



APPENDIX A

Saskatchewan Multicultural Centre Association
2144 Cornwall Street Regina, SK. S4P 2K7
306-780-9275

November 24, 2015

Office of the City Clerk, City of Regina
Queen Elizabeth II Court
2476 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 3C8

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Multicultural Centre Association (SMCA) Board of Directors, I am writing to you today to express our concern over the substantial property tax increase notice our organization recently received.

For many years, our property at 2144 Cornwall Street was valued at \$261,100.00 and our annual property taxes over the last few years were as follows: 2015: \$5,901.75; 2014: \$5,355.19; 2013: \$4,344.80. As you can see, they have already significantly increased each year, with an especially large jump from 2013 to 2014.

On November 13, 2015, the SMCA received its annual Property Tax Assessment. The assessed value of the building increased from \$261,100.00 in 2015 to \$441,500.00 in 2016. Upon contacting the City of Regina, we were notified that the process had changed and that as a result, our property taxes would increase from under \$6,000.00 to approximately \$10,000.00 per year.

The SMCA is a small non-profit organization, which is responsible for managing the facility at 2144 Cornwall Street in Regina, Saskatchewan on behalf of its resident members, the Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages Inc. (SOHL) and the Multilingual Association of Regina Inc. (MLAR).

All of these organizations are dedicated to preserving and promoting languages in Saskatchewan through various educational and cultural programs. SOHL is a provincial cultural organization whose membership is comprised of over eighty community-based heritage language schools and multicultural organizations throughout the province. MLAR is a local non-profit organization whose membership is also comprised of over 30 Regina-based heritage language schools.

SOHL, MLAR, and the numerous heritage language schools they support are all providing important services that play a vital role in strengthening Regina's economy. Taking into consideration the recent influx of new immigrants to our province and city, as well as the number of refugees expected to arrive shortly, it is imperative to have resources that make newcomers feel welcome. The heritage language schools, SOHL, and MLAR contribute to the retention of immigrants in our city and province by helping people to maintain their culture, identity, and traditions, while simultaneously learning about Canadian ways of life. Of course, the schools

also provide services to all Canadians wishing to learn an additional language; whether to brush up on a mother tongue, for travel purposes, to increase career opportunities, and much more.

The Saskatchewan Multicultural Centre Association has been the home to SOHL and MLAR since 1993, at which time this building was purchased with assistance from the Government of Saskatchewan. We are very disappointed that the leaders of our city and province who helped to create this centre are now making it next to impossible for our organization to survive, much less to thrive. With our property taxes almost doubling in cost, our small organization will struggle just to make ends meet.

We also have concerns about the new assessed value of the building. Though the building is structurally sound, it is over 100 years old and much of it is still in need of considerable repair. The SMCA recently obtained an appraisal from DTZ Barnicke Regina Ltd. and the estimated value of the building was noticeably lower. We understand that the assessed value can vary depending on a number of factors, including the rate of return used, but the value of \$441,500.00 seems quite high.

On behalf of not only the SMCA, but of SOHL, MLAR, and by extension, the heritage language schools, we ask you to please consider a tax exemption or abatement for our organization. We truly are doing very important work, and feel that this huge property tax increase will hinder our progress at a time when we need to be increasing and strengthening our efforts.

Thank you in advance for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Girma Sahlu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Girma Sahlu
SMCA President