



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 19, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** September 18th 2019
From: Councillor Potts
Subject: Temporary Accommodation of Peers Victoria Resources Society

BACKGROUND

Peers Victoria Resources Society is an established resources center for sex workers that has been operating in the Victoria/Esquimalt area since 1995. They are supported by VIHA and receive funding support from various levels of government, and have a professional board and executive. Peers provides an array of outreach and drop in counselling and support services alongside education and employment training for current and former sex workers, in Victoria and on Vancouver Island. Much of their work is also focused on violence prevention. They have a permanent location in Esquimalt, but are undergoing renovations in October and November and must move out during that period. More information of their programs is available at <https://www.safersexwork.ca>

Peers has attempted to find temporary commercial office space for their employees while their construction is completed with a preference for the Rock Bay/Burnside area. Due to the short period of time they require space, they have been unable to find the space they need and have made a request to the City for temporary office space from October 1 to December 2019. As October 1 is fast approaching they have indicated they need to either confirm space in the following week or be faced with making programming decisions temporarily until their renovations are completed. Their use of the space would be primarily for Peers staff with a drop-in time of 11 to 2, 3 days a week for clients. Additionally they hold a potluck style meal once a week in the evening. Peers does not provide medical services or allow drug consumption, they are primarily a resource and support group that operate during regular business hours.

Real Estate staff are conferring with facilities staff as to availability of the 2nd floor self contained old office area for the next 2-3 month period. Currently the area is used for storage and not occupied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion:

Recognizing the importance of Peers Victoria Resources Society in preventing violence and providing support and counselling resources for vulnerable individuals in the City, that Council directs City staff to work with Peers Victoria Resources Society to determine if a temporary office space can be secured for their use (with minimal expense) for the period of October 1, 2019 to

December 31, 2019 at the City's Old Island Saw Building on Bridge Street; and if so confirmed by staff that this can be accommodated, Council further authorizes the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a lease or license agreement, the terms of which are acceptable to the City Solicitor, for the space during the term at a rent that is affordable to them.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. Potts', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Potts