

**City Council**

<b>MM7.33</b>	<b>ACTION</b>			Ward: 11
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**Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds from the Development at 1 Bloor Street West to St. Clare's MultiFaith Housing for the construction of a new theatre and rehearsal space at 877 Yonge Street**

*\* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

*\* This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2023 Approved Operating Budget for Non-Program on a one-time basis by \$1,250,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained from the development at 1-11 Bloor Street West, 768-784 Yonge Street, and 760-762 Yonge Street (Source Account: XR3026-3701060) secured for capital improvements for new or existing cultural and/or community space, to be utilized for the construction of a theatre, office and rehearsal space at City-owned 877 Yonge Street (Cost Centre: NP2161).
2. City Council direct that the \$1,250,000 be forwarded to St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society for construction of a theatre, office and rehearsal space at 877 Yonge Street, upon the signing of an Undertaking by St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society to govern the use of the funds and the financial reporting requirements.

**Summary**

Nightwood Theatre and Tapestry Opera have jointly agreed to lease the sub-basement of City-owned 877 Yonge Street to become their new theatre, office and rehearsal space. The sub-basement requires substantial renovation to be turned into a community theatre, rehearsal studio, and offices, and to be made wheelchair accessible. The space will be shared with other community performing arts groups and used not only for performances to the broader community, but also for workshops involving performing artists, students, and residents of 877 Yonge St.

The Nightwood Theatre and Tapestry Opera operated for many years out of a theatre, office and rehearsal space in the Distillery District. Dozens of other performing artists and arts groups also used these facilities for rehearsals and performances.

The pandemic was brutally difficult for all performing artists and arts groups, including the Nightwood Theatre and Tapestry Opera. In addition, the Distillery District closed the theatre on which they depended and converted it to other uses. They have therefore been searching the city for replacement facilities that they can afford, with little success.

877 Yonge Street is owned by the City of Toronto, and is used primarily to provide supportive housing to disabled and other tenants. The City has contracted with St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society to manage the building. St. Clare's welcomes the opportunity to add a community cultural facility to the building. Among other things, this helps to build a stronger, more positive relationship between St. Clare's, its supportive housing tenants, and the surrounding community.

The developer of 208 Bloor Street W. has agreed to fit out the performance room (auditorium) as part of its in-kind Community Benefits, and this was approved by Council in March, 2023. Considerable additional funds are required to fit out the rest of the space and to make it wheelchair accessible, and appropriate s. 37 funds, earmarked for community or cultural space, are available from a nearby development. The project has earned the strong support of both neighbourhood residents' associations, ABC Residents Association and Greater Yorkville Resident's Association.

This request is urgent as the release of Section 37 funds is required to ensure this project can proceed to construction in the summer of 2023, and commence use for performances in the fall of 2024.

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

Member Motion MM7.33