

I would like to ask Council to downzone the property at 108 Niagara St, known as the Victoria Edelweiss Club, so that the club can continue its very useful role in the community.

I am speaking on behalf of my husband, John de Pfyffer, who has to teach this evening. John has taught dance in the city for the last 34 years and is a member of and/or teaches for the U.Vic Ballroom Dance Club, the Ballroom Dance community, the Swing Dance community and the Latin Dance community.

John has also been a member of the Edelweiss Club for many years and has volunteered at and participated in a number of functions at the hall in this time. He has rented the hall for over 30 years for numerous events for the U.Vic Ballroom dance club and for dances for the Ballroom, Latin and Swing dance communities. Several thousand people have attended these dance events over the years at the Edelweiss Club. It is one of very few facilities left in Victoria where we can hold such events. The character, charm, acoustics and wonderful, large, sprung, hardwood dance floor make it the best venue we have left in the city.

Dance is recognized as the healthiest activity for the mind, body and soul according to every study on active living and this means we need more facilities like this and not less. Dance is also a big part of almost every culture so a good dance floor like the one at this hall is essential.

Community members rent this hall for functions like birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas parties and weddings.

Several other dance groups also use the hall regularly for practices and dances. These groups could rent big, ugly, acoustically awful gyms to hold their functions in, but they prefer this wonderful venue that is a big part of this beautiful city.

The Victoria Edelweiss Club is the ideal venue for several communities and dance is the glue that binds these communities together.

Volunteers run the Edelweiss club and it would cost the city a fortune to build, maintain and run anything like it. Cultural facilities, like this club that bring communities together, are also an important part of every great city. I, therefore, want to encourage the city to downzone this property so that the Edelweiss Club can continue to be the important and useful facility it has been for the community for the last 50 years and to ensure that Victoria continues to be a great city to live in.

The Official Community Plan is, after all, first and foremost, a plan for the community.