

DRA Board Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2024

Location: ZOOM

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Present: Sandra Severs (President), Jeremy Zhao (Vice President), Doug Boyd (Treasurer), Colby Young, Michael Demakiling, Dawn Moorhead, Furkan Kucukdurmaz, Jordan Royer, Neil McKinnon, Mano Majumdar

City Council Liaison: Dave Thompson

DRA Neighbourhood Engagement Coordinator: James Davis

Call to Order, Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Approval of Agenda

Regrets were received from Sebastian Calderone, Sherry Lee and Ian Sutherland.

Councillor Update: Dave Thompson

Pandora Sheltering:

Outdoor overnight shelter in Irving Park and VicWest Park will be prohibited as of August 1st. Dave did not vote in favour of this motion as it is unclear where individuals will go. Last Thursday's incident on Pandora has clearly shown that the community, both housed and unhoused, has reached a breaking point. As a result of the violence against a first responder, ambulance services will not go onto the 900 block of Pandora without a two car police escort leading to concern about a loss of service in other parts of the city and also what might happen if there is a medical emergency on the 900 block that police can't immediately attend.

2155 Dowler Place:

SOLID will not have Dowler Place up and running until early October. There is pushback from the North Park community about this facility. Other organizations are in conversation about increasing their mat programs to increase the number of shelter spaces.

Garry Oaks:

In response to a question about the location of Garry Oaks in the Downtown neighbourhood, **Dave will contact city staff to find out whether the land north of Red Fish Blue Fish at the water is owned privately or by the city, province or harbour authority.**

Executive Report: Sandra (report attached)

Sandra attended the meeting organized by NPNA to discuss the 2155 Dowler project to be run by SOLID. The mood was hostile.

Sandra has been in conversation with Mayor Alto's scheduler, Jake, who is setting up quarterly meetings between the DRA and Mayor Alto.

Standing Committee Reports – Q and A

- **Urban Livability Committee (ULC) and Urban Ecology and Agriculture Committee (UEC):** Michael/Colby (no report)
- **Downtown Coolkit** Dawn (report attached)
- **Communications and Membership Committee (CMC):** Doug (report attached)
- **Governance Committee:** Jeremy (report attached)
- **Land Use Committee (LUC):** Ian/Jordan (no report)
- **Community Engagement Committee (CEC):** Furkan (report attached)
- **Neighbourhood Engagement Coordinator** James (report attached)

External Meeting Reports – Q and A

- **Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN):** Sandra/Ian (report attached)
- **900 Pandora Good Neighbour Group:** Sandra (no report)
- **Greater Victoria Harbour Authority Community Liaison Committee:** Doug (no report)

Other Business:

Financial report – Doug presented the Q2 financial report for the period April to June 2023.

Motion: That we accept the financial report as circulated. **Neil/Furkan. CARRIED.**

Climate Solutions Committee proposal -Dawn presented a proposal that a Climate Solutions Committee be struck with the following terms: “The Climate Solutions Committee is focussed on Downtown climate crisis mitigation and adaptation in buildings, waste, transport and the urban forest.”

Motion: That we establish a Climate Solutions Committee. Dawn/Doug. **CARRIED.**

Follow up to conversation with Mayor Alto

Sandra and James will explore setting up a feedback session with the neighbourhood on the OCP engagement process and the responses to the DRA survey.

6:30 p.m. Meeting concludes

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September, 2024, at 5:30pm

Executive Committee Report – July 2024

Track it Forward - A gentle reminder to Board members to start using the Track it Forward app which will give us a clear sense of volunteer hours committed to the work of the DRA. If you have questions about the use of the app, please be in touch with Doug.

Wiser Projects – On the recommendation of Mayor Alto, a copy of our OCP report developed by Wiser Projects has been sent to Karen Hoese, Director of Planning, with a request for comment.

Webinar – Sandra participated in a webinar entitled “Main Street Mosaics: Piecing Together Investments for Complete Communities” delivered by the Canadian Urban Institute. The most resilient main streets which showed the best recovery from the pandemic were those main streets which had residents living within 1 km and whose services were hyperlocal in nature. Main streets which relied primarily on office workers and tourism suffered the most and have had the most difficulty recovering.

https://citytalkcanada.ca/discussions/main-street-mosaics-piecing-together-investments-for-complete-communities/?utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-94oYyL5RkdzliJmZ5nHyrtUZqllUEMyYtWQnuJ7XV5zfG2-n723T-16BBgarMbHJo3RmXpxYTIOn9r_qOoszkIBctCYw&hsmi=314979711&utm_content=314979711&utm_source=hs_email

A new tool, measuringmainstreets.ca, is a comprehensive mapping and analysis platform for main streets across Canada. It provides data on business types, civic infrastructure, and neighborhood demographics, helping communities visualize and assess their main streets’ health and resilience.

