



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting June 15, 2023**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 8, 2023
From: Mayor Alto and Councillor Coleman
Subject: Freedom of the City for the RCN(R)

Background

2023 marks the Centennial of the creation of the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve. On this occasion, His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Malahat* would like to recognize the impact of Victoria's naval reservists to the Royal Canadian Navy who, over the years, have contributed to the local community, aided their fellow citizens, and protected Canadian interests at home and abroad.

To mark this milestone, HMCS *Malahat* has requested that the city of Victoria grant the service *Freedom of the City* for one day, on September 23, 2023. This request is one of 24 *Freedom*s being sought across Canada in all major cities where a Naval Reserve Division of the Royal Canadian Navy is located. On this day, units of the RCN Reserve would parade through some streets in their respective cities to mark the centenary of the Naval Reserve.

Traditionally, *Freedom of the City* is a tribute to, and offers appreciation for, local naval or other military service. In this case, it includes a ceremonial march by units of the Naval reserve for several blocks from a staging area near the inner harbour to Centennial Square. Drums and flags accompany the march. Under the Community Charter, section 158(1), a municipal council may confer freedom of the municipality on a "distinguished unit of the armed forces of Canada or another nation" (s.158(1)(b)). Under the Community Charter, section 158(2), the commander of the armed forces unit so awarded is "deemed to be an elector of the municipality", and other qualifications, unless the municipal council revokes the honour.

This request does not include any reference or desire to invoke any aspect of the Community Charter, and speaks only to the opportunity to parade and celebrate. The Commanding Officer of the *Malahat* has acknowledged that this request is an honour of some magnitude, one of the most important a municipality can grant to a military unit, and has offered his assurance that he, his protocol and leadership teams, will work closely with city staff throughout the planning process from preparation to the parade and the eventual ceremony. The closing ceremony would take place in Centennial Square.

This request has been granted in the past, most recently in 2010. A proclamation noting that ceremony was also approved at that time.

Resolution

That the City of Victoria grant the Commanding Officer and the members of the HMCS *Malahat* Freedom of the City for one day on September 23, 2023, and

That such freedom be revoked as of September 24, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Alto



Councillor Coleman