

# DRA Board Meeting Draft Minutes

18 October 2016

## Location: Esquimalt Nation Room, Victoria City Hall

**Present:** Board Members: Nicholas Harrington, Robert Florida, Ruth Annis, Erika Luebbe, Cathy Brankston, Doug Boyd. Victoria City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe. Victoria Downtown Community Development Co-ordinator Michael Hill.

**Regrets:** Ian Sutherland, Wendy Bowkett, Don Elliott, Kaela Schramm, Eric Ney.

**Meeting called to order:** at 5:40 pm by Nicholas. A quorum was established.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved with following changes: Item 8: Land Use Committee—Doug Boyd will speak. Item 10: Responses by Mike Hill—to be moved to before Item 9 (Governance).
2. **Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2016 Board meeting.** Approved with the following amendments:
  - Sect 4: City Liaison report: to read “DRA will be asked to review and comment on applications”
  - Sect 9: New Business: to read “The DRA group came together over the Bamboo Project proposal”.
3. **Councillor’s Report:** Charlayne Thornton-Joe
  - Charlayne has been attending many community meetings. Dealing with Our Place issues such as drug addiction, loitering. The City is putting pressure on Our Place staff to keep front area clean of needles, drug dealing, and loitering.
  - Central Care home/Portland Hotel site, neighbours concerns are being acted upon, and bi-monthly meetings with neighbours are continuing. Additional lighting added, fencing erected on next door vacant lot, and security staff duties have been enhanced. The condo neighbours have expressed compassion and concerns for the PHS clients, however the condo residents want a perception of safety and reality of safety for all. Consideration and respect is a two way street. Shelters are full, with a long wait list.
  - The extreme weather protocol kicks in on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, when many more beds will be open. Because of the huge windstorms last weekend, Our Place opened 24 hours per day, and provided a “warming station”—No mats, just places to sit. This enabled clients to come in to dry off and be under shelter.

- Camping and loitering at Reeson Park continues to be a large concern. Police and by-law are working to curb the camping, and encourage people to move along during daylight hours.
- Most calls are about addiction issues and the use of the drug fentanyl has caused many calls to police, fire and ambulance. This drug has caused the highest accidental death rate in BC. Our police force is seeing up to 3 overdoses a day, and the police and fire dept staff have emergency kits on board each vehicle. Naloxone nasal spray, provides life-saving treatment to people who have overdosed or to officers who have been accidentally exposed. The police and fire department have had training in order to assist ambulance workers. Police and fire are often first responders.
- In the media, Federal Government approving safe consumption sites is being mentioned more often, and Island Health has said they will make application to the Federal Government for safe consumption sites. This is not up to the City, however the City is making their needs known. Not one main site but several scattered sites. Internal services on site such as mental health workers, nurses, detox area in the buildings. One marijuana dispensary has been fined for going against the new by-laws.
- Next year will be Canada's sesquicentennial, its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Federal Government has given funding to several cities across Canada. Victoria's first planned celebration will be held on New Year's Eve. Large video screens will be erected. Fireworks will be co-ordinated across the country, all to be lit at the same time, approximately 9 pm for Victoria. Will have multi-cultural activities also, a fun family event. Festivities will be held in the Inner Harbour and Parliament Buildings. Former Victoria mayor Alan Lowe is the chair of "The Spirit Committee". Other committee members include members from the DVBA, the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Victoria, and City Councillors Charlayne Thornton-Joe, Margaret Lucas and Marianne Alto. Most events will be around New Year's Eve, Canada Day, Aboriginal Day, and Saint Jean Baptiste Day. A group will be hired to produce these events.
- Bike lane installations are proceeding. The goal is for the downtown area to be done before Christmas.
- Mayor Helps and Margaret Lucas are in China. Will be visiting the factory where sections of our bridge are being fabricated.
- Talk in the media about a park going in where the law courts are. Charlayne has made it clear to Mayor and council that this will not be a City initiative. The law courts site is not in downtown, and is owned by the Provincial Government. Downtown still needs a City park. Perhaps Centennial Square, Reeson Park, or Harris Green. Please send any suggestions to Charlayne. She does not want any City park to be deferred because of the law court proposals.

- A casino is not going into the Crystal Garden site. Provincial Government possibly will still consider the Apex site. Ruth has said their Humboldt Valley Committee has come up with many ideas for use of the Crystal site, which do not include a casino. The HVC has been attending council meetings to set forward ideas, not to overwhelm council, but to continue to have residents/business views heard.
- Ruth mentioned safe injections sites are most important to be full-service. Could the City ask the Health authorities to re-visit the idea of providing the drugs (e.g. heroin) to addicts? Vancouver had the “Naomi Project” some years ago. It was most successful. Drug dealers were off the streets, and a safe place was available with support services for addicts. Program was terminated by government bodies.
- Nicholas asked for info on the Central Care Home site, is it full? Yes. Mt. Edwards? 50 spaces are being used, re-zoning is required to house more clients. Wait lists of 150 people are in place at Choices and My Place for beds. The newest housing project at the former ‘Super8’ on Douglas Street will be open in November. Some clients could be moved from Central Care to make a better fit for some individuals.

#### 4. City Liaison report: Michael Hill

- The Visual Victoria project storefront at CityStudio (742 Johnson St.) will be open this Thurs Sept 20th from 3:30 till 7 pm to continue to gather ideas for improving downtown. Web site <http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/community/visual-victoria.html>. Also Twitter hashtag #VisualYYJ. Consultants are compiling results. Next round of stakeholder meetings will be held end of November. This is a four step planning process, expected completion March 2017.
- Budget consultations will be starting Nov 4<sup>th</sup>. A number of community town hall meetings are planned. Charlayne mentioned less people are attending meetings at City hall, however they do send many tweets and emails while watching at home.
- The City is working towards promoting festivities to continue for a month for each celebration. October being a Halloween and Harvest time theme. Tourism Victoria has added bats, witches, black cats, bat benches to downtown. And the flying witch attached to City hall tower, just a slight problem occurred during the last windstorm.
- New Government Street banners are being installed which will showcase significant people from across Canