

April 17, 2020

Dear Mayor Brown & City Councillors,

I am reaching out to you with a concern regarding the City's Recreation offerings once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Small businesses will be rebuilding from the ground up, and that's if we can even make it through this extremely difficult time.

My concern is that once we, Akasa Yoga Studio, can re-open and our economy is at the lowest it's ever been, people will likely not have the means to pay for extra curricular activities, it will be an ongoing struggle for some time.

With that, my even larger concern is that The City of Merritt offers 6-9 Yoga classes per week at an extremely low cost (\$4.50-\$9/class). This sheer volume of classes offered by the city is as many as we run per week at our Yoga Studio (7-10), so the City is essentially running a yoga studio, which is in direct competition with a small business, and at the tax payers' expense. In my opinion, the number of classes offered through the City is excessive. I have had to lower my rates which were at par with industry standards, just to stay competitive with the City's rates. While I hear that our City is supportive of small business, it does not seem to prove so in my industry, it is exactly the opposite.

If these classes are still available for people once the pandemic is over, our studio will likely not re-open. It has already proven to be an issue, for the 2 reasons listed above, prior to the pandemic. In the event that we do have to close our doors, we will have 7 instructors and support staff out of work.

I have reached out and spoken with both Sky and Felicity about this problem, with no resolution. Which is why I have decided it may be time to bring my concern forward to you, especially with the recent events.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts regarding this issue, and appreciate your time.

With warm regards,

Megan Paquette
Akasa Yoga Studio
250-572-5687