



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 21 2021

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: January 21 2021

From: Mayor Helps

Subject: Response to Broken Windows

Late meeting rationale: This motion is late because it responds to a recent event that happened after the Monday 11:00am motion deadline.

Background

Late Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning a man smashed the windows of 14 businesses in the city. In weeks previous, downtown businesses have also been targeted by professional criminals who remove glass and then steal from the businesses. VicPD has apprehended and held in custody the man who created the senseless act in the early morning of January 20th. And they will continue their work to apprehend the people committing the more targeted acts.

While the police continue their work, our small businesses, already hit hard economically and emotionally by the pandemic, are left with the repair bills or insurance deductibles.

In the past, the City has provided funds to the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) which they have turned into grant programs. Last year, for example, the City made a grant of \$20,000 to the DVBA to help businesses with graffiti removal. The DVBA has also administered great neighbourhood grants on behalf of business working on items such as parklets.

Wednesday night, I was in contact with the DVBA Executive Director, Jeff Bray, who indicated his organization's willingness to create and administer a grant program for businesses in the downtown and beyond, whose businesses have been vandalized. As with past grant programs that DVBA has created and administered for their members, these details would be left to the DVBA to develop.

While a grant program may be one way to address the damage to downtown buildings which has an impact on the downtown's economic vibrancy and the public realm, there may be other steps that the City can take, in partnership with the DVBA.

Recommendation

That staff work with the DVBA and report back to Council on options to support the vibrancy and viability of the downtown and to address the impacts of vandalism.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Helps", written in a cursive style.

Mayor Helps