

Redacted 1638 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, B.C. V2L 3N6

Dear Mayor and Members of Council

Phil and I arrived in Prince George in August 1974 and immediately joined Prince George Theatre Workshop. We heard the stories of the dedicated group of community theatre lovers that built the Prince George Playhouse. In 1994, when it came time to consider renovations and an expansion to the Playhouse, I was part of the fundraising committee led by Mike Dezell. It was determined that \$1.8 million was required to have the plans come to fruition. Mike obtained a \$300,000 contribution from the City of Prince George, \$240,000 from CNC/CEC, \$810,000 from a Federal/Provincial Infrastructure Grant and Prince George Theatre Workshop committed to raise the remaining \$450,000.

Within six months, we had raised \$185,000 largely from selling dedication seat plaques. The plaques that are still on many seats in the Playhouse are a result of the belief and confidence the community had in this project. Fundraising continued for the next year with raffles, special benefit concerts, a choral extravaganza where community choirs performed, and a variety night with a silent auction. One benefit concert was performed by two New York actors that did fundraisers for regional theatres. Community donations to support bringing them here included Canadian Airlines, the Inn of the North, CKPG and Park Lane Limos. It was a truly amazing collaboration.

Renovations began to the Playhouse while the fundraising was continuing and took over a year to complete. A fly tower was built, the seating capacity was increased, a new lobby was added, rehearsal space was created and the dressing rooms were improved. Electrical and heating upgrades were also made. Unfortunately, when the renovated Prince George Playhouse reopened, there was still a debt owing and Prince George Theatre Workshop took out a large loan to cover it. The organization carried on but could not climb out from this debt and eventually turned management of the building over to the City along with the debt still owed.

The building has been very well managed by the City for the past number of years and, even though Prince George Theatre Workshop no longer put on plays, it has been used by numerous performing arts and other community organizations. We have enjoyed Judy Russell and Excalibur theatre productions, Theatre B.C. Zone festivals and Film Festivals. I have also attended numerous Bel Canto, Cantata Singers, Sweet Adeline and other choral concerts as well as P.G. Symphony chamber concerts. We have also seen many touring performers. The 300 seat Playhouse has been an affordable option for so many groups and it is a venue that offers an excellent audience experience. It really has been a jewel for the community.

If the damage to the building can be repaired, we believe that it is definitely worth a continued investment. It would be very cost effective to ensure that there continues to be a small performance space in the city that would be up and running again long before any new venue could be constructed. Prince George citizens believed in the existence of the Playhouse 50 years ago and again 25 years ago. Many of those supporters still live here and, like us, hope to continue to enjoy a variety of events similar to those that have occurred at the Prince George Playhouse for so many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Redacted

Kris and Phil Nellis Redacted  
Life Members of Prince George Theatre Workshop