



Yukon Historical &
Museums Association



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Step in to our story

Yukon Historical & Museums Association

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Charitable No. 119307924 RR 0001

6 September 2019

Mayor and Council
City of Whitehorse
2121 Second Avenue
Whitehorse YT Y1A 1C2

RE: MacBride Museum Tax Abatement

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Yukon Historical and Museums Association (YHMA) wishes to express our support for MacBride Museum of Yukon History (MacBride). We encourage the City of Whitehorse to reinstate 100% tax abatement for MacBride in perpetuity. By doing this, the City will support the preservation of our shared heritage and an increasingly important tourism sector, and strengthen our community.

MacBride is an anchor in Whitehorse's tourism industry, holding the largest artefact collection in the Yukon at over 40,000 pieces and welcoming over 30,000 visitors each year. The museum injects new funds into the local economy by consistently generating a positive return on government investments, including those provided by the City of Whitehorse. This support has played an important role in MacBride's continuing growth over its 6+ decades of operations.

The museum also offers experiences that create a sense of community and increase quality of life for the individuals it serves. The contribution of cultural organizations such as MacBride will soon to be recognized through a Yukon-specific version of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Museums are also committed to providing opportunities for learning. MacBride, open during the school year, provides a wealth of opportunities to students when it comes to supporting and creating links with Yukon school's new inquiry-based learning model.

MacBride's recent expansion was undertaken with the support of the City. The museum has expended considerable resources on this project, including earned revenue and funds that were raised specifically for the project and cannot be spent elsewhere. Considering MacBride's ability to generate a positive return on investment, its prominent role in the Whitehorse tourism industry, use of its newly expanded facilities for an extensive suite of diverse programming, and new exhibitions set to be completed in 2019, their expansion has set the foundation for far-reaching social and economic benefits. These benefits, and MacBride's operations, have been placed at risk by large current and anticipated future city tax bills.

It is YHMA's understanding that resolution 2015-12-08 grants all museums in Whitehorse that hold title to their own property exemption from the Municipal Charges and Community Services Grant Policy and the City Grantmaking Policy. Under this resolution, MacBride is eligible for a tax grant equal to the full amount of property tax owed. To our knowledge this resolution has never been revoked, replaced, or amended. We believe that the City should honour resolution 2015-12-08 and provide MacBride with 100% tax abatement for back and future property taxes. YHMA also supports MacBride in its requests to Council with regard to resolution 2015-12-08 and its past, current, and future tax bills.

We look forward to a positive resolution to this situation so that MacBride can continue its operations, working to preserve and share Yukon heritage.

Sincerely,

Sylvie Binette
Vice-President, Yukon Historical & Museums Association