

Young Arts Market (YAM) Dances Held at 164 Alberni Highway, Parksville

Members of Parksville Council were advised of a police incident that occurred on February 25, 2011, involving excessive noise and disorderly conduct at a dance hosted by the Young Arts Market in the building they rent at 164 Alberni Highway, Parksville. The Oceanside RCMP estimated that between 300 and 400 people were in attendance. Through subsequent investigation of the incident, the City has also learned that several similar events had also been held at this location in the recent past, although not of the magnitude of the February 25 event.

Rough Diamonds Creative Arts Society has a licence to only operate a "retail use art gallery" at this location. The building does not meet BC Building Code requirements for public assembly events which creates a "life safety" issue. To be safe for large gatherings of people, emergency exiting, fire suppression and structural support for the building must be in place. Very simply, the building does not meet the BC Building Code requirements for events such as the February 25 dance. The City has both a legislative and moral responsibility to enforce compliance with the BC Building Code in order to ensure the life safety of its residents and will not allow public safety to be jeopardized.

Acting Mayor Chris Burger said, "It is important to point out that the City of Parksville is not closing down the Young Arts Market nor is Council suggesting that YAM should be closed. Youth events are encouraged in the City of Parksville, however, the site must be safe and appropriate for the event and the life safety of those attending such events must not be compromised."

Council recognizes the work of the Rough Diamonds Creative Arts Society with youth at the Young Arts Market and encourages the Society to work within the limits of their business licence or to work with the owners of the building to make the necessary upgrades required to meet the needs of their programs. Council would welcome a presentation by the Society to learn more about their programs and activities.

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For more information:

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