

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM35.8	ACTION			Ward: 9
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### **Support for The Wildseed Centre for Arts and Activism - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

### **Recommendations**

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher, recommends that:

1. City Council increase, on a one-time basis, the 2021 Council Approved Operating Budget for Non-Program, by \$250,000.00 gross, \$0 net, for implementation of capital upgrades to Black Lives Matter Canada's facilities located at 24 Cecil Street (Cost Centre NP2161). fully funded from Section 37 (Planning Act Reserve Funds) community benefits from the following developments:

- a. 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street, secured for streetscape improvements; however the funds have not been utilized for the stated purpose within 3 years of the final confirmation date and thus may be redirected for another purpose, at the discretion of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, provided that the purpose is directed in the City's Official Plan and will benefit the community in the vicinity of the Lands, in the amount of \$35,334 (Source Account Number XR3026- 3700836);
- b. 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street, secured for cycling infrastructure; however the funds have not been utilized for the stated purpose within 3 years of the final confirmation date and thus may be redirected for another purpose, at the discretion of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, provided that the purpose is directed in the City's Official Plan and will benefit the community in the vicinity of the Lands, in the amount of \$36,262.05 (Source Account Number XR3026-3700838);
- c. 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street, secured for improvements to the Huron Street Garden; however the funds have not been utilized for the stated purpose within 3 years of the final confirmation date and thus may be redirected for another purpose, at the discretion of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, provided that the purpose is directed in the City's Official Plan and will benefit the community in the vicinity of the Lands, in the amount of

\$55,271 (Source Account Number XR3026-3700837); and

d. 20 Edward Street, secured for capital improvements which will benefit the community in the vicinity of the project, in the amount of \$123,132.95 (Source Account Number XR3026-3701042).

2. City Council direct that the \$250,000.00 be forwarded to Black Lives Matter Canada, subject to Black Lives Matter Canada signing an Undertaking governing the use of the funds and the financial reporting requirements.
3. City Council request the Controller to determine whether the Wildseed Centre meets the eligibility criteria to access the City's Tax Rebate Program for Ethnocultural Centres as set out in the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 767, Taxation.
4. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, responsible for the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Environment and Energy, to work to identify other opportunities to support the creation and sustainable operations of the Wildseed Centre, including but not limited to funding from cultural grants, and exploring funding for energy retrofitting financing.

## **Summary**

Black Lives Matter Canada has purchased a property at 24 Cecil Street. This building will become the permanent home of the Wildseed Centre - a centre for arts and activism that could cultivate transformative ideas from Canada's diverse Black communities.

The multi-purpose space will be used as an office for Black Lives Matter Canada, provide meeting space for artists and community groups, as well as studio, rehearsal and rentable space for community gatherings and events. The grounds will also be used to develop a community garden program and run freedom schools on food justice and land justice. The three-storey building has accessibility considerations and is located right downtown and in the heart of a historic Black neighbourhood, bordering on what is now Chinatown.

Black Lives Matter Canada currently operates out of a rented space located at 76 Geary Avenue, and has been using this 1,700 square foot rental space for just over two years. The space serves as an office, an event space, an organizing space, and a space that community members can book for free to support their own organizing needs. Over the last year, they have grown significantly and expanded beyond the benefits that a 1,700-square foot space can provide, and the purchase of 24 Cecil Street will allow them to scale.

Providing funding assistance for the Black Lives Matter Wildseed Centre supports many goals of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, including investing in Black arts and culture institutions, creating a Black community hub and enhancing community safety and wellness. This support and partnership would be ground-breaking and another tangible action to show the City's continuing commitment to address anti-Black racism.

This would be the first centre for art and activism of its kind in North America.

## **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM35.8

