

DRA Board Meeting Minutes

24th July 2013

Location: Victoria Silver Threads

Present: Wendy Bowkett (DRA chair), Ian Sutherland (LUC chair), Lisa Helps (City Councillor), Cathy Brankston (Secretary), and Robert Florida (Board member).

Regrets: Eric Ney (gallivanting in France)

Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm.

1. **Approval of agenda:** By consensus: 2 items added under New Business.
2. **Approval of meeting minutes of June 26th 2013.** By consensus.
3. **Business arising from minutes.** No discussion was required.
4. **Councillor's Report: Lisa Helps**

City councillors are continuing to work on updates to governance issues. Discussions regarding Advisory boards are expected to be completed by Sept in order to have new boards appointed as soon as possible. The city will be enacting a 3-year budget plan in Sept. Gail Stephens, city manager from 2009, has resigned and has taken a new position in Winnipeg. Jocelyn Jenkyns, currently general manager of the Victoria Conference Centre, has been appointed as acting city manager. Sage Baker has been appointed as Executive Director of Economic Development on a 2-year contract. Her role will be working to grow a strong local economy. DRA board has requested to meet with Sage to discuss downtown revitalization and residents' concerns. Lisa will arrange a meeting in Sept. A new opening date, Sept 14th has been set for the Victoria Public Market at the Hudson, as vendors are not yet ready. A farmers' market is being held every Wednesday from 11 am to 3pm in the back carriage way at the Hudson. This market has many stands of produce, baked goods, lunch items etc. The market has been very well attended. Lisa, along with others, is organizing an event named Living The New Economy. Date chosen is Nov 29th to Dec 05th. See neweconomy.ca for more details. The last meeting of city council for July will be Thurs 25th, council will reconvene the week Aug 18th.

5. **Communications Committee: Wendy**

Meeting was held Tues July 23rd, with next meeting slated for 3 months from now. The co-ordination between DRA web site, Twitter and Facebook has been working very well. Placing unique photos on line helps to drive traffic through all sites. Mail chimp is tracking clicks and providing statistics to enable more enhanced web site management. Don Elliot and Nicholas Harrington are both writing articles for our website and newsletter. The focus of Don's article is about maintaining a healthy vibrant core for the benefit of the region. Don and Nicholas will be

attending the public hearing July 25th for a development permit application for the Plaza Hotel property. Nicholas will write an article about the project.

Community Development Committee: Wendy

Meeting was held Tues July 16th at Veneto on Douglas St. Topics discussed were ways to increase membership and our popular Roving Refinery events. No Refinery event is planned for August as there are many festivals and music events already booked in our downtown area. Third week of Sept has been chosen for a gathering at Foo Restaurant located at 769 Yates St. People will be asked to register through Eventbrite. Information will be posted on our website and also notification through our newsletter, FB and Twitter. Attendance will be limited, be sure to sign-up early. Door prizes and a chance to participate in a fun filled local area event. All within walking or cycling distance. Another reason we love to live downtown. Yates Street Taphouse has been chosen for our following event. Wendy will arrange the date for mid to late Oct. Suggestions from our committee meeting of Thurs 25th also include Cook Culture, Zambri's, Tre Fantastico, Belmiro's and the Guild Restaurant. Plans are to hold a Refinery event each month with the exception of December.

The board approved two other events through the CDC as proposed by Graham Briggs. He will organise 2 separate evening events, currently referred to as "Public Forums" to be held at Victoria Event Center on Broad St tentatively scheduled for 2nd Oct 2013 and Dec 2013. The first two topics for discussion will be Amalgamation and Homelessness. These topics are current concerns for our fellow citizens. The event center has a capacity of 170 people. Plans are to invite speakers, DRA members, downtown residents and other neighborhood groups to enable a sharing of a larger variety of ideas and knowledge. Graham will be asked to write promotion pieces to help advertise the evenings. The tentative proposal is to host 6 evening sessions per year.

Next meeting Wed Aug 14th 5:30 pm at QV Café 1701 Government St

6. Healthy Living Community: Tabled

Eric Ney is away on holidays. Next meeting Tues Aug 6th 7pm at Silver Threads.

7. Land Use Committee: Ian

Plaza Hotel 603 Pandora Ave: Ian voiced a concern that DRA's second letter to the city had not been included in the council's information package. Lisa will check to be sure all councilors will have the second letter in time for the public hearing scheduled for Thurs July 25th in council chambers. Ian will speak at the public hearing. The architect had responded favorably to earlier suggestions mentioned in the first DRA letter sent to council.

1075 Pandora Ave: A follow-up meeting with developers and CEI Architects was held July 16th. Plans for both sites have been modified and the FSR was recalculated as earlier data was incorrect. The Johnson St building exceeds requirements for distances between properties and

the side windows that face other properties have been made narrower. The Cook/Pandora St building has some minor changes including relocation of the stairwell. The concept for this building has not changed from 3 separate buildings with outside hallways. Materials to be used, removal of overhead hydro wiring, safety and noise concerns were also discussed. The next step will be to go before the city's Planning and Land Use Committee.

A Public Open House is scheduled from 3 pm to 7 pm Sept 18th at City Hall. Focus groups are to be formed to discuss Zoning Regulation Bylaws with the Planning and Development department. Pre-registration is required. For further information please check the Victoria city website under Community and Events Calendar.

Johnson St Bridge: DRA is waiting for city staff to set a meeting date to present the latest plans regarding the public right of ways and green spaces on the east side of the bridge. The DRA would like a more collaborative discussion with engineering staff, not the communications department.

8. New Business: Wendy

Funding Grant: The DRA has received a full funding grant from the city based on the 2011 census figures. More downtown residents equal a broader voice in policies and issues concerning all. Please encourage others to join the DRA. Pass on our website victoriadra.ca to friends and neighbors, where they can register for the DRA.

BC Culture Days: This national event celebrates the diversity of cultural programming. This year, the province is supporting this initiative with Victoria as the provincial focus. Nicola Reddington, with the City of Victoria, is acting as a coordinator for the planning of events for the weekend of Sept 27th to 29th. It is intended that programming will expand beyond the downtown area and that events will be participatory in nature, as opposed to observational. For further information check out the following websites: bc.culturedays.ca for BC or culturedays.ca for nationwide. Also 'Like' on Facebook: Victoria Culture Days.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm

Next meeting 7 pm Wed Aug 28th at Silver Threads