

Appendix A

From: Maurita Prato [mailto:maurita@lifecyclesproject.ca]

Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2015 4:00 PM

To: Citizen Engagement

Cc: Aaren Topley; Linda Geggie; All staff

Subject: LifeCycles Feedback on City's changes to Granting Application and process

Hello,

My name is Maurita Prato and I am the Executive Director of LifeCycles project Society. I commend the councils' commitment to food systems, and feel encouraged by the direction and support council is showing in increasing food production in the City.

I have a few concerns with the proposed granting criteria and process.

1. With the exception of the possibility of a micro grants, there are no grants to support new community garden creations or builds. While it is commendable to give larger grants to neighbourhood groups that already manage gardens, in most cases the costs of garden builds or garden creation is substantially higher than supporting existing garden spaces. To support council's direction to increase food production in the city, I suggest that new garden builds be included in the Direct Awards Grant.
2. I would also suggest a 'no net garden loss' support, whereby the city helps community gardeners losing their gardens due to development, to find a new suitable location and help financially with the build (possibly rolled into one of the proposed categories).
3. In terms of the application process. It is my opinion, having been through similar processes with other municipalities, it can be quite a burdensome on small organizations or groups to have to submit an application and present to council. This is a lot to ask applicants that are already resource poor.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration of these points. Again, in general, I have been very pleased with the direction of council especially as it relates to increased food systems in the city.

Please excuse delays in response as I am out of the office Tuesdays and Friday afternoons

Maurita Prato

Executive Director/Education Coordinator PEPÁKEN HÁUTW, Blossoming Place

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From: Mitchell Krieger (VS) [mailto:mitchell@victoriasymphony.ca]
Sent: Friday, May 15, 2015 3:06 PM
To: Citizen Engagement
Subject: Comments re grant policy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new grant policy. Here are some thoughts:

- Multi-year commitments. It was noted that a multi-year project could be applied for; however, some organizations repeat projects annually, and consistency in funding, if there were a way to do that, would be of great help.
- Granting cycle. Earlier is always better for those of us whose planning cycle has to be well in advance. The Victoria Symphony must finalize its budget six to eight months before each fiscal year begins on June 1; the planning begins several months earlier than that. By the way, this is a problem we have with all levels of government except the CRD.
- Grant criteria, Council review. This will be a very difficult process. If Council actually wants to be involved, perhaps they could adjudicate only grant applications above a certain dollar amount (\$10,000?).
- Grant application and reporting. We hope the City will remember that all nonprofits are stretched thin, and the simpler the paperwork can be kept, the more the time and energy of nonprofit's staffs and volunteers can go towards making the programs happen.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

Mitchell Krieger
Mitchell Krieger /Executive Director
Victoria Symphony /250.412.1981
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From: viva youth choirs [mailto:viva@vivavoices.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 1:05 PM
To: Citizen Engagement
Subject: Strategic plan proposed grant policy

Hello, Council.

Thank you very much to the staff who organized and presented the Grant Policy Information Session. Dola Dube and I found the information presented very informative and found no challenges to the application process. Our questions were answered and we found the hand-outs very useful.

We look forward to making an application in early September and would appreciate a reminder email to this effect.

Best regards,

Diane

Diane McWilliams
GM Viva Youth Voices
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Appendix A

From: Joan Kotarski [mailto:executivedirector@fairfieldcommunity.ca]

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 3:28 PM

To: Citizen Engagement

Subject: Re: feedback on City of Victoria proposed new grant program

Good Afternoon,

The senior staff team at the FGCA have a number of general comments about the proposed new 'grant' process and consultation; then some specific comments about the policy as presented. Given the short turn around as a staff we have not had much time to be thoughtful or put together a cohesive commentary. The following comments may be similar and /or duplicate thoughts on the process and content.

