



Council Member Motion

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of February 7, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** February 1, 2019
From: Councillors Alto and Thornton-Joe
Subject: Commemorative Tree Planting in Mayors Grove

BACKGROUND

The "Mayors Grove" was established in what is now called Beacon Hill Park in the Heywood meadow area east of Arbutus Way, during a 1927 convention of western mayors in Victoria. Nine mayors planted trees to begin the grove. In following years, visiting dignitaries were invited to plant trees, among them Winston Churchill (a hawthorn in 1929), the King of Siam (an oak in 1931) and Lord Baden-Powell (an oak in 1935).

Historian James Nesbitt has noted that in the 1920's and 1930's, it was popular for the mayor of the day to take distinguished visitors to Beacon Hill Park and have them plant a tree in the Grove. The Grove fell in to decline during the 1950's. Mayor Richard Wilson had it restored in the 1960's.

In 1963, a refurbished Mayors Grove sign was erected on steel posts northeast of Goodacre Lake. Listed were twenty-five dignitaries, the tree species they had planted – oak, maple, fir, ash, beech, copper beech, linden or hawthorn – and the dates. Identification numbers matched stone markers at the bases of the trees.

Gretchen Mann Brewin was the first woman ever to serve as Mayor of Victoria, elected for two terms from 1985 through 1990. During her tenure as Mayor, as a result of her great interest in community development, social and heritage planners were hired by the City. She chaired the Police Board, was an active member of the Capital Regional District, BC Transit and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and played a key role in bringing the Commonwealth Games to Victoria.

Mayor Brewin began her political career as a member of the Scarborough School Board when she was in her twenties. After moving to Victoria from Ontario in 1973, she went back to university and completed a BA in political science. In 1979, she was elected to Victoria City Council, serving three terms.

After civic political service, Gretchen was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Victoria Beacon-Hill, serving two terms from 1991-2001, during which she served as the province's first woman Deputy Speaker and Speaker in the Legislative Assembly, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development and Economic Security, and as the Minister for Children and Families. As MLA, Mayor Brewin also served as Deputy Chair of Committees and was a member of several select standing committees. She facilitated many

important developments in Victoria, such as the restoration of St. Ann's Academy, the replacement of Sir James Douglas School, a Royal Jubilee hospital expansion, a new cancer clinic, and several important housing initiatives – Kew Court, Carillon Place, Pandora Project, Mike Gidora Place, Sandi Merriman House and Streetlink Housing Society.

Mayor Brewin has four children, seven grandchildren, 3 step grandchildren, 2 step great-grandchildren and 1 great grand-child. Now in her eighties, she currently resides in Vancouver where she moved in 2015 to be closer to her family, after living in Victoria for 42 years.

RESOLUTION

That the City of Victoria plant a tree in Mayor's Grove to honour former Victoria Mayor Gretchen Mann Brewin, the species to be determined by the Director of Parks, at a time in the spring of 2019 when such a planting has the best chance of success, as determined by the Director of Parks.

That a ceremony be held at the time of the planting, including the installation of a small commemorative plaque to complement the style of others in the Grove, and that Former Mayor Brewin be invited to attend that ceremony.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Alto


Councillor Thornton-Joe