an opportunity to begin the dialogue on how the Province can support the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich move forward with this proposal.

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I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Sherri Andrews is my administrative assistant and she may be reached directly at 250-475-5510 or via email at sherri.andrews@saanich.ca.

Yours truly,



Richard Atwell
Mayor, District of
Saanich



Lisa Helps
Mayor, City of
Victoria

cc: Council, District of Saanich
Council, City of Victoria