

February 2012 Newsletter

Hi DRA Member,

It hasn't been long since our last e-news and with our website coming on-line shortly, this may be one of our last! But February is a short month, even if it is a Leap Year, so this month's update will be brief. As always, if you see anything you'd like more information on, or would like to get involved in any of the activities, events or committees mentioned, please get in touch.

There are two new ways to connect with the DRA!

Follow us on Twitter at @VictoriaDRA

Check out our NEW Facebook Page (in addition to our DRA Group): Victoria Downtown Residents' Association

DRA BOARD MEETINGS

Throughout 2012, monthly Board Meetings will be held on the 4th Wednesday of every month at Silver Threads at 1728 Douglas Street (not the retail unit on the corner, but the larger office to the south). Meetings start at 7:00 pm and once the meetings commence, the front doors are locked (for security purposes).

Meetings may be rescheduled from time to time, in consideration of holidays and other commitments. The date for each meeting is confirmed the month prior at the Board Meeting.

DRA Members and those who are interested in joining the DRA are welcome to attend.

The March meeting is currently scheduled for Wed 28th Mar.

ROVING REFINERY

Imminent announcement of the next Roving Refinery for March – date and time being confirmed.

The Roving Refinery is a DRA members' social event where you will get a chance to meet other downtown residents and merchants in your neighbourhood.

2012 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND DRIVE

It is a new calendar year, so we ask members to renew their memberships and invite new members to join us in 2012.

An updated membership form for 2012 is included below.

Please fill it in, snail mail it, email it, fax it, or drop it off. And don't forget to print off a couple extra copies for your neighbours or forward the application to them!!

All voluntary donations of \$10 (or \$5 for the under-employed and retired) are appreciated.

MEET AND GREET WITH DARB ERICKSON

Darb Erickson is a new City employee, working with Michael Hill, as a Downtown Programs Liaison. His portfolio includes Graffiti Management and the Late Night Great Night Strategy.

Come meet Darb, bring your questions, comments and concerns. No pre-registration is required.

When: Wed 14th March

Time: 6:00 – 7:00 pm

Where: Silver Threads – Main Meeting Room

A high-level review these programs is provided below:

Graffiti Management

- Consolidating a comprehensive strategy to managing graffiti throughout the City.
- Partnering with various organizations that are involved with graffiti removal such as the DVBA, VTAG and neighbourhood associations.
- Supporting the efforts of community groups by hosting graffiti-paint out events and providing paints and supplies.
- Developing programs to support businesses that have been victims of graffiti.
- Communication – comprehensive strategy to inform the public of the issue of graffiti and what can be done.
- Communicating the existing resources available to victims of graffiti.
- Communicating the value of the three R's- Record, Report, Remove
- Sending specific properties to Bylaw enforcement that have shown an unwillingness to address graffiti on their property.
- Working with utility companies to address graffiti on their property.
- Partnering with Bylaw and VicPD in the apprehension of vandals.

Late Night Great Night Strategy

- Making improvements to the late night taxi stands and other modes of transportation.
- Partnering with VicPD and the Bar Association to further the Barwatch Program.
- Review and recommend improvements to the Late Night Task Force Policing Program.
- Offer leadership to solidifying the mandate and direction for the Multi-Agency Task Force - Police, Fire, Bylaw, Liquor Board.
- Supporting the efforts of groups that are offering evening and late night activity in the downtown (non-liquor focused activities)

- Continuing to monitor and minimize issues around public urination, litter, vomit, etc.
- Develop patron responsibility campaigns and branding around the Late Night Great Night Programs.

GARDENS & GREEN SPACES

1. DRA Container Gardening Workshop

When: Wednesday, 29th Feb 2012

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Where: Silver Threads – 1728 Douglas St

Cost: \$15 per participant (cash or cheque only)

Facilitator: Amy Crook, M.S., Certified Master Gardener

Join us for our inaugural workshop on container gardening featuring a combination of classroom teaching and creating a take home container garden. This workshop has been tailored to inform and educate our residents in an urban context!

All materials for the class (soil, seeds, seedlings, fertilizer, containers) will be provided, including trowels, buckets, watering cans, and printed handouts.

