

Dear Mayoral and Council Candidates:

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Re: Tax Situation at MacBride Museum and other Charities**

The City of Whitehorse has three tax classes: “business”, residential and agricultural. All NPO/NGO/Charities who own land are taxed at the “business” rate.

Between 2012 and 2015 MacBride worked with Council and staff to develop and approve a tax solution that ensured MacBride would not pay going forward. Council passed this resolution, which is still on the books at the City: “2015-12-07 as amended by 2015-12-08 (June 15) COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANTS

It was duly moved and seconded:

**THAT museums that hold title to their own property be exempted from the provisions of the Municipal Charges and Community Services Grant Policy and the City Grant-making Policy and be provided with a tax grant equal to the full amount of property tax owed;”**

Then after almost 70 years of 100% exemption / abatement, in 2018, the City sent MacBride a tax bill. We believe that MacBride continues to be tax-exempt based on the Council vote 2015-12-08 however we do not have the financial or legal resources to fight City Hall. Our website has a section outlining the history of this issue.

**MacBride is an entity that solely exists for the benefit of preserving history and showcasing it to our community and visitors. It is not financially viable for MacBride to pay taxes with the O&M that we receive and to remain open year-round.**

As a candidate, we are asking the following questions

1. Will you honour resolution 2015-12-08, which has not been rescinded, and provide a 100% exemption to MacBride?

[Yes, I believe our museums hold an important place in education, recreation, preservation and the economy (especially tourism which some day post-COVID may rebound in a big way). Therefore, accepting the 2015 resolution honours and respects the decision of a previous Council and supports these values.]

2. Will you commit to a review of the tax classes at the City with a view to creating a tax class for museums at a rate of zero that does not harm the operations of the organizations in the first year of your mandate?

[Yes. We will be going into a budget cycle right away following the election, so to have this as a topic for review and decision makes very good sense.]

3. We invite you to review the list of 23 charities/NGOS paying \$165K to the City in taxes in 2021. The City has been in a “surplus” position for many years yet taxes museums and service organizations in our community. Will you commit to an immediate review (year one) of Municipal Charges and Community Services Grant Policy and the City Grant-making Policy?

[Again, it makes sense to have this discussion during the upcoming budget cycle. I support this review. In my platform I talk about alignment, and this would be one area where we can align our policy with the value of contribution to our City and to our territory. Many of these organizations provide incredibly important services to our community and in many cases to citizens in need. Taxing them draws away resources that can go to our most needy.]

We would appreciate your reply by noon on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. We will be sending replies to our members and posting them on our social media.

Regards,

Patricia Cunning  
Executive Director