

BY E-MAIL

March 3, 2022

Darryl Walker, Mayor
City of White Rock
15322 Buena Vista Avenue
White Rock, B.C.V4B 1Y6

Re: Request to Declare every May as Jewish Heritage Month in the City of
White Rock

Dear Mayor Walker,

The letter is sent on behalf of B'nai Brith, one of Canada's leading Jewish advocacy organizations active nationally since 1875.

I recently completed my mandate as City Councillor having served the people of Montreal and of my Snowdon district for 39 consecutive years. It has been a great honour to do so and I take pride in my accomplishments that have contributed to the public good.

I have since been appointed National Director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada. One of my first projects in that capacity, is the promotion of Jewish Heritage Month.

There is a growing Jewish population in the lower mainland including White Rock. Like Jews everywhere in Canada these past years, Jewish residents of your municipality have not been immune to a growing wave of antisemitism. Indeed, the situation became so appalling nationally that last July the Government of Canada convened a National Summit on Antisemitism to strengthen the response of local authorities and public security agencies to these incidents of vandalism and violence targeting the Jewish community.

Government response culminated with a strong statement by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on October 13 at the Malmo International Forum to Combat Antisemitism with a robust pledge for a national strategy to combat hate, the implementation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, promoting Holocaust education and combatting Holocaust denial while making permanent and fully funded the position of Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism.

B'nai Brith has offered its expertise to the Government and Special Envoy and has launched a four-point program to translate the pledge from a promise that gives hope to one with concrete achievements.

We have also launched a national campaign to urge cities to adopt motions that will recognize every May as Jewish Heritage Month in their territory. We are now presenting a request for such a motion to you in the hope that you will ask Whitby Council to adopt it at an upcoming meeting.



In 2018 Parliament enacted "An Act respecting Canadian Jewish Heritage Month" designating the month of May as Canadian Jewish Heritage Month thereby recognizing the important contributions that Jewish Canadians have made to Canada's social, economic, political, and cultural fabric.

Attached please find a copy of that bill as well as a suggested text that your Council might adopt.

The Jewish community has a long and proud history in Canada and has made significant contributions to the wellbeing, growth, and prosperity of Canada. Jews have excelled in a wide range of endeavours including the arts, sciences, the law, architecture, media, finance, entertainment, and business significantly contributing to Canadian life while having to overcome systemic barriers of discrimination that endured until quite recent times in Canadian history.

Parliament has declared that a Canadian Jewish Heritage Month would provide an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play.

In the context of a pandemic that has fostered hate and targeted Jews, B'nai Brith, as Canada's pre-eminent Jewish human rights organization, is inviting municipalities to enhance Parliament's declaration of the Canadian Jewish Heritage Month by adopting their own motions to recognize and celebrate an annual Jewish Heritage Month every May.

We thus urge White Rock to adopt the motion and to work with the Jewish community to ensure the celebration of Jewish Heritage Month every May through exhibits and performances highlighting Jewish history and culture to take place at City Hall and elsewhere in the municipality.

We would be pleased to meet with you, virtually or otherwise, to discuss further. We are pleased to provide a suggested text.

Yours truly,



Marvin Rotrand
National Director - League for Human Rights
B'nai Brith Canada

Encls.