

DRA Board Meeting Minutes

21 February 2017

Location: Songhees Room, Victoria City Hall

Present: Nicholas Harrington, Ruth Annis, Robert Florida, Eric Ney, Kaela Schramm, Don Elliott, Paul Gandall, Megan Clark; City Liaison Mike Hill; City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe; Guest presenter Victoria Adams

Regrets: Ian Sutherland, Wendy Bowkett

Meeting called to order at 5:35pm

1. Guest (Victoria Adams)—“Home Truths: A Tale of Two Cities” (presentation on short-term rentals)

- More than 8,000 empty homes in GV, according to the census
- 55% of these are located in the downtown area—almost 15%, followed by James Bay and Vic West
- 25% of condo pool are rentals (about 3000, up 2% from last year)
- Almost 60% of homes are rentals
- Shortage of housing for students
- Displacement of long-term renters due to redevelopment, “renovictions”, vacation rentals
- More than 3000 Air BnB listings in GV, 1700 in City of Victoria
- Guest has recently launched a petition re: short term rentals
- Guest has written a paper on this topic—email her to receive it
- 74% year-round occupancy levels at hotels; this is high, but some hotels are being converted to condos
- Some developers are marketing condos as investments/short-term rental properties
- Lack of taxation, regulation of short-term properties is problem; plus congestion, security, negative impact on social fabric
- Average rent per night for a short-term rental is \$150/night (vs. \$33/night for long-term resident)
- 80% of short-term rentals are for the whole unit

- Prohibiting short-term rentals while encouraging guests to visit (and stay at hotels/ B&Bs) is Guest's goal
- DRA members have mixed experiences and thoughts on the topic of short-term rentals

Guest departs

2. Mike & Charlayne's report:

- Charlayne:
 - Short-term vacation rentals
 - Council held workshop on short-term vacation rentals
 - They received letters from people for and against and from key stakeholders
 - Issue is divisive but there are more in favour of limiting/prohibiting short-term rentals
 - There may be opportunities to find a compromise, e.g., allowing sub-letting when the resident is away on holiday
 - Zoning
 - Focused consultation is coming on draft zoning bylaw
 - The question will be: How well is the zoning matched to livability?
 - Cannabis
 - Shops are now coming to Council for rezoning (two on Yates St. have submitted applications at this point)
 - Decision of Council was to accept the application of first applicant (no date yet set for public hearing)
 - Second applicant is within 200m of the first one so will depend on whether first is approved
 - All rezoning will go to relevant neighbourhood association for comment
 - Additional police officers/ACT Teams
 - Supported by council as a pilot program for one year
 - Bike lanes
 - Updates available every 2 weeks
 - My Place Meeting/Our Place/Johnson St. Community Meetings
 - My Place scheduled to close March 31st

- \$54.00 honorarium collected at presentation to Humbolt Valley group was donated to the Yates Street Community Garden.
- Mike's updates:
 - Emergency preparedness workshop
 - Staff willing to do one tailored for downtown residents
 - Visual Victoria
 - March: open house presenting draft strategy
 - Plan will be finalized in late April
 - Great Neighbourhoods Grant Program
 - Renewed program coming based on input
 - Kick off event in late April is possible
 - Harbour Path update:
 - Council supported the two pedestrian bridges (although some discussion re: Heron Cove sustainability issues)
 - Staff to present overall plan to Council
 - Some councillors want to revisit length of pathway and name
 - Centennial Square:
 - Programming for the square: staff keen to develop
 - Play feature (contest open now)
 - Crystal Pool
 - Referendum process being designed
 - Task Force on Social Enterprise and Social Procurement
 - Survey closed
 - Plan will be presented to Council in March, avail online
 - Community Gardens:
 - Avail online
 - Public engagement roadmap
 - Workshop happened this weekend; was well-attended
 - Create Victoria (cultural policy)
 - Engagement just kicking off

- Cultural Cafe on March 4th, 11am-2pm
- Consultations throughout March
- Mid-June: opportunity for input on draft plan
- Training opportunities for Neighbourhood Assocs:
 - March: some opportunities
- Late Night programs
 - Multi-agency task force will be going out between 9:30pm-3:30am

3. CDC Update

- Understanding the Village: full-day training for two people would be \$100
 - Moved by Robert , seconded by Nicholas, motion carried
 - Megan would like to participate
 - **Action:** Email Kaela if you are interested in being the second attendee

4. ULC Update

- Centennial Sq. redesign: Nicholas working on something

6:55pm: Charlayne departs

5. Governance

- Deferred until March (Process of AGM; Recruiting/training board members)
- Don: Board Succession Planning and Role of Secretary
- Garden constitution and bylaws to also be presented in March
 - **Action:** Draft to be sent before meeting

