

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 3. Naming the City's New Chinatown Office

Submitted by: Mayor Sim and Councillor Zhou

#### WHEREAS:

1. Chinatown is an invaluable part of our city and an important part of Vancouver's cultural identity and heritage;
2. Vancouver City Council remains resolute in its commitment to revitalizing this historic neighbourhood and to ensuring that it is safe, easy to access, and a vibrant place for visitors, residents, and businesses alike; <sup>i</sup>
3. Vancouver's Chinatown has long served as a symbol of how Chinese-Canadians and other minorities overcame hardships and discrimination together, and in the process, helped make our city a more just society;
4. Work has been underway for several months to establish a satellite City Hall office in Chinatown to create a formal presence in the community;
5. The imminent opening of the Chinatown satellite City Hall office provides an opportunity to name this new office in honour of a significant person or place name. But in order to name a civic facility such as the new Chinatown office, the name must have Council approval;
6. The City of Vancouver has a Civic Asset Naming Committee, the mandate of which is to advise Council on matters pertaining to the naming of City-owned assets, with the exception of assets operated by City of Vancouver Parks and Recreation, and the Vancouver Public Library;
7. The role of the Civic Asset Naming Committee is to recommend names for streets and roads, development areas, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, City-owned assets and facilities (excluding Parks and Library assets), and to offer policy advice. The Committee also serves to approve the names that are to be added to the Civic Asset Name Reserve List based on input from staff regarding compliance with naming policies and guidelines;
8. Inclusion of a name on the Name Reserve List for City-owned assets should generally be people who are no longer living, places, events, and things related to the city of Vancouver;
9. The Civic Asset Name Reserve List contains the names of a number of well-researched persons of significance who satisfy multiple naming criteria established by the City;

10. Any person considered for inclusion on the Name Reserve List must demonstrate exceptional dedication and excellence in service in ways that made a significant contribution to the community, the city of Vancouver, the province of British Columbia, or Canada, such as providing extraordinary help or care to individuals, families, or groups, or risked their life to save or protect others;
11. Likewise, any person to be honoured by inclusion on the Name Reserve List for City-owned assets should reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of Vancouver;
12. Won Alexander Cumyow (溫金有) is a person of significance whose name is included on the City's Name Reserve List. He is the first person of Chinese descent born in what is now present-day Canada (British North America), and his activism and involvement in various organizations left a lasting impact on Chinese Canadian history. In 2020, he was shortlisted by the Bank of Canada for the new redesigned five-dollar bill alongside seven other important historical figures: [Francis Pegahmagabow](#), [Fred Loft](#), [Isapo-muxika](#), [Lotta Hitschmanova](#), [Pitseolak Ashoona](#), [Robertine Barry](#), and [Terry Fox](#);
13. In addition to being a prominent leader of the Chinese community in Vancouver, and a founder of the Chinese Empire Reform Association and a president of the Chinese Benevolent Association, Won Alexander Cumyow (溫金有) was also a public servant who worked as a court translator. He spoke multiple languages including Hakka, Cantonese, English, and Chinook Wawa, and by the 1870s, when his family moved to New Westminster, he was able to complete his education and training in law. In 1888, using his language skills, he became a Chinese and Chinook court interpreter for the Vancouver Police Department, a position he held until his retirement in 1936;<sup>ii</sup>
14. In 1947, when voting rights were finally restored for Chinese Canadians, Won Alexander Cumyow (溫金有) cast his vote in the 1949 federal election at the age of 88 after years of advocating for voting rights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Hall satellite office in Chinatown shall be named in honour of Won Alexander Cumyow (溫金有) in recognition of his significant contributions and his dedication in service to the community, the city and people of Vancouver, province of British Columbia, and Canada, and the lasting impact of his legacy on Chinese Canadian history.

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<sup>i</sup> In January 2023, the *Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan* was approved by Council with a focus on providing Chinatown with enhanced cleaning and sanitation services, graffiti removal, beautification, and additional community supports. Likewise, setting a new flat rate of \$2 per hour for parking meters throughout Chinatown was implemented to introduce consistent parking pricing and to support the City's efforts to revitalize the area as part of the *Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan*.

<sup>ii</sup> Won Alexander Cumyow (溫金有), activist and interpreter (born around 21 March 1861 in Port Douglas, BC; died 6 October 1955 in Vancouver). His parents' choice of Chinese name, Cumyow (金有) — literally, "gold have" — was likely a reflection of the Gold Rush period in which he was born.