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REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION MEETING OF THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

SUBJECT Mahon Hall, 114 Rainbow Road, Salt Spring Island

ISSUE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to review options to support the Salt Spring Art Council (SSAC) in renovations of Mahan Hall.

BACKGROUND

Mahon Hall, located at 114 Rainbow Road in Ganges Village, was constructed in 1902 and is a recognized historic and heritage building. The one-storey wood-framed structure has cultural, social, and architectural significance and has long served as a key community asset in the village core.

The SSAC currently leases Mahon Hall from School District 64 (SD64) under a 60-year lease effective December 31, 2014, based on the understanding that the building is no longer suitable for educational use. Under the lease, SSAC is responsible for all operating, maintenance and capital costs. As a volunteer-led organization, SSAC has requested that the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC) consider assuming the lease to better support ongoing operations and required capital upgrades.

To inform future planning, SSAC has completed multiple technical assessments, including structural, geotechnical, building code compliance, and a comprehensive revitalization study. These investigations identified significant deficiencies related to seismic performance, fire and life safety, accessibility, and aging building systems.

The proposed Mahon Hall Revitalization Project would address these deficiencies through a comprehensive code upgrade and renovation to improve safety, accessibility and functionality while preserving heritage features and expanding the building's capacity and usability as Salt Spring Island's primary arts and cultural venue.

The LCC has requested that staff report back on options to support the SSAC in renovations of Mahon Hall. During a recent meeting, the SSAC has confirmed that they are looking for support with the following:

- Provide letters of support for grant applications and donor requests.
- Provide funding to support the SSAC in applying for grants and pursue donor funding for the capital campaign. Specifically, to support a staff member to write grants and funding to complete a fundraising feasibility study.
- Work with the SSAC to negotiate an arrangement with the school district to address the ownership requirements of the funding bodies. (Capital Regional District (CRD) would likely need to assume the lease to qualify for grants)

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission request that the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director direct staff to develop the 2027 1.111 Salt Spring Island Administration Provisional budget with an additional day per week of auxiliary Engineering Technician time to support the Mahon Hall revitalization and other Salt Spring Island initiatives.

Alternative 2

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission requests that the report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The CRD provides contribution funding on an annual basis to the SSAC to support program delivery and Artspring to support building and operating costs. The total funding requisitioned in 2026 was \$147,373 with \$103,161 (70%) going to Artspring and \$44,212 (30%) going to SSAC.

In addition to the arts funding requisition the SSAC is requesting \$67,000 in 2027 to support:

- Grant writing (\$10,000)
- Construction phasing plans (\$7,000)
- Feasibility Study Consultant (\$50,000)

Should the LCC wish to allocate additional funding to SSAC the funds would need to be added to the 1.299 SSI Arts Service Contributions-Projects budget and invoiced separately.

Operating Implications

The Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation department has acquired several new facilities in recent years, including assuming the operation and management of the Rainbow Recreation Centre in 2018, the creation of the Mouats Bike Park in 2018, the Salt Spring Island Multi Space in 2022, Mount Maxwell Community Park in 2023, Phoenix Elementary in 2024, Morningside Drive Park in 2025 and will assume full responsibility for the Ganges Fire Hall in 2026. The Hydrofield ballfield is also currently under construction. Capital improvements for the Salt Spring Island Library have been handed to the Salt Spring Island Engineering Team who support capital improvements for CRD infrastructure and buildings on the island. Transit and Transportation infrastructure has also been added to the parks maintenance workplan. Supporting the SSAC with the revitalization project and potentially taking over the management, operation, repairs and regular maintenance of Mahon Hall will require additional staff support.

Social Implications

Mahon Hall is a historic hall that is over 120 years old. The hall is well-known as the host of Artcraft, visual arts exhibitions, arts workshops, community theatre performances and other community events.

First Nations Implications

Situated on the land of the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, specifically the ancestral and unceded territory of the Hul'qumi'num and SENCOTEN speaking peoples the hall borders a registered archaeological site requiring permitting and First Nation consultation prior to any land altering works.

CONCLUSION

Mahon Hall is a significant heritage and cultural facility that continues to play an important role in arts and community life on Salt Spring Island but it requires substantial capital investment to address identified deficiencies. The Salt Spring Art Council has requested targeted, time-limited support to advance grant applications, fundraising readiness, and discussions related to lease and ownership requirements. Approval for additional funding and staff support would be required should the Local Community Commission approve the Salt Spring Art Council request for support.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission request that the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director direct staff to develop the 2027 1.111 Salt Spring Island Administration Provisional budget with an additional day per week of auxiliary Engineering Technician time to support the Mahon Hall revitalization and other Salt Spring Island initiatives.

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