6. Communications

- Moving hosted services: additional storage for the same price; shift has been made; some emails have gone missing so Nicholas has submitted a ticket

7. VCAN update: see agenda attachment

8. Business arising from minutes:

- Two steps to getting insurance: applying to Volunteer Canada (complete), applying for insurance
- **Action:** See agenda attachment for questions re: insurance coverage; if any directors answer “yes” to any of the questions, email Nicholas (**deadline: one week**)

9. New Business

- Volunteer Victoria survey
 - See agenda attachment
 - Would require filling out survey and then being interviewed for more specifics
 - **Action:** Don is willing to fill out survey
- Car Free Day
 - We'll do again
- Short-term vacation rentals
 - Issue for discussion/motion: Whether Chair would go forward to Council on issue of short-term vacation rentals
 - Eric has drafted some language re: short-term vacation rentals
 - “That the City of Victoria should treat the downtown core equally to other City of Victoria neighbourhoods in prohibiting short-term vacation rentals
 - Some DRA members do not feel fully informed on the issue; need more time
 - Thursday: opportunity to make input at Council meeting
 - Mike: Can the DRA provide Council some input that reflects any consensus between us?
 - DRA members seem to want more time to consider
 - Staff report that was presented during Jan 19th workshop is available
 - Don moves to table discussion, seconded by Kaela, motion passed (Ruth abstained)

Meeting adjourned at 7:41pm

In Your Neighbourhood

Visual Victoria

Victoria's downtown public realm plan and city-wide wayfinding strategy is proceeding to its final phases. The summary report from the second phase of the project is now posted on the [City website](#). A public Open House will be scheduled in March to receive comments on the draft plan. The plan will then be finalized for presentation to Council in late April.

Great Neighbourhoods Grant

In preparation for the 2017 [Great Neighbourhoods](#) grant program, City staff met with a group of grant recipients and neighbourhood groups on February 1 to discuss any suggestions they may have to improve the program. All of the great ideas that were brought forward were appreciated and in coming weeks, final recommendations for improving the 2017 program will be prepared.

Cannabis Retail Rezoning

At their February 16 [Committee of the Whole \(COTW\) meeting](#), Council opted to proceed with consideration of a rezoning application at 546 Yates Street and defer a later application from a second nearby location. Council also resolved that applications for rezoning under the Cannabis policy shall be forwarded to the Neighbourhood Association in which the subject property is located, for information and comments they may wish to provide.

Harbour Pathway Update

Council has directed staff ([February 2 COTW meeting](#)) to complete the two pedestrian bridges and the Heron Cove Special Place at Fisherman's Wharf and report back with recommendations for implementation on the design of the Johnson Street Bridge Underpass and Reeson Park Pathway. The Johnson Street Bridge Underpass design will be included in the 2017 Financial Plan.

Council also requested information on work required for the pathway overall and specific information on various sections. In addition, a closed meeting was called to discuss the name "David Foster Harbor Pathway" being defined as the section of the pathway extending along the harbour from Belleville to Ship Point.

Rezoning Bylaw

On February 16, Council received a report relating to an update of the zoning regulations for the Downtown Core and Historic Commercial districts of the downtown (red and brown areas on adjacent map). Council directed staff to "undertake focused public consultation on the draft Zoning Bylaw and related maps and to report back to Council by May 2017 with a proposed bylaw that considers the public feedback received prior to a Public Hearing".



Centennial Square

The City is seeking creative [proposals for program activities](#) for the community to enjoy in Centennial Square and Beacon Hill Park from May to September 2017. Event programmers are invited to submit the fillable application form available online and email it to culture@victoria.ca with samples of their work by midnight on Monday, February 20, 2017.

Submissions will be evaluated based on their appeal, creativity and the applicant's experience in

delivering successful programs to the community. Submissions will be reviewed by a City staff team and notifications completed in early March.

There is also a [design competition](#) open for creating a playful pop-up installation for kids of all ages in Centennial Square. A panel of qualified jurors will judge submissions based on the following criteria: play value, relationship to events, local context, robustness, feasibility. The jury's choice will receive a \$5,000 award and up to \$50,000 for the design, build and install an imaginative creation in Victoria's signature public square. The People's Choice will receive a \$1,000 award. Design packages must be submitted online by 4 p.m. PST on March 30, 2017. Installation will take place in early July to be enjoyed during the summer and fall.

