

**MINUTES**  
**Special Committee of the Whole**  
**Joint Meeting with the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria**  
**Held at Capital Regional District Boardroom at 625 Fisgard Street**  
**June 26, 2018 at 7:00 pm**

**The meeting was co-chaired by Mayor Atwell and Mayor Helps**

**Council in Attendance:**

**Victoria:** Mayor Helps as co-chair; Councillor Alto, Councillor Coleman, Councillor Isitt, Councillor Loveday, Councillor Lucas, Councillor Madoff, Councillor Thornton-Joe, Councillor Young.

**Saanich:** Mayor Atwell as co-chair; Councillor Brice, Councillor Brownoff, Councillor Harper, Councillor Haynes, Councillor Murdock, Councillor Plant, Councillor Sanders, Councillor Wergeland.

**Staff in Attendance:**

**Victoria:** J. Jenkyns - City Manager; C. Coates - City Clerk; C. Havelka - Deputy City Clerk.

**Saanich:** S. Samborski – Acting Corporate Officer; A. Bains - City Clerk; B. Reems, Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services; S. Litzenberger – Senior Committee Clerk.

**A. PUBLIC INPUT ON A REFERENDUM QUESTION ON AMALGAMATION**

*Mayor Helps provided information about the intent of the special joint meeting which is to hear public input and agree upon a question to put on the October 20 election ballot regarding the formation of a citizens' assembly to study the amalgamation of Victoria and Saanich.*

**It was moved by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Loveday,** that the agenda be approved.

*Councillor Isitt expressed a concern about the agenda, as this meeting conflicted with a housing meeting many Councillors would have liked to have attended.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**B. INTRODUCTION OF THE ITEM**

Mayor Helps introduced the motion that was on the agenda and read it out:

1. That Saanich and Victoria both place the following question on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot:

**“Are you in favour of establishing a Citizens’ Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria?”**

2. Co-develop and disseminate educational information in advance of the October 20, 2018 general election as an inclusive election expense.
3. Direct the Mayors to write to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing informing the Hon. Selena Robinson of the intention to pose a ballot question, sharing the wording of the question.

### **C. PUBLIC INPUT**

M. Graham, Marsett Place, Saanich: Spoke in opposition to amalgamation of the two municipalities, as there are no perceived benefits to the efficiencies it might bring.

*A Council member made a point of order in relation to what input is expected of the public. It was noted that anything relevant to the motion on the agenda should be considered.*

R. Graham, Marsett Place, Saanich: Spoke to amalgamation being of interest to all municipalities, not just these two and this should be considered by the provincial government.

N. Chambers, Blenkinsop Road, Saanich: Agreed with other speakers that a bigger municipality is not needed.

D. Pascor, South Valley Drive, Saanich: Expressed concerns about the number of the municipalities and how amalgamation would prevent duplication of services.

C. Nielsen, Greatford Place, Saanich: Spoke in support of the non-binding question on the ballot as it is worthy of review.

A. Roberts, Marsett Place, Saanich: Spoke in opposition to Saanich and Victoria amalgamating as it isn’t practical to look at only two municipalities.

M. Gardiner, Dallas Road, Victoria: Spoke to the need for amalgamation to create a more effective local government.

J. Anderson, Lauder Road, Saanich: Spoke to the regional issues that are ignored and is in favour of starting the process for citizen assembly to consider amalgamation.

K. Whitworth, Viewmont Avenue, Saanich: Called on the province to establish and fund a citizen assembly on amalgamation, saying this process is ill-advised and there should be a cap on funds to promote this.

B. Johnson, Saanich: Spoke against amalgamation, saying there are reports advising that the cost of amalgamation is too high.

B. Merson, Carolwood Drive, Saanich: Would like more information on amalgamation, on how much it will cost for the citizen assembly and consultants and they don't want taxes raised so more information is needed on the budget.

J. Ellis, Ocean View Road, Saanich: Spoke in support of amalgamation which will provide better service and the reasons against amalgamation are mostly fear of the unknown.

B. Fowler, Browning Street, Saanich: Expressed disappointment in the progress of this initiative noting the inefficiencies created by several municipalities and the CRD would be best to deliver services as a group.