Meeting with Jeff Bray, CEO of the DVBA – Sandra had coffee with Jeff Bray to talk about a variety of things including street disorder and homelessness. The DVBA will be participating in a city-led retail policy development process next year. I indicated that the DRA would like to be involved in that conversation as well.

Review of the Extreme Weather Response -The Salvation Army hosted a review of the EWR for 2023-2024 which Sandra attended. Staff and members of community groups and non-profits were in attendance as was a staff person from BC Housing. Survey results and assessment clearly reveal that the system does not work. There are not enough spaces in the system to get people who are at serious health risk inside during extreme weather events. What is provided does not meet needs. There is no provision for storage and no accommodation for pets. When the city did activate warming centres, it took two days to get a warming centre up and running. Staffing was extremely difficult to manage given that hours were weather dependent. Shifts of 12 hours in this kind of context is not sustainable.

A number of recommendations have been forwarded to BC Housing for consideration.

Centennial Square Redevelopment- An email was sent to Councillors Caradonna and Thompson outlining the major points of the Board's conversation about the proposed redevelopment of Centennial Square. The email contained both concerns about missing elements and portions of the design that the Board was pleased to see. In watching the live-feed of the meeting, it was good to see our concerns about public washrooms and the lack of a mid-block crosswalk at Cormorant raised for consideration by staff.

2155 Dowler Place – A meeting was hosted by the North Park Neighbourhood Association with Mayor Alto, VicPD, some members of Council and staff of SOLID present to provide information to the North Park community about the new community hub that will be established at 2155 Dowler Place. The mood of the meeting was tense and confrontational.

Climate Catastrophe Escape Room

Volunteers have worked assiduously to create a fun and meaningful experience with the Escape Room. The public debut will be at Moss Street Market on August 3, followed by a second appearance at the market on August 17. We welcome suggestions and requests to set-up at other venues -indoors or outdoors.

The room's theme is building retrofits - electrification and efficiency.

Share/Service

This is the community service we are providing for local Zero Waste Events. Due to the cancellation of "Pandora Day", August 8 will not be its first use.

However, thanks to Councillor Thompson's follow-up from our last board meeting, we understand that all My Great Neighbourhood Grants will be Zero Waste events beginning with the next intake (February 2025). Thus we're gearing up to be ready for the ensuing demand.

Conference Report

Board member Dawn Moorhead attended a 3-day training conference with former US Vice President Al Gore in New York.

Boiling down 3-days packed with information:

"If we don't mitigate we won't be able to adapt"

"It's Real

It's Us

It's Bad

Scientists Agree

There's Hope"

Air Conditioning Survey

The "beta version" of the survey will launch in August at the Moss Street Market.

Communications and Membership Committee Report – July 2024

Update on Committee activities since the June 2024 report:

- **Newsletter / Other Communications to Members:**
 - The June newsletter was issued on June 21. Statistics from Mail Chimp indicate that it was opened by 51.4% of subscribers. The items receiving the highest number of clicks were the South Island Farm Hub, the City of Victoria Development Tracker, and the City Vibe Pocket Guide.
 - We also sent communication about a Music by the Shore event on July 10 and a volunteer callout for the Escape Room event on June 26.
 - We intend to put together a newsletter by July 16 and welcome contributions from Board members.

- **Web site**
 - We continue to add posts to the News page and add events to the Events page of our website.
 - 435 site sessions for May (up 35% from the previous month). The most viewed posts were the Music in the Park event and information on Board members.

- **Social Media**
 - The number of posts over the past month, and the current number of followers are:
 - Facebook - 10 posts, 1056 followers
 - Instagram - 4 posts, 1048 followers
 - Twitter - 4 tweets, 1155 followers

- **Other**
 - 2 new members since the last report. As a note, we send welcome letters to all new members inviting them to become involved with DRA activities, and, where applicable, to become an ambassadors for posting notices of our events in the buildings where they live.
 - 8 new newsletter subscribers since the last report

Submitted by
Doug Boyd

Governance Committee Report – July 2024

Governance Committee membership – The governance committee will consist of Jeremy Zhao (Vice-President), Doug Boyd (Treasurer), Dianne Flood, and Soleil Heaney. Sandra Severs (President) and Sherry Lee (Secretary) will also be on the committee.

Charity Status – Dianne will send Soleil the link to the federal government’s website on applying for charity status, and Soleil will look into the details of what is required. The group believes that other than time and effort required to get charity status, there are no other obstacles.

New Board Member Orientation – Group decided early August would be a good time for new board members to get some introductions and orientation. Right now August 6th seems to be the best date to move forward with this orientation based on availability.

Financial Policy Update – The governance committee was given an update that the financial policy was approved by the Board.

Climate Solutions Committee – The governance committee does not feel that it has the responsibility for the formation of this committee, and it lies with the Board to create committees as it sees fit. Dawn, Colby, Furkan and Michael should discuss this more in detail. Doug will bring this item up in the next Board meeting.

