

September 11, 2020
City of Lethbridge
City Hall
910 4 Ave S
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

Attention: Your Worship, Mayor Spearman and Members of Council

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

RE: D-34 Performing Arts Centre Resolution to discontinue project – September 21, 2020

How have you coped with Covid 19? Have you been soothed by music? Have you been entertained by movies? Documentaries? Biographies? Have you laughed at comedy? Have your spirits been lifted by dance?

If so, how would you have coped differently without the performing arts? The performing arts are critical to our health and well-being today and tomorrow and COVID-19 is just another reminder of how essential they are.

In 2017, City Council unanimously shared a vision with financial commitments of \$375K and \$6.8M when you identified and approved the planning of a new Performing Arts Centre. That vision was a commitment to 'growing the performing arts' in Lethbridge for the next 100 years and the Community celebrated your vision. (See attached timeline.) More than twenty years of community advocacy has prompted previous Councils to identify and further investigate the need for a new Performing Arts Centre to meet the demand that existing performing arts facilities cannot fulfill. In addition to the considerable time and effort expended by City Administration and the community at large, the City has invested close to \$1M in studies that have repeatedly confirmed the needs and this final consultation and the findings of the City's Performing Arts Steering Committee confirm our fear that **'growing the Arts' in Lethbridge will stumble and halt if we do not continue to move forward.** Further, each time progress is delayed, the costs escalate.

The Province of Alberta is supportive of a new Performing Arts Centre in Lethbridge but has informed Council that any financial assistance is contingent upon our planning being further along. If we are to move from a 'shovel worthy' project to a 'shovel ready' project, we cannot halt the excellent progress this Council has committed to.

The City established the Performing Arts Centre Steering Committee to deeply investigate and recommend the next steps towards making the Centre a reality. The Performing Arts Centre Advocacy Group is appreciative and supportive of the good work they have done. We recognize COVID-19 has placed extraordinary pressures on fiscal realities municipally, provincially and federally. We are cautious about moving to the design phase with existing financial uncertainties. HOWEVER, we are also aware that site selection and preparation must continue, and those steps will require the monies Council has already set aside. **If we are to move towards the realization of a new Performing Arts Centre, we MUST move purposefully forward and not lose our momentum.**

With the exception of a Performing Arts Centre, Council has completed all its prioritized facilities goals over the past 20 years. It is time to advance the Performing Arts Centre.

We ask that Council defeat the motion to remove approved funding from the 2017 – 2020 CIP and invest those committed dollars in site selection and preparation for a new Performing Arts Centre to ensure we are shovel ready when funding comes available. Quality of life depends on the investment we make in a healthy, balanced and vital community.

"We must plant trees under whose shade we do not intend to sit." African proverb

Respectfully,

Dianne King, on behalf of the Performing Arts Centre Advocacy Group

Members include:

Peggy Mezei, Allied Arts Council
Jeremy Duchan, Allied Arts
Council
Dawn Leite

Don Reeves
Shaun Ward
Don Robb
Ian Randell

Stephen Graham
Paul Davis