#### **D. COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS**

The Councils agreed to discuss item # 1 first and on the procedures for the discussion and debate.

**It was moved by Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Coleman,** that Saanich and Victoria both place the following question on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot:

"Are you in favour of establishing a Citizens' Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria?"

*Council discussed the following:*

- *The importance of hearing from the public on moving forward with amalgamation*
- *That this action was requested in 2014 and is a top regional issue.*
- *That pros and cons of a potential amalgamation will be considered as part of that process.*

**It was moved by Mayor Helps, seconded by Councillor Loveday,** that the motion be amended to add:

**'of spending an amount to be determined' after 'Are you in favour...'**

*Council discussed the following:*

- *The province's commitment to provide one-third of funding for the total cost of the process.*
- *The budget already committed to election expenses.*
- *Whether how the amendment is phrased might change the nuance of the motion.*

**It was moved by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Thornton-Joe, that the amendment be amended by moving the amended wording to the end of the sentence, as follows:**

**“Are you in favour of establishing a Citizens’ Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria, and spending an amount to be determined to do so?”**

**Victoria City Council on the amendment to the amendment:  
Carried Unanimously**

Council members requested more discussion on the amendment to the amendment.

*Mayor Helps recalled the motion.*

**Victoria City Council on the amendment to the amendment:  
Defeated Unanimously**

*Council discussed the amendment as follows:*

- *Concerns that the amendment complicates the question.*
- *The need for a breakdown of the costs and to set limitations as part of the 2019 budget process.*
- *The cost of the educational material.*

**Victoria City Council on the amendment:  
Carried**

*For: Mayor Helps, Councillors Alto, Isitt, Loveday, Lucas, Madoff, Thornton-Joe and Young*

*Opposed: Councillor Coleman*

**Main Motion as amended:**

**“Are you in favour of spending an amount to be determined for establishing a Citizens’ Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria?”**

*Council discussed the main motion as follows:*

- *Staff working with colleagues in other jurisdictions to determine an approximate cost for engagement.*
- *Concerns about the methods of engaging the public in order to ensure they are provided sufficient education.*
- *The top topics facing the community and if this topic is one of the most important.*
- *The high percentage of residents that wanted this sort of review.*
- *That a Citizens’ Assembly review would be helpful in terms of the cost benefits of amalgamating these two municipalities.*

**Victoria City Council on the main motion as amended:**

**Carried**

*For: Mayor Helps, Councillors Alto, Coleman, Loveday, Lucas, Madoff, Thornton-Joe and Young*

*Opposed: Councillor Isitt*

**Motion to Recess:**

**It was moved by Councillor Plant, seconded by Councillor Haynes,** that the meeting recess.

**Victoria City Council on the motion:**

**Carried Unanimously**

*The meeting recessed from 9:32 p.m. until 9:39 p.m.*

**Motion:**

**Moved by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Mayor Helps that it be recommended that Victoria and Saanich:**

Co-develop and disseminate educational information in advance of the October 20, 2018 general election as an inclusive election expense.

*Council discussed the following:*

- *The budget for the election and that this educational piece could be supplementary to what is currently planned.*
- *The importance of educating the public on how the Citizens' Assembly would work.*
- *Both municipalities distributing the same information and reporting back to Council with the information to be disseminated.*

**Victoria City Council on the motion:**

**Carried Unanimously**

**Motion:**

**Moved by Councillor Madoff, seconded by Councillor Coleman, that it be recommended that Victoria and Saanich:**

Direct the Mayors to write to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing informing the Hon. Selena Robinson of the intention to pose a ballot question, sharing the wording of the question.

**Victoria City Council on the motion:**

**Carried Unanimously**

*Council discussed the need for clarification from the Minister regarding the funds the province would contribute towards the Citizens' Assembly.*

*The Mayors took direction from their Councils to contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to seek clarification on the funds the Ministry will be contributing towards a potential Citizens' Assembly.*

**Motion to Adjourn at 10:07 p.m.:**

**Moved by Councillor Madoff, seconded by Councillor Alto, that the meeting adjourn.**

**Victoria City Council on the motion:**

**Carried Unanimously**

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