



Gonzales Neighbourhood Association

359 Richmond Avenue, Victoria, BC V8S 3Y2

July 30, 2019

Mayor and Council
Victoria City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

Mayor and Council:

Re: Request for Separate Gonzales Neighbourhood Association

The Gonzales Neighbourhood Association (GNA) is requesting that Mayor and Council recognize the GNA as the representative organization for Gonzales.

Fairfield and Gonzales currently have one representative association: the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association (FGCA) and one CALUC. Combined, these neighbourhoods have an area that extends from the downtown core to the Oak Bay border with over 17,000 residents. With a population of 4,200, Gonzales alone would fall into the mid-range when compared to other Victoria neighbourhoods.

For some time now, it has been apparent that the FGCA is not able to effectively represent the needs of both communities, and that the priorities of the FGCA make it difficult to respond to the needs of Gonzales residents. The FGCA board is made up of 13 members; however, only 3 of the board members live in Gonzales. The FGCA CALUC is also predominantly made up of Fairfield residents and has not been able to provide balanced representation when reviewing proposed developments. This is reflected in the fact that in June four CALUC members resigned due to conflicts with the FGCA board and staff.

The GNA has been active in the neighbourhood for quite some time, and, increasingly, it has taken a leadership role in dealing with the concerns of the neighbourhood. Along with its website, www.gonzalesna.ca the GNA produces regular newsletters in order to communicate with the community about items of interest. The GNA has over 300 members, supporters and subscribers, and it continues to gain support from residents.

The GNA project team has been looking at ways to engage the community and improve the overall wellbeing of the neighbourhood. In the fall of 2018, the team initiated a

community mapping project in conjunction with the UVIC Geography Department/Mapping Collaboratory. The result is a draft map designed to gain an understanding of the priorities of the community on three map layers: bike lanes and walking paths, housing density and ecosystem protection.

One aspect of the mapping project was to involve grade 5 students from Margaret Jenkins School in order to understand future generations' interests in the neighbourhood. One important point that has become apparent as a result of this mapping exercise is that generations may disagree on housing density or the value of bike paths but 90% of respondents agree that preservation of the neighbourhood's tree canopy, parks and beaches is paramount.

With the confirmation of a \$4,000 grant from the City, it will be possible to have the mapping project finalized and a product available within the year. The GNA is committed to continuing to concentrate on land use, transportation and placemaking in the neighbourhood.

The Gonzales Neighbourhood Association legally incorporated as a society on December 13, 2018 and, currently has 3 board members. The intention is to add 5 to 7 people to the board at the first Annual General Meeting to be held in November 2019. The GNA board conducts monthly board/project team meetings at the **St. Jean Baptiste Church**, which is located at 307 Richmond Ave. The church, which provides a daycare and is often used for neighbourhood events, is in support of the GNA and has office space available if needed.

The GNA requests that Mayor and Council consider this request for a separate neighbourhood association to be determined as expeditiously as possible. The consensus of the City of Victoria personnel which have been contacted (Andrea Hudson, Tom Zworski and Chris Coates) is that this decision is to be made by council once the request has been initiated with the submission of this letter.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Regards

Susanne Rautio, President