The workshop will cover:

- Planning your garden - how physical factors (amount of sun, wind, soil type, drainage) affect success, attracting beneficial insects, pest management without pesticides, and crop rotation
- How to make healthy soil and why it's critical for a successful garden
- Growing food in containers-how to maximize food production in a small space. Tips on types of soil to use, varieties to plant, and keeping your containers growing at peak capacity all season
- Seed starting -10 secrets to starting seeds and growing healthy seedlings
- How to extend the growing season

Please pre-register with Cathy Brankston at cbrankston@telus.net or 250-383-2366.

Space is limited to 15 participants.

About our Facilitator: Amy Crook is a Certified Master Gardener with 4 decades of experience. She has been growing food since she was a small child on her grandparent's farm. Amy's teaching focuses on motivating everyone to grow their own food using practical skill building techniques, and emphasizes success, not sophistication.

2. Planning Your Food Garden

LifeCycles is offering a workshop hosted by Amy Crook, certified Master Gardener

When: Sat Mar 3

Time: 10am-12pm

Where: Ingredients Health Food Store, upstairs

2031 Store St

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED as space is limited. Please contact uahub@lifecyclesproject.ca or 250-383-5800 to register for workshops.

LAND USE COMMITTEE

1312 Government St – New England Hotel

Le Fevre & Company with de Hoog and Kierulf Architects
CALUC Meeting at Silver Threads (1728 Douglas St) Tuesday March 13th at 7 PM

603 Pandora Ave – Plaza Hotel/Monty's

Eric Barker Architects - Updated design

769 Pandora Ave

GMC Projects – Rental Units

VICTORIA TOGETHER AGAINST GRAFFITI (VTAG)

The VTAG program is a volunteer program formed by residents who wish to improve the appearance of their neighbourhoods by painting out graffiti on power poles along their streets. The program is facilitated by the City of Victoria in cooperation with Victoria Police Department's Block Watch program. BC Hydro supports the program and has consented to their poles being painted in a prescribed manner.

Graffiti tags are not art; they are a form of vandalism that degrades the appearance of our community. The deterioration and lack of respect for the public and private property tends to promote an increase in graffiti, vandalism and disrespectful behaviour in general. Where it is perceived that no one cares about a neighbourhood, then people will tend to behave accordingly. The result is a lowered quality of life, more crime and even decreased property values.

Those wanting to participate in the VTAG program should contact the Program Coordinator through vtag.paintover@gmail.com or call the City's Graffiti Outreach Coordinator at vtag@victoria.ca. The paint and supplies you require will be provided. This includes paint, rollers, trays, brushes, litterbags and masking tape.

LISA HELPS – COMMUNITY COFFEE HOURS

City Councillor and DRA Council Liaison, Lisa Helps, has organized bi-weekly Community Coffee Hours and invites those who are interested in joining her and other community members in open discussions on a variety of topics.

The next events are:

· When: Sunday Feb 26, 4pm-6pm (Note time change!)

Where: Spiral Cafe, 418 Craigflower Rd

· When: Friday Mar 9, 10am-12pm

Where: Solstice Cafe, 529 Pandora St

· When: Friday March 23, 10am-12pm

Where: Habit Coffee, 552 Pandora St (Note location change!)

Please check Lisa's website for additional information and other dates as they are posted.

www.lisahelpsvictoria.ca/

JOHNSON STREET BRIDGE (JSB) UPDATE

Johnson Street Bridge Rail Removal

The dismantling of the railbridge and 500-tonne counterweight will take place from Wednesday, February 22 to Saturday, February 25.

This is an exciting and historic phase of the project with a lot of visible activity in the harbour. The project webcam will be capturing live coverage of the bridgework, which you can see at any point during the day by visiting www.johnsonstreetbridge.com/

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC MARKETS

WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

Featuring local farmers, food and music!

Where: Market Square, Inner Courtyard

When: Saturdays 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

March 3rd & 17th

For more information, check out the website for the Downtown Victoria Public Market Society:
victoriapublicmarket.com/

Thanks for your time! We look forward to meeting you and seeing you at events and in the community throughout 2012!

Cheers,

Wendy Bowkett

Chair & Treasurer

Downtown Residents' Association