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TO: City of Maple Ridge Mayor & Council
FROM: The Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Arts Council
RE: Operation of The ACT Arts Centre

The Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Arts Council was instrumental in the establishment of The ACT Arts Centre. In fact, it is safe to say that 20 years of lobbying by this volunteer group led to the construction of a much-needed arts centre in the heart of our downtown. Since 2003, The Arts Council has been engaged in programming and operating the ACT.

The City has negotiated a well-functioning operating agreement for over 20 years, thus providing a wide range of arts activities for the citizens of Maple Ridge, and the Arts Council has consistently fulfilled its responsibility to operate the centre and provide programming, even during the COVID-19 years.

The most recent operating agreements terminated on December 31, 2023, and City staff delayed discussions on a new agreement for over a year. The Board finds the agreements recently presented by the City, which contains an "or else" clause, unacceptable. Discussions have thus come to an impasse.

The Arts Council is concerned not only about the communication difficulties, but also about the immense responsibility of safely operating an older facility. We have concluded that we can no longer operate The ACT under the terms of past and currently proposed agreements and seek a new way forward for the Centre.

We respectfully request that Council direct City administration to engage an independent theatre operations specialist consultant to conduct a feasibility analysis of best operational models for similar theatres offering similar services, including municipal management and operation, to ensure sustainability for both the facility and programs at The ACT.

We note that other cities, including Burnaby and New Westminster, are engaged in similar work.

We look forward to making this request as part of our regular annual update to Council. Please advise us of the next possible date for a presentation.

Most Sincerely,

Sharen Sandhu
President, Board of Directors

A blue ink signature of Sharen Sandhu.

Curtis Pendleton
Artistic and Executive Director

A blue ink signature of Curtis Pendleton.