

DRA Board Meeting Draft Minutes

May 27th 2014

Location: Silver Threads

Present: Wendy Bowkett (Chair), Ian Sutherland, Doug Boyd, Nicholas Harrington, Kaela Schramm, Cathy Brankston, Erika Luebbe (Board members), Hugh Kruzel, (DRA member), Marianne Alto (City Councillor Oakland's Neighbourhood and Downtown Business Liaison)

Regrets: Lisa Helps (City Councillor Downtown/Harris Green, Vic West Liaison), Eric Ney (Board member), Robert Florida (Board Member overseas)

Meeting called to order at 5:35pm

- 1. Approval of Agenda:** Approved by consensus.
- 2. Approval of Minutes** of the 22nd April meeting. Approved by consensus.
- 3. Business arising from minutes.** Covered by councillor's report.
- 4. Councillor's Report:** Marianne Alto (stepping in for Lisa Helps)

Marianne addressed the request from DRA for Land Use notices to be also sent by email. City staff is currently working on a more comprehensive program to enable a sign-up to specific notices, bulletins and documents to be sent by email. This will complement the Canada Post mail-outs that could then be distributed more efficiently to DRA/committee members. The ability to sign-up to be notified regarding our bordering neighborhood associations Land Use applications will be an asset to enable more cohesive developments. Our district borders Rock Bay, North Park, Fernwood, Fairfield, and James Bay.

A new board meeting location was discussed, as Silver Threads has been given a notice to vacate this September. Wendy has checked a few options, and now has more suggested locations to follow up. City Council updates from Marianne included the difficulties that Silver Threads has had in finding a suitable location. The decision by Council to support the move to the CIBC building by the Jubilee Hospital was postponed by a week to give Council and staff more time to get and review relevant information.

Downtown priority bus lanes along Douglas St are now in use. The stretch between Hillside Ave and Tolmie Ave will be open in September. BC Transit has funded the changes.

The sewage treatment plant scheduled for McLoughlin Point is officially on hold. Upgrades will be going ahead at Clover Point as that facility is 40 years old. The potential for improved upgrades to the Dallas Road waterfront has been altered by these decisions.

The proposal to change the speed limit to 40km on specific streets throughout the City has been put on hold. The DRA did not support the proposal as presented. Traffic calming and traffic engineering studies are needed to determine if and where the speed limit could be reduced. Just changing signs is not the answer.

Marianne is liaison with the DVBA (Downtown Victoria Business Assoc), and suggested that DRA might ask to present to the DVBA's monthly board meeting. A more vibrant, liveable city includes residential and business working together. DRA board has previously worked with DVBA on projects and activities. A more formal partnership could make use of knowledge and expertise from both organizations. Wendy will add this to her agenda.

Nicholas questioned the Harbour/Q Lot land swap. This is James Bay district, however these changes will greatly affect our area. Jawl Properties is proposing to build 200,000 sqft of office space. The potential for vacancies in the core will hopefully be minor if the new construction is phased, with new business/government departments taking over vacated space.

Doug asked for clarification on closure of Government St. The council has mixed opinions, so no decision yet on partial closing of Government St this summer. Marianne stated problems arising from previous street closures are too many people/kiosks with local merchants not having any foot traffic in their establishments. Not having a "draw" to bring and keep people into the area, making the closure the right size to accommodate pedestrian and the re-routed vehicle traffic. City Council is not considering weeks of closure, just certain weekends. The debates will continue.

5. Community Development Committee: Kaela

a. Roving Refinery: A Roving Refinery gathering was held May 21st at Bernard Callebaut Chocolaterie 621 Broughton St. Brad Potentier was a very generous and engaging host. Many sampled scrumptious chocolates, learned a great deal about the making of chocolate, and left with parting gifts and flowers. Draws for Bernard Chocolate gift certificates were held. Keeping with our commitment to a better community for all; our generous DRA members contributed 10 lbs of canned good and \$55.00 to be given to Our Place Society. Our next potential June RR event is Lacey Lou Tapas Lounge 1320 Broad St. Stay tuned to our Web site/Facebook/Twitter for further details. No RR events will be arranged for July and August.

b. Victoria Matters: The next Victoria Matters event suggested is a forum to discuss municipal election issues and concerns; inviting the candidates to meet, great and speak about their platforms. September would be the optimum month as November is election month. So far Dean Fortin and Lisa Helps have declared their intentions for the Mayor's chair.

c. Pedestrian Mall/Government St: Wendy: Wendy has met with Mike Hill (Downtown Co-ordinator) to discuss research already gathered on this subject. Additional issues mentioned were choice of location: Government St from Wharf to Herald, or Wharf to Yates, or other? Need to consider other variables such as bus stop for Cruise ship drop off on Govt St. Need for a

champion to move initiative from discussion to implementation. Wendy has planned to meet with Ken Kelly (DVBA).

d. Next Community Development Committee meeting: **Thurs June 5th 5:30 pm at QV Bakery.**

6. Healthy Living Committee: Nicholas/Wendy

a. Block Watch: Wendy: Nicholas will join a meeting with Ken Kelly (DVBA) if available to discuss a pilot project involving business and residents. Ken Kelly is presently working on security workshops with DVBA.

b. Noisy Motorcycle pipes: Nicholas: No bylaw changes are needed, just enforcement. City of Victoria has a noise bylaw in place. BC municipalities are adopting automotive standards as a benchmark for allowable levels of noise. Provincial tickets could be an option. Eric has sent an inquiry to Police Chief Elsner. Chief Elsner has forwarded that request to a sergeant in charge, who has more experience dealing with the noise issue.

c. Survey Nicholas: Four surveys are ready to add to Survey Gizmo. Testing is still required. Newsletter readers will be polled and results posted in the following publication.

Next Healthy Living Committee meeting Wed June 18th 7pm at QV Bakery

7. Land Use Committee: Ian

a. 816 Broughton St – Customs House Site

A CALUC meeting was held May 8th at the Victoria Executive Centre. Stan Sipos, Cielo Properties; and Jim Wong, Studio One Architecture. Paul Merrick of Merrick Architecture presented their proposal. The DRA Land Use Committee members, nearby residents and building owners, attended the meeting. A rezoning and development permit are required. Plans are to keep and renovate the heritage portion along Wharf and Courtenay St, remove and rebuild the 1950's building facing Government St. The plan calls for retail space along the 3 streets, with condos above. Seven stories are proposed and the height would match the Belmont building on Government St. Website is www.customshouse.ca. Issues discussed at DRA board meeting include lack of transition in height down to the waterfront, the addition on top of the heritage portion, lack of samples of materials to be used, and more detailed information for the site. Ian will send site plans to LUC members to add their comments. Wendy requested to meet with developers before any CALUC meeting to ensure the CALUC meeting is as informative as possible. This will be discussed further DRA meetings.

b. 836 Broughton St: Chard Developments

This development proposal is part of the Fairfield neighborhood district, another reason why it is important for neighboring districts to meet together. Fairfield and the developer were surprised to learn that this small portion of Broughton St was not in Downtown. A 10 storey

mixed-use building with underground parking is proposed for the site. The site is presently a parking lot and the former Black Press Building. The development proposal received approval from the Planning and Land Use Committee and Public Hearing. See www.eschervictoria.com for Chard's site.

c. 808 Douglas St: Vic Theatre

Vic Theatre has requested a liquor permit to allow alcohol for specific events, hours 6pm to 11pm 7 days a week. DRA board was in support of the application. The nearby Royal Theatre serves alcohol afternoons and evenings. The public hearing is scheduled for Thurs June 26th 7pm at City Hall council chambers.

d. 777 Douglas St: The Executive House Hotel/Bartholomew's Pub

The hotel has submitted an application to change the occupant load to eliminate 120 food primary seats and add 62 to the liquor primary seats. City staff recommended approval to the Planning and Land Use Committee however Council postponed making a decision, requesting community engagement. The City received 50 to 60 emails/letters in response to the proposal. There were 8 letters of support (some with qualifiers, such as asking to have security added as a condition of support). There were 61 letters in opposition. There are many components that aren't working in the neighbourhood which reduce liveability, comfort and security for residents in the area. Many noise complaints, outside smoking, taxis/patrons not going to the designated taxi stands, loud crowds not clearing the area after closing hours, and noise bylaws not being enforced, calls to police re noise being disregarded by VicPD non-emergency operators are some of the issues. The city has notified the 5 strata groups within the 200m catchment area and Wendy is contacting all the boards. A public meeting will be held with hotel, DRA and concerned residents and business owners. The meeting will be held in close proximity to allow for more attendees. The Island Saving Credit Union has offered space, but capacity and set up are not yet confirmed. The Conference Centre is another possible venue. A related problem mentioned is the fact that Vic police do not track noise complaints, so it is difficult to know if issues are escalating or improved. Solutions mentioned are having pub patrons exit through the Exec hotel, and having security on site.

e. **1823 Douglas St.** Development permit application request March 20th. No further information has been received.

8.Communications: Nicholas:

Nicholas will take on the task of editor for our monthly Newsletter; Robert Florida will submit articles for posting. Nicholas is looking for Television/Web footage on our recent Victoria Matters Forum "Sewage Treatment in the Capital Regional District"

Hugh Kruzel suggested DRA add new menu options on our website. Buttons for links to other web sites such as Focus Magazine.

Erika has taken Wendy's turn as our Social Media person until the next Communications meeting. Erika will be away for a couple of weeks and Wendy will take over the social meeting in her absence. Erika is presently updating our on-line membership form for new members. Sign-up for membership and the Newsletter will be a one-step process.

9.New Business: Wendy

Wendy has been tracking DRA membership for the past 5 years and has 205 members listed. On-line membership is 137. Wendy and Erika will amalgamate the on-line membership and the excel lists to be certain every-one who has joined is receiving information.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm

Date for next meeting Tues June 24th 5:30 pm at Silver Threads