YSCG Bylaw and Governance Documentation Review – The governance committee does believe that there are certain gaps between what is currently written in the YSCG bylaws and governance documents versus what is actually being done. The committee will work to address those deficiencies, particularly around the financial reporting side of things. Dianne will review the comments from Michael, and Doug will also review if insurance will cover any of the YSCG’s Steering Committee actions should something happen. Other committees should also be bringing forward plans/budgets for approval to the Board potentially.

Engagement Committee July Report

1. The Engagement Committee has confirmed it's 2024 meeting schedule:

Monthly - on the first Thursday of the month at 5:30 PM

The next meeting will be August 1.

2. Details of the committee's considerable past, and possible future, activities have been received from Dianne and James, respectively. Much great work has been accomplished!! It is the opinion of the Engagement Committee co-chairs that it would be advisable to divide the committee's portfolio and create a new committee, "Climate Solutions", that will include "Victoria" Coolkit and other climate related downtown initiatives. Both committees hope to continue the quality activism of our predecessors. Furkan would continue as chair of the Engagement Committee and Dawn would chair the "Climate Solutions" committee.

2. Music in the Park: The second event in our series of free summer concerts is coming up on Wednesday, July 17th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in Reeson Park and will feature live music by Okan Yedikuvvet (Turkish music featuring the bağlama) and Pesewa (ambient afro-futurist folk featuring the kologo), along with a spoken word performance by young Indigenous poet Shauntelle DC.

3. Coolkit's Escape Room will be "ready for primetime" on August 1st. We will be at the Moss Street Market on August 3rd & 17th. You can also request or suggest other venues - indoors or outdoors. If we have more market volunteers, we can attend additional days.

Share/Service - Due to the cancellation of "Pandora Day", August 8 will not be the first use of this project. However, thanks to Dave's follow-up, we have word that all My Great Neighbourhood Grants will be Zero Waste events beginning with the next intake (February 2025). Thus we're gearing up to be ready for the ensuing demand.

The Air Conditioning Survey will launch in August.

Neighbourhood Engagement Coordinator Report - July 2024

Updates since last board meeting:

Welcome Brochures - Brochures were dropped off for incoming residents at two new Downtown buildings that were recently completed: Urban Edge Heights B (1088 Johnson Street) and The Wedge (1400 Vancouver Street).

Music in the Park - The first concert in our summer concert series took place on June 25th and was a beautiful event, featuring three performers who have been part of the Queer Open Stage this past year.

Yates Street Mural - Artist Jesse Campbell completed the mural on June 27th despite many obstacles, including unexpectedly soft ground that caused problems for the lift and the theft of batteries from the lift. As a result of these delays, the final mural is slightly different than the design but is still stunning. We held a pop-up open house at the garden on June 26th for people to get a closer look at the mural and enjoy a free bike-blended smoothie.

Pride Parade - James and board members Sandra, Doug, Jeremy, Neil and Michael were joined by other Downtown residents and volunteers as we marched in the parade for the second year in a row.

Upcoming events:

Music by the Shore (July 17th) - Concert two in our series is happening in Reeson Park at 6:30 pm.

Painting Party (July 18th) - We will be applying a fresh coat of paint to the lower section of the wall, below the mural.

Restoration at Maplebank (July 19th) - Songhees member Cheryl Bryce and the Lekwungen Community Tool Shed are hosting a restoration event on the Songhees Reserve from 10 am to 1 pm. James will be leading a bike ride from Downtown to the event for residents who are interested in attending. Those who prefer to drive can meet up with the DRA contingent on site before the event begins. Board members are encouraged to take part!

Naloxone Training (July 24th) - Colby will be leading this training at theDock at 6 pm.

Music on the Green (August 8th) - The final concert of the summer is happening on Pandora Green at 6:30 pm.

VCAN meeting report – July 2024

In response to the request to Mayor and Council, Councillor Thompson was present at the June meeting providing valuable insight into the OCP process for neighbourhood associations who were still working to gather and provide feedback.

Mapping Project – A second in-person gathering has been held to provide information about Garry Oak ecosystems. Members of VCAN met with urban forester Ryan Senechal at Kings Park in Fernwood to talk about urban Garry Oaks and restoration of urban spaces. A walk through of the data mapping system was provided at the monthly meeting of VCAN to help members of the network learn how to map the presence of Garry Oaks in their neighbourhoods.

A letter has been sent to Mayor and Council inviting them to participate in VCAN meetings.

Fernwood Community Association- Representatives of FCA reported that the association is considering a change of direction to their mission, moving from traditional community association service delivery to becoming an arts organization for the whole city. A motion will go to their AGM in the Fall. As part of the shift in their purpose, they have moved stewardship of their community gardens to the Compost Education Centre.