



head baker, Owen Smith, won a unanimous Supreme Court of Canada decision that granted patients the right to use cannabis oils and derivatives.

Last month the club was raided (more than 3 years after the last raid) during which around \$100,000 in products was seized, and a few weeks later a civil forfeiture notice was served to the owner of the building leased by VCBC, through which the Province is seeking approximately \$3.24 million, tied to years of enforcement actions, raids, and fines connected to the club's unlicensed cannabis operations. According to VCBC, the fines are currently being challenged in court and are pending a judicial review expected to examine whether members have a constitutional right to access the cannabis products and services provided by the club. Provincial targeting of the landlord has resulted in an eviction notice being served to VCBC, making access to its services almost impossible for its most vulnerable clients.

VCBC has provided life changing medicines for ill patients throughout a generation of regulations and laws prohibiting and limiting cannabis use. Given that survival, and the non-profit, community serving nature of its existence, it is perplexing in the extreme as to why the Provincial government would now raid and excoriate the VCBC when cannabis use, distribution and sale is legal.

Raids on the VCBC store and the subsequent eviction notice from its landlord (under threat of civil forfeiture of their building) make no sense in the current environment of cannabis legality, regulation and popular recreational use.

Civil forfeiture is a tool typically reserved for the proceeds of serious crime, and I cannot help but ponder what resources are being used in this enforcement and action that might be better employed to target intense, drug-related criminal infrastructure that have a far greater, and more concerning, harm on communities, families and neighbourhoods.

All that said, VCBC has made the simplest and most Canadian request – that it be given time to complete the process of a judicial review of the relevant decisions, with a pause on enforcement until that judicial review is complete. VCBC is asking for what every Canadian expects – a fair hearing, before sentence is declared and executed.

Victoria City Council has a history of supporting the VCBC, most recently writing, in 2020, to Health Canada to support a temporary exemption from the Cannabis Act, and again in 2022 to Ministers Mike Farnworth, then Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and Sheila Malcolmson, then Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, requesting amendments to the

"The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay sw"