



**Council Member Motion**  
**For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of August 6<sup>th</sup> 2020**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 31 2020  
**From:** Mayor Helps and Councillor Thornton-Joe  
**Subject:** Newspaper boxes in Downtown

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**BACKGROUND**

Mayor and Council received a letter from the DVBA regarding newspaper and magazine boxes in the downtown. It was expressed at the DVBA Board meeting that many of the boxes are:

1. In Disrepair
2. Unused
3. Unlicenced

With use of the internet and libraries, these boxes are no longer needed and most are often empty or filled with garbage (See attached photos). Additionally, there is no fee for use of public space and no licensing regime. Companies are benefitting from public space without paying for it, including using boxes for advertising, whereas small business owners have to pay a fee for sandwich boards and also must receive a licence. The boxes clutter our downtown streets and detract from a high quality public realm.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council request that staff ask the companies to remove newspaper boxes from city-owned property and if they do not, that staff remove the boxes off of public property.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Helps".

Mayor Helps

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlayne Thornton-Joe".

Councillor Thornton-Joe

**List of Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Letter from the DVBA dated July 17, 2020
- Attachment B: Photographs



Downtown Victoria Business Association  
20 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P7  
(250)386-2238  
[info@downtownvictoria.ca](mailto:info@downtownvictoria.ca)

July 17, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps & Council  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P6

Re: 'newspaper distribution boxes' and their detrimental affect on the downtown appearance

It is our understanding that these distribution boxes for free magazines and papers have no approval from the City allowing them to be installed on public sidewalks. The organizations pay no fees to allow the sidewalk clutter (unlike sandwich board signs and other regulated street installations) and rarely maintain the pick-up boxes.

The DVBA Clean Team reports frequently needing to pick up magazines which have been scattered by careless or mischievous people. There is rarely a workday where none of our workers have to remove graffiti from the boxes, as they are a frequent target of vandalism.

We would like to ask the City to remove these pick-up boxes. Due to COVID-19, sidewalk space is especially important (to allow for proper social distancing in line-ups) and the boxes interfere with shared use of the sidewalk. When lines are waiting the boxes become an obstacle. And they are unsightly clutter which contributes to the perception of some visitors that downtown is "messy."

Thank you for your time and your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Bray".

Jeff Bray  
DVBA Executive Director

## Attachment B: Photographs







