



## **ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION**

January 16, 2016

Mayor and Council

Re: Opportunity Inequity among Victoria Neighbourhood Associations

We wish to draw attention to an issue of inequity in the City's funding of Victoria's 12 Neighbourhood Associations (NAs) and the resulting loss of opportunity for some as compared to others. On January 12, two of us from the Rockland Neighbourhood Association (RNA) met with representatives from other NAs which, like ourselves, have no community centres. It became clear to us that we "non-centre" NAs operate at a distinct disadvantage to those that can provide, at no additional cost, many benefits that greatly facilitate organizational administration and services provided to their respective communities.

The RNA gratefully acknowledges the annual per-capita City grant which, combined with membership fees, allows us to rent room space for our AGM and to recompense our volunteers for material and other consumables used in our operations. Computer, mail, files, small meetings and storage needs are met by using individuals' private homes and resources. We are fortunate in being able to hold our monthly Board meetings in a small cottage on the grounds of Government House at the kind discretion of the Friends of Government House Garden Society but are in no way assured that the courtesy will be extended indefinitely. In these ways, we preserve some of our per-capita dollars for other priorities. In contrast, an NA with a City-funded centre can avail itself of meeting space, storage, files, supplies, administrative support, etc while freeing its per-capita funding for use on community enrichment and engagement activities. We particularly envy those NAs with centres the visibility of a physical presence within their communities. We struggle for visibility.

Community centres submit budget requests that are considered through the City's annual approval process. We would urge the City to extend that same opportunity to all 12 NAs. Just as our neighbourhood differs from others in terms of needs and opportunities, the specific operational plan and budget we might submit would vary from those of other NAs. While we are in no position presently to meet the City's budgeting deadline for 2016, were Mayor and Council to entertain a change of policy establishing an equitable operational and funding process across all neighbourhoods, the RNA would be highly motivated to prepare itself in this regard for 2017.

Sincerely,

Janet Simpson  
President