General

- creating and implementation of the grant policy and changes is too fast
- one meeting for all on very short notice did not allow for some people to attend
- very short time to respond and over a holiday week end
- a more thoughtful timeline might have been to retain the current program for 2015 , do a proper consultation process with current grant stakeholders and then go to an open call of interested community members and groups once a more solid proposal was thought out
- it is still not clear why a redo of the current set of grant programs is necessary
- what problem is the new policy addressing – if it is simply to align with a new strategic plan and add 2 new categories that has been done before
- there is no building on previous grant policy language and categories to see where they shift or need to shift
- the language used before in applying for a city grant was to ask the grant seeker to identify how it fit with the current strategic plan or council priorities
- many of the grant programs have unclear or duplicate or changeable titles so it is hard to know what is being replaced, reworked or new for instance with the direct award grants there is no clarity of title in my own grant files about the title the core grant for operation of community centres has been called recreation core grant, core operating grant, community and senior centres operating grant or what it is the centres are actually funded to do(provide adult and youth recreation in local areas) this grant pays a portion of the salary of a programmer
- neighbourhood enhancement has been called neighbourhood matching grant and relied heavily on a direct match of cash grant and volunteer labour
- along the same lines base grant is changed to neighbourhood per capita grants somewhere celebration grants of 100 dollars per neighbourhood got subsumed and added in
- there used to be 3 year demonstration grants as well as special project grants.
- the information about names of grants ,what the grant is supposed to be linked to is confusing
- sorting out the existing grants first before making changes might have been a starting place for instance FGCA receives a grant from the city to negotiate and buy liability insurance for those associations who do not operate community centres –where should that grant be placed? Direct award? fee for service?
- new ways of doing things do not seem to use any information from even the recent past for instance it was just 2 years ago when 'core' grants to community and senior centres began with a new policy announcement and short implementation and consulting process –this process seems to be following exactly that bad pattern.
- the people presenting did not seem to understand about the current state of the various grants and so lots of questions without answers around transitions
 - It would be useful to have a clear understanding of what is driving these changes - what issues Council and staff had with the existing grant program, and what the community saw as problematic with the existing program.
 - The consultation period is far too short to have any meaningful dialogue with previous grantees or the public

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- Nomenclature of grants is inconsistent across materials. For instance we currently receive what is called a 'CORE grant', but in the proposed grant policy this seems to be a 'Community and Senior Centre Operating Grant'. Are these the same thing? Are there changes? The size of the proposed (even with increases) does not cover the full cost of operating the facilities.

Notes regarding the proposed Grant Policy:

Specific

- concerns about elected officials micro-managing
- seems like the process will become politicized
- one year funding cycles make it challenging for programs to gain credibility – particularly youth programs
- it's challenging securing joint funding when there is a one year commitment (City commitment goes a long way when trying to leverage other funding)
- by changing and adding to the application process more money will be required for administrative purposes which will take away from the money needed for frontline delivery
- Youth (Outreach) seems to no longer be a priority according to the strategic plan but seems to contradict some of the findings in the Victoria Foundation Vital Signs survey.
 - How will the new Grant Policy incorporate current research and practice? Eg. investing in early years, youth, and at-risk populations can greatly reduce policing costs – but programs targeting these groups likely only hit one strategic objective and are less likely to be funded than, say, a bicycle emergency management project. Is this sound fiscal management
 - The proposed reporting period may not produce the desired results: although approval is given in November, monies are not awarded until July. Many organizations will not have the capacity to start projects until they receive actual funds. Reporting will be required in September or October, leaving a very short window for projects or programs to start (much less finish) before reporting is required.
 - The current grant program specifies amounts of grant funding in particular streams (eg. arts amount, youth outreach amount). With the new policy, how will council ensure that funding is well distributed across program and project areas without spending a tremendous amount of time every cycle on fund allocation?
 - The new policy recognizes the need for ongoing volunteer coordination of community gardens by providing funding for 6 existing neighbourhoods with gardens. How will the ongoing management of any gardens started with \$500 one-time micro-grants be supported?
 - It was suggested that the more strategic objectives that are ticked the better chances one has of securing a grant – I am not sure that is necessary an appropriate manner to decide on the awarding of project grants
 - Many projects requesting a city grant involve other parts of the city structure like parks and engineering to be completed or placed in a work schedule. It was not clear how the impact affects department workloads or how that will be managed
 - somehow artist in residence or arts grants generally got more confusing or eliminated in this current stream except for Festival Investment grants which we were told repeatedly had a robust intake and oversight process and did not need to be reviewed

Positives about the proposed process are:

- One grant deadline date and one application format
- Having advance notification of grant approvals. Would suggest that approval is accompanied by a formal grant agreement so that agencies have assurance of amount and payment schedule of grant monies.