Crystal Pool

Council provided direction for the future of Crystal Pool at their February 16 [COTW meeting](#). Project Update (#2): Crystal Pool Feasibility Study. Council approved funding to consist of \$10 million from the Buildings and Infrastructure Reserve and the remainder through a combination of external borrowing and other funding. Staff were directed to:

- Develop an implementation plan for a new facility to cost no more than \$69.4 million total.
- Amend the 2017-2021 Financial Plan for 2017 to include \$10 million towards the funding of the project;
- Develop a plan to use the referendum process as the method for placing the borrowing question before the electors, once additional funding opportunities have been explored
- Consult with citizens and stakeholder groups on the design elements of the future facility, in alignment with Council's decision on a facility option.

Update on Cycling Network Implementation

Staff provided Council a workshop on the implementation of Phase 1 of the City's AAA cycling priority network and future work moving forward. The workshop included a review of AAA design guidelines, an update on the current program status, and an update on the development of the overall program implementation plan which remains subject to further analysis and planning, while providing Council an opportunity to provide feedback. Council directed staff to report back in June 2017 with further cycling network updates and recommendations regarding sequencing, scheduling, resourcing and costs for completion of the network by 2022. [View the report](#).

Developing Social Enterprise

The Mayor's Task Force on Social Enterprise and Social Procurement would like community input into its draft [action plan](#) to help employ Victorians who are out of work and help grow a strong, inclusive economy. The draft plan includes recommendations to strengthen the City's procurement practices and maximise benefits to the community, small business and social enterprise. The online survey closed on February 12, 2017. Public input received will help inform a revised draft action plan that will be presented to City Council for consideration in March.

Community Gardens Map

We have just launched a new online Community Gardens [feature map](#). It includes information on existing community gardens and the revised 2017 land inventory for community gardening. To find out more about community gardens in Victoria, visit our [website](#).

Public Engagement Roadmap

In an effort to better understand how the community would like to be involved in City decision, a workshop was held on Saturday February 18 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Royal BC Museum. The [Roadmap](#) workshop agenda can be viewed [here](#).

Create Victoria

The City is developing a Cultural Policy and an Arts and Culture Master Plan branded *Create Victoria* to guide the City's investment in arts and culture over the next five years.

The public is invited to drop by the *Create Victoria Cultural Café* at City Hall on Saturday, March 4, 2017 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. to share their ideas on how they currently participate in arts and culture, their vision for a vibrant arts and culture scene and the role the City can play in providing support. The drop-in event will include live music, treats and arts activities for all ages.

To help measure the impact of arts and culture in Victoria, the community is also invited to participate in an online survey at www.victoria.ca/create until March 31, 2017. Pop up kiosks and a series of cultural cafés with sectors of the arts and culture industry will be coming up in March. The City will come back to the community in mid-June for feedback on the draft Arts and Culture Master Plan.

Training Opportunities

[Leadership Victoria](#) is a voluntary organization with a mission to develop leaders with a passion for building a vibrant community. In addition to a nine month Community Leadership Development program and sponsoring annual Victoria Leadership Awards event, they offer workshops and symposia for developing leadership skills. [Upcoming workshops](#) are three hours long and the cost is \$10.

- *Engaging Skilled Volunteers* – Wednesday, February 15 at 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- *Making Decisions to Make Progress: Improving Board Effectiveness* – Wednesday, March 8 at 9 a.m.
- *Board Governance: Being a Really Good Board Member* – Wednesday, March 8 at 1 p.m.

As part of [Volunteer Victoria's](#) mission to “inspire everyone to volunteer”, they offer training and networking opportunities that advance the quality of volunteer programs and build capacity in the non-profit sector. [Upcoming workshops](#) are three hours long and the cost is \$40-60.

- *The New BC Societies Act: The Basics* – Tuesday, February 21 at 2 p.m.
- *What Now that the BC Societies Act is in Force?* Thursday, March 2 at 4:p.m.

Neighbourhood Communications

It has been suggested that standard email addresses might ensure consistent communication from the City to neighbourhood associations. If neighbourhood associations adopt, for example, [Board@\(neighbourhood association\).ca](mailto:Board@(neighbourhood association).ca) and [CALUC@\(neighbourhood association\).ca](mailto:CALUC@(neighbourhood association).ca) as their designated email addresses for City communication, this would allow neighbourhoods to determine who they would like to receive communication and update the contacts as necessary without having to notify the City. Some neighbourhood associations have this in place. For those that don't, it may be something that you want to consider.

Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole will meet on February [2](#), [9](#), [16](#) and [23](#) at 9 a.m. and Council will meet February [9](#) and [23](#) at 6:30 p.m.