

Victoria Edelweiss Club

German Canadian Cultural Society

108 Niagara Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1E9

Mayor and Council
City Hall
1 Centennial Square,
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

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SEP 11 2019

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

September 9, 2019

Dear Mayor and Council,

RE: Council Meeting - September 12, 2019 - Item G3
and Victoria Edelweiss Club, 108 Niagara Street, Victoria BC

Victoria City Council is considering how best to deal with tax relief for various non-profit groups throughout the city. **One way is through tax exemptions** – in the past, cultural clubs unfortunately were not eligible. We hope that Council will choose to change this policy and support such important facilities. Accordingly we hereby apply for the Victoria Edelweiss Club to be included on the list of grants or approved exemptions (categories of Cultural, and Recreational).

The Edelweiss Club building in its current format provides an irreplaceable and affordable community-oriented facility for a wide variety of users to gather for social, cultural, recreational, and educational purposes:

- Several First Nations groups hold their spring and their fall ceremonials there
- Orchestras and choirs visit from Germany to give concerts,
- The Coast Guard trains there every month,
- Dance groups include weekly Swing events, English Country Dancers, the Latin-African dance society, Dance Temple, Scottish dancers, as well as champion ballroom dancers from around the world,
- Weekly Yoga is held there,
- Community associations and many strata meetings come from the area,
- Weddings, Celebrations of Life, Philippino 18th birthday parties,
- Family reunions
- A Sensei event from Japan
- 3 choirs and 2 bands practice there
- "Be Connected" holds its annual party for 200 special needs kids
- Victoria's surgeons hold their annual event for the hospital staff of both hospitals

And many more besides....

For a longer-term solution, the Board of Directors of the Victoria Edelweiss Club formally requests that Victoria City Council initiate a Rezoning and an Official Community Plan Amendment for the parcel known as 108 Niagara Street. As you know, the redevelopment-oriented valuation for this property has tripled the assessment in one year, resulting in property taxes increasing from about \$11,000/year to \$37,000/year.

| Year | Building Assessed Value | Land Assessed Value | Total Assessed Value |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2018 | 68,1000 | 1,022,000 | 1,090,000 |
| 2019 | 88,800 | 3819,000 | 3,907,800 |

This tax burden is considerable, and will drive a community asset out of existence very quickly. To meet our property tax obligations in 2019, the club had to borrow the money.

The solution to this issue (after much research and discussion with the Assessment Authority and others) is that the property be rezoned to a "club zoning" similar to other cultural clubs in Victoria that have "club zoning". Along with a Council-initiated rezoning, a change in the OCP designation (for example to Institution/Recreation) is also necessary to confirm that the Victoria Edelweiss Club will continue to be a valued institution within the city.

Hopefully the rezoning and the OCP amendment can move forward in a timely manner. This will enable BC Assessment to adjust the Total Assessed Value for 2020 to reflect actual use and not be based on some possible future redevelopment.

We appreciate your consideration, and hope that Council will take these steps to protect this valued, and affordable, community amenity.

Sincerely,



Angela Plasterer
Treasurer



Mona Jane
Chairman of the Board