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- Inclusion of administrative dollars to grants which did not previously have them included (eg youth outreach grants, which now fall under Strategic Plan grants)

I am sorry but this is all the time we have available to comment on the new grant program.

Joan Kotarski

Executive Director

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From: VicWest Garden Project [mailto:vicwestgarden@yahoo.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 10:25 PM
To: Citizen Engagement
Subject: Feedback on proposed changes to City's grant program

Hello,

Congratulations to Mayor, Council and staff for the grant program's alignment with the progressive 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, specifically it's support for enhancing local food systems and community engagement.

I do have a concern about the application process. Requiring applicants to present to Council in addition to a written application is very time-consuming and challenging to develop the formal presentation, especially for volunteers representing community organizations. Also professional organizations with more presentation experience will have an advantage in the competitive process over volunteer-based groups who have less time and experience.

The schedule for Direct Award Grants for the volunteer coordination of community gardens must be synchronized with the garden maintenance season. Funds should be received ahead of the season, which begins in March, in order to facilitate planning and recruitment of volunteer resources. Award of funds in mid or late season will result in a less successful maintenance program and the objective of the grant will not be met.

In regards to the monitoring and reporting, grant recipients would benefit from a City standard form or template for the annual report. The City would benefit by receiving a consistent report from all groups, facilitating easier post program/project review.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback. I look forward to the finalization of the program.

Patti Parkhouse
Project Coordinator
VicWest Food Security Collective - Victoria West Community Association
email: vicwestgarden@yahoo.ca
www.vicwestfoodsecurity.org

...cultivating community by growing and sharing food!

*Gardens and flowers have a way of bringing people together, drawing them from their homes.
Clare Ansberry, The Women of Troy Hill*



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

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May 19th, 2015

Susanne Thompson,
Director of Finance,
City of Victoria

Dear Susanne,

Re: Draft Grant Proposals

The JBNA Board appreciates that we were able to attend your presentation about the proposed changes to the Grant program and process.

The proposed changes appear to be positive. Aligning various aspects of the grant program with the Strategic Plan is a good step. The parameters for garden micro---grants need clarification to ensure such grants serve a broader public good focus in addition to personal use. Otherwise, we have no suggestion for changes at this time.

As you move forward, we ask that you ensure that all Neighbourhood Associations be invited to participate fully. At the VCAN meeting the evening of your presentation, four people raised their hands when asked if they had NOT been invited to the afternoon grant presentation. I personally do not know all of these people, but the ones known to me were associated with stand---alone neighbourhood associations, not Centers.

JBNA looks forward to receiving more details about the application process and timing in the near future and to working with the City in ways that benefit our neighbourhood.

Sincerely,

President, JBNA

Cc: Terri Askham,
Manager, Recreation & Culture

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From: Rupert Downing [<mailto:rupert@communitycouncil.ca>]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2015 12:45 PM
To: Citizen Engagement
Cc: Rupert Downing
Subject: Grants Policy
Importance: High

Hi there, I'd like to provide this feedback on the City's proposed changes to grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City's proposed grant policy. We are concerned about the proposed phasing out of multi-year fee for service grants. We have seen a steady decline in multi-year, predictable funding to the non profit community sector. This type of funding is essential for community agencies like ours to plan and deliver on social innovation, often tackling complex systemic issues such as we do, on poverty reduction, housing affordability and the coordination of responses to social issues such as the affordability challenges residents face. We have seen sharp declines in funding from senior levels of government for this work. We have also seen the formerly integrated inter-agency approach to granting by the core municipalities fragment. The United Way has phased out its core grant category. Now the City is proposing to do away with its multi-year grant category as well. The constant instability of short term grant cycles hampers our work, and prevents us from leveraging local predictable funding with grants from private foundations from outside the region who are always looking for matched local sources of funds, and willing to provide grants over longer time periods. We have for example leveraged \$150,000 in investment from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation (based in Toronto) to our local work on the Community Action Plan on Poverty partly because of the three year grant commitment from the City of Victoria.

In short we'd like the City to reconsider and continue a "fee for service" three year grant cycle for core agencies that deliver essential support for elements of the City's Strategic Priorities. Just as the City's Strategic Plan needs to be multi-year to make effective progress, so does the grant cycle to leverage and unleash the potential of community partners to contribute.

Best Regards

Rupert Downing
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