

DRA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

15 March 2016

Location: Victoria City Hall Songhees Room

Present: Board members Ian Sutherland, Wendy Bowkett, Eric Ney, Doug Boyd, Nicholas Harrington, Erika Luebbe, Cathy Brankston, Robert Florida, Don Elliott, Kaela Schramm. City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe, City Downtown Community Development Coordinator Michael Hill.

Regrets: Karen Gallagher, Ruth Annis.

Meeting call to order: Kaela called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda: Approved

2. Approval of minutes of 16th Feb 2016 meeting: Tabled.

3. Councillor's Report: Charlayne.

- Committee of the Whole meeting for Thursday Mar 17th has two items of interest to DRA members:
- **Saint Franks**, located at 1320 Broad St has made application for a change in hours to their liquor license. Council does not support an increase a Friday, Saturday 2am closing, will support a 1 am closing. City canvassed nearby property owners and also posted a notice on the property. 30 letters of support and 3 letters against were received. Saint Franks has requested a letter of support from DRA. Ian will draft a letter to circulate to DRA board. Possible concerns are noise and the building next door has an unused liquor license.
- **The Guild**, 1250 Wharf St is requesting an amendment to existing liquor license. To add patron participation entertainment endorsement for special events. City received 2 letters of support, and 1 against. Ian circulated the City's Notice of Application letter to the LUC for comments. No objections were raised.
- A Ship Point Pop Up Design Competition is being held. The completion closes May 13. The scope of the project is to cover part of the site, and be a moveable structure so that events can still be held. The budget is \$45,000.00, with \$5000.00 going to the artist. DRA will be asked to send a representative to be one of 6 jurors responsible for evaluating the submissions.
- March 10th Biketoria open house was held at McPherson Playhouse. Charlayne attended for 1 hour and many DRA board members also attended.
- Plans for a community garden on Yates Street on City owned property are moving forward. City Studio now has a storefront on Johnston St. This group is made up of university students. The students study and then can work on a real-life project. City

Studio was asked by the city to partner with the DRA. A first meeting has already been held.

- The Downtown Service Providers (DSP) is still looking for a location to build a secure storage facility for use by the homeless. Three applications have been received, with two locations being in the downtown area. Charlayne has been receiving comments that the number of carts on the street seems to be reduced. She believes that could be attributed to the fact that there are more places for people, who then don't need to keep their possessions with them.
- Questions: Nicholas asked what is happening with the potential boundary changes? Charlayne said changing the boundaries is a much bigger discussion. Other neighbourhoods are still waiting to have their current neighbourhood plans updated, which is a priority. However, when it comes to land use, the planning department is looking at the borders where neighbourhoods meet, with possible amendments to land use rules in the border areas. An example given was that an owner moved a few feet over the border into another neighbourhood area and different parking restrictions were then put in place.
- Question: Doug mentioned our funding is based on the census, so any changes would affect the amount we receive from the city. Council has discussed, but this is not on the work plan now. Charlayne will continue to keep the request in mind.

4. City Liaison Report: Michael Hill

- Biketoria March 10th open house, focussing on Downtown/Harris Green had 25 business owners and residents attending. Consultation with neighbourhoods will conclude during the week of March 18th. The consulting team will then refine their analysis, recommendations, and costings. Council will receive a report from staff and the consulting team. In late April, council will provide direction on construction of future bike lines. Once that direction is received, further consultation will proceed on a block by block basis. Charlayne said council will closely consider neighbourhood comments. Ian and most DRA board attended the open house. Ian will draft a letter detailing issues. The letter will circulate to the board and then be sent to council. Wendy asked about proposed changes to the parklet on Fort Street. Designs will be looked at on a block by block basis. Michael said the city would be looking at more opportunities to augment public spaces and provide more green spaces. Example would be the turning exit space at Blanshard and Pandora.
- Douglas & Yates Intersection Project. Product of the visioning charette in 2015 formed by DVBA. A funding project was formed by the DVBA, the City of Victoria, and the Downtown Victoria 2020 Conference Society, which had some legacy funds available from the Downtown 2020 conference series. The city added \$60,000. A total of \$180,000.00 is available to design and implement this project. The elements are a bike shelter, a gathering spot, art installations, colour treatment for the sidewalks and crosswalks. Due for implementation later this month and should be launched in early April. Atomique Productions is working together with DVBA to come up with a brand.

- The successor to the downtown beautification plan will now be called public realm plan and way-finding plan combined. Taking our downtown area plan and looking specifically at streets to ask what do we want to achieve, with reference to the lack of trees, saying this is the time to look at the trees. Our way finding signage is poor and needed to be looked at for a while.
- Government Street Charette: An updated on the last year's Government Street Charette. The DVBA looking to hiring a new executive director, so some items are on hold. Charlayne believes they are still going ahead with Car Free Day 2016, and putting lights in the tree located at the far end of Government St. Doesn't believe there is funding in place for 2016. A number of action items did come from the committee and the plan would be to roll them into the public realm plan.
- David Foster Harbour Pathway: An ambitious plan is to move this forward in 2016/2017.
- Camping in parks: Concerns only Hagar, Kings, Arbutus, and Cridge parks. After consultation with residents and homeless, the city is looking into restricting camping in those parks. City considered the size of the park, proximity to neighbours, and also to pathways that adults and children access. What would be the impact of these changes? Our shelter beds are extremely full. Our seasonal shelter beds will be coming off stream shortly. Michael is hearing that we are experiencing an influx of people coming into the city and seeking shelter. Charlayne mentioned the installation of a sign that states "no camping" in the play area at Cridge has been very successful. Children from the nearby daycare are making great use of the space, climbing over the log structures and having room to run around safely.
- Arts and Culture: Commercial Alley, located at Bastion Sq and Yates St. Call to artisans has been issued for a new art installation. Open space is doing that until the end of March. Michael attended an orientation session last Saturday. Approximately 45 people filled out applications. This is a modest project, so very encouraging and the level of expertise of applicants was high. We want to keep in touch, for future projects. There is a community mural project, 5 or sites. Doug asked if a business needs permission from city to add/ remove a mural. Charlayne said no, they could just go ahead, following the City's guidelines. The City's mural policy states restrictions on adding names, advertising. Michael explained "Graffiti Art". Michael said we don't always enforce on installs all the time, though technically it is restricted by our Graffiti policy. Would be good to find a channel for street artists. Not to allow tagging and graffiti, but distinguish between street art and graffiti.
- Strategic Plan Grants: The deadline to apply is March 31st. Kaela will follow up the opportunity to apply for funding for Victoria Matters Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation event. Look through the strategic plan and see where your interests are. There are many grants available for 2016. The intent of the program is to get the money out. Plans are to streamline process for smaller projects. Reminder, the program for neighbourhoods will be coming shortly. Could be place making, or what is deemed to be something to enhance our neighbourhood. The amount available is \$120,000.00. Michael said the City would like the funds spent in 2016. The city looks at the plan to be sure it is achievable, and City/staff will do all they can to help bring the plans to fruition. Robert asked if the

community garden would be eligible. Yes. Question from Doug: Would the grant be available to various community groups? Michael replied, “probably not”, however if you work with a non-profit that would most likely be ok. If a group wants to do something on their block, the city will endeavour to do as much as possible to see the project through to it’s completion.

- Question from Nicholas: What will be the upcoming storm water fee? Strata boards would like to add to annual budgets. Michael will follow up and get back to board.
- Question from Cathy: How far will the way finding plan extend? Michael replied that the coverage will be as defined by the Core Area Plan with special focus on downtown. Probably the main corridors coming into downtown will also be included.

5. Community Development Committee: Wendy

- **Next Roving Refinery:** The invitation has been posted on our site. Wednesday March 23rd, 6 - 8 pm. Location is Table 21 and Hilton Doubletree, 777 Douglas Street (formerly The Executive House). Guests will have an opportunity to tour the new renovated hotel, and sample items from the Table 21 menu. Feel free to share invitation with your neighbours. Charlayne challenged all to bring a new person.
- **Next Victoria Matters:** Kaela spoke regarding an update on the next Victoria Matters event. Not much to update at the moment. A meeting was held with Charlayne to set parameters on what we would be interested in, and what we could take to council. Charlayne has looked over the plan and will send on to councillor Marianne Alto. Marianne is best to be the lead, as she has very good connections, with the Chiefs of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. A lot is about relationship building, and this is already established. Kaela would like to meet with Marianne shortly. Joe Akerman and group will also meet with the CDC to discuss their plans and work with DRA.
- **Next meeting:** TBA

6. Urban Liveability Committee: Nicholas

- ULC met last Wednesday, Eric was unable to attend. Eric has tried to contact Grant Olsen about ULC working with DVBA .Nothing yet.
- Nicholas met with 3 members from Walk On,Victoria. Three main points were:
- The group was originally interested in joining the land use committee for the purpose of analysing and making comment on access and safety from the perspective of a pedestrian or building resident.
- Would like to be involved in new developments. Asked if they could add their email address to our land use mail-outs. An option would be to forward relevant development applications to one of the group. Robert had spoken to Sally Reid, chair of Walk On,Victoria and suggested to her that the time to look into issues is the beginning of the

process, not after the construction has started. Two members of Walk On, Victoria reside in downtown and are members of DRA. The board suggested that it would be appropriate for one of the group to join the LUC as an individual. Nicholas will get back to Sally with our comments.

- Nicholas suggested that if they had any issues of pedestrian safety or access in the downtown, the group should bring those issues to the ULC. The ULC could talk about and bring issues to the board.
- **Community Garden:** Nicholas received a request last week from Katie Hamilton to set up a meeting. On Monday 14th, Katie met with Janet, Nicholas, and Sarah regarding the proposed community garden. Katie stated that if we are ready to partner with the city and City Studio; the city would make a City owned plot of land on Yates Street available to DRA for at least 3 years. Previously, this land was the site of a dry cleaning establishment, leaving the ground contaminated. As the soil is contaminated, container gardening is the only viable option. The lot has been graded with crushed stone, and the city will install a water source next week. Possibly the Camosun Trades could build the structures. The formal announcement from the Mayor will be next week. The city will work with City Studio. Dr Sarah Wiebe from UVIC Political Science and Environmental Studies dept. is teaching a course on how to build an urban garden. This is a month long course is starting May 9th. Approximately 30 students will be involved. Hands on. Thurs Mar 17th at 1:30, a meeting will be held at Habit coffee/Atrium to discuss additional details. Greater Victoria Placemaking Network will send a representative. Virginie Lavallee-Picard, the city's food systems coordinator will attend. Nicholas to send out the invite.
- **Question:** Wendy asked for an update on the on-going issue of noisy motor-bikes. Eric has not been in touch VicPD lately. Nicholas will add to the agenda for next ULC meeting.
- **Next meeting:** Wednesday April 13th @ Veneto @ 5:30pm.

7. Land Use Committee: Ian

- Ian stated February was a quiet month. Two development meetings are scheduled for this month
- **534 Pandora Ave :** Lum Sam building. Lefevre & Co. Development variance permit application. Went to public hearing Mar 10th. No letter submitted from DRA.
- **534 Pandora Ave:** Lum Sam building. Heritage designation of property. Went to public hearing. No letter submitted.
- **533-537 Fisgard:** Lee Chong building. Lefevre & Co. Heritage designation of property. Went to public hearing. No letter submitted.
- **721 Government:** Empress Hotel. Bosa . Application for a permanent Change to Hours of food primary licence and liquor licence. Patron participation.

- **721 Government:** Empress Hotel. Bosa Developments. David Chang, Architect. Pre-CALUC meeting with LUC members regarding the old bus depot sites is scheduled for Mar 22nd, 7pm in the Library Room at the Empress. Extension to hotel, use would be long term stays/monthly rentals.
- **952 Johnson Street:** McCalls Funeral Home. Daniel and Stephen Cox, the developers, are requesting rezoning to allow retail and office use. No exterior alteration to the building. Variance request to number of parking spaces on site. CALUC meeting scheduled Mar 24th 6pm @ 952 Johnson St. Ian encouraged the Cox's to apply for a site specific zone, that took into consideration the existing height and dimensions of the building. Ian stated The McCall's building is being considered for inclusion on the Heritage registry as this is a John Di Castri design. Charlayne mentioned that the Victoria Conservatory of Music is currently using the McCalls parking lot on a temporary basis.
- **Biketoria update:** Ian shared his thoughts regarding the recent open house March 10th. Essentially there is a route structure put into place by the consultant. "Hub and Spoke". City core is the hub. The biggest issue is the budget of 7.2 million dollars, which won't go far. Suggestion was to prioritize, pick one route and complete. Connect the users with their destination. No permanent structures. City has just finished installing curb extensions on corners. Ian will draft a letter, submit to DRA board, and then forward to city.
- **CALUC process:** One meeting has been held. Fine tuning process. A meeting with UDI (Urban Development Institute) is scheduled for next week. A design Charrette will be put on by the Bastion Square, Ian will keep the board up-to-date.
- **Restricting Sheltering in Small City Parks:** Charlayne stated Fernwood sent in a letter regarding the parks that are being looked at for overnight camping restrictions. Cridge Park is in our area. Staff was asked to speak to the campers who would be affected by the restriction. The Aria & The Belvedere have received a form letter from the city for the strata and their residents to respond back to the city. Michael will send a copy of the form letter to Kaela. Kaela will submit to the board, and then to councillors/city.

8. Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN): Doug

- **Presentation by Victoria Micro-Housing:** <http://www.microhousingvictoria.com/> Presentation by Kristina Leach described their concept of modular homes, with common facilities and modular bedrooms that could house 6 or more people on a standard residential lot. What they need help with are finding suitable properties - they have some prospects but nothing firm as of yet. Kristina was going to forward a copy of the presentation to us, but I have not received. I will forward to the Board once I have it.
- **Discussion focussed on VCAN action items:** Discussion was focussed on Land Use planning matters, community engagement processes, and the role of neighbourhood associations. There were a lot of concerns raised that the city is not, in many cases, following the engagement policies as specified in the OCP. These are specified by IAPP

(International Association for Public Participation) guidelines. One action item agreed to was to draft a communication that the NA Boards could send to Mayor and Council, requesting that land-use issues other than rezoning and development permits, be in accordance with these guidelines and follow a CALUC type of process. An example of an issue that most felt was handled badly in this regard is Biketoria.

- **Next Meeting:** Tuesday May 10. Suggested discussion items were the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood plan, demolition of older houses, and job descriptions for neighbourhood coordinators.

9. Downtown Service Providers (DSP) update : Don

- Storage facilities for homeless' possessions mentioned already. Lots of discussion on Tent city, looking at next steps. Last meeting was Feb 23rd. Upcoming is a Replacement ID Clinic. Date TBA. Results of the Point in Time Count held in February will be available mid-April. Federal funded study. Will give a lot of the characteristics of the sheltered and the homeless. Specifically their city of origin, where people are coming from, how long they have been homeless. What specific support services are needed. Opportunity to see what other communities are doing. What is working and not.
- **Next meeting:** May 10

10. Business arising from minutes: Kaela

- Kaela will send a Top 10 wish list to the board to collect feedback.
- Wendy reminded us of the first Governance Committee meeting at The Drake, 5:30 pm, Monday Mar 28. Wendy, Nicholas, and Kaela will attend. All are welcome.

11. New Business: Kaela

- Charlayne asked if DRA would be interested in a permanent home in the downtown area, if one could be made available. Just looking for a preliminary poll of DRA board, before she looks further. A discussion was held. Charlayne will continue to explore options.
- Michael Hill announced that the **Bastion Square Revitalization Association** (the organization that looks after the Bastion Square market), are looking for people who are interested in being involved in the organization. Lots of money available. A design charette is already in the plans. Mandate is to revitalize the area. Meetings are casual.

Meeting Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Next Meeting: April 19, 2016, 5:30 pm, Songhees Room, Victoria City Hall