

DRA BOARD MEETING

25th March 2014

Held at Silver Threads

Present: Robert Florida, Cathy Brankston, Kaela Schramm, Nicholas Harrington, Erika Luebbe, Doug Boyd (Board Members), Don Elliott (DRA member), Lisa Helps (City Liaison Councillor), Kathy Stinson and Alan Rycroft (Victoria Cool Aid Society), Brad Stokes and Steve Cox (CGS Property Group)

Regrets: Wendy Bowkett and Ian Sutherland (on holiday), Eric Ney.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm. Robert Florida (acting Chair)

1. Approval of Agenda: Approved: with addition of CGS Property Group given permission to address the meeting.

2. Guests: Kathy Stinson and Alan Rycroft from Cool Aid were invited to present an update to the DRA regarding Cool Aid's new Housing Plan. The society's plans are to add an additional 360 units by 2018. This would more than double the number of current units Cool Aid has in the CRD area. Currently; planning for three projects is underway. Cottage Grove Manor, supportive housing for seniors in Saanich; Cedar Grove, a rebuild of existing units on Gorge Rd, and Central Gardens, 140 apartments for low-income seniors and supportive housing located 800 block Johnson St. Cool Aid is seeking funding from Provincial Government, the City of Victoria and Saanich. Cool Aid helps over 10,000 people a year through supportive housing, emergency shelters, and community health services. Cool Aid has many programs; donations and/or volunteers are welcome. Kathy invited DRA members to phone/email and she would be pleased to conduct a tour of Cool Aid's facilities. A question and answer period followed. Robert thanked Kathy and Alan for the update.

2.1 Brad Stokes and Steve Cox expressed their concerns regarding the Rezoning and Development Permit Application scheduled for Thurs March 27th at City Hall. Their site is located at 1075 Pandora Ave, the former BCAA site bordering Cook St. DRA had sent a letter to the city in June 2013 and also in March 2014 in regards to land use concerns. Steve explained that CGS Group felt all concerns had been addressed satisfactorily, and after working with city planners had been able to improve aspects of the property for the benefit of the neighbouring buildings. Improvements made were adding an equal distance to the property line to match the Mondrian building. The street-wall height was lowered; and landscaping to match the Mondrian will assist in softening the outlook. A question period followed. Robert thanked Brad and Steve for attending. Robert will attend the City meeting and speak on behalf of the DRA.

3. Approval of minutes of 26th of Feb; Tabled.

4. Business arising from minutes; Tabled

5. Councillor's Report: Lisa

Governance and Priorities Committee discussed the proposed Art Alley located beside the new Anthem Properties "Union" building on lower Pandora Ave and Fisgard St. Lisa mentioned that the council has determined that citizens should have an opportunity to be involved in discussions/input on the current 3year budget plan on a yearly basis. Information session will be arranged. Dates will be announced ASAP. Victoria Matters Sewage Treatment Forum April 2nd 7pm at Victoria Event Centre was discussed. Lisa mentioned the latest sessions in other venues resulted in capacity crowds. DRA will be verifying numbers allowed. Lisa attended her first Roving Refinery event at Peacock Billiards .She was very delighted and will continue to encourage other council members to attend our next events.

6. Community Development Committee: Kaela

a. Victoria Matters Sewage Treatment Forum is on track for Wed April 2nd. Written questions will be answered by speakers. This will allow more questions to be answered and enable all speakers to share their views equally. Kaela will arrange to have the doors open to public by 6:30pm and a sign-up sheet will be provided.

b. Roving Refinery Mon Feb 17th was held at Interactivity Board Game Café. Attendance was smaller than usual, however everyone had a good time learning about the business and new location on Yates St. See Feb newsletter for more details on Interactivity hours and amenities. We all played a game (one of the 500 available), all were winners.

c. Roving Refinery Thurs Mar 20th was held at Peacock Billiards located at 1175 Douglas St. A very enjoyable evening was had by all. David Peacock, owner gave a comprehensive tour of the premises, history of his career and business, and explanation of the original art which covers all walls. The café tables have hand-painted quotes from Ulysses and are also works of art. Many pool tables are available. Ping-Pong tables are located outside in the covered patio area and are very popular. Snacks were provided and David very kindly arranged a credit for the DRA members to come and play a game. Kaela and Lisa each won a draw prize. Next RR event will be held the Catalano Restaurant 623 Courtney St in late April. Details will be posted soon.

d. Next Community Development meeting will be held Thurs Apr 3rd 5:30 pm at QV Bakery.

7. Healthy Living Committee: Nicholas

Nicholas will arrange a meeting with Ken Kelly, general manager of the DVBA. DRA would like to partner with DVBA to organize Block Watch for downtown. A one-block area will be proposed as a trial run. Eric will write an essay on the loud pipes/noise issue to present to the DRA and possibly City Council. Eric will gather data on what other North American districts are doing to combat this on-going problem. Our proposed survey is still to be tested. Will be posted soon. Next Healthy Living Committee meeting is Wed April 16th 7pm at QV Bakery.

8. Land Use Committee: Robert

1075 Pandora Ave was discussed as Steve and Brad (CGS developers) had left the meeting. Red Hot Video development application was discussed. The new proposal is for a one story building with mezzanine and surface parking to replace the current building located 1823 Douglas St. City council passed the proposal to the advisory design panel. Lisa Helps and Pam Madoff voted against, citing the issues that the building was not in keeping with the OCP plan to encourage density in downtown. Surface parking and quality of design were also an issue. After discussion at the Advisory Design Panel, the proposal will come back to city council for approval. DRA is in agreement that this project is much too small for the Douglas St area. Robert will ask Lisa as to what steps DRA can take to have our opinions noted. DRA was not approached by the developer to review and write comments regarding the site. However, DRA can review the information given to planning/city council.

9. Communications: Nicholas. Covered under item # 7.

10. New Business:

Wendy and Ian are away till April 18th. Duties to be covered in their absence have been assigned to other board members.

Cool Aid had asked the DRA to write a letter in support of Cool Aid's new Housing Proposal. Cathy will draft a letter and present at next board meeting.

Nicholas welcomes any articles to add to our newsletter. Email to info@victoriadra.ca

Murray Rankin MP for Victoria will be a guest speaker at our April meeting.

Next Board Meeting: Tues April 22nd 5:30pm at Silver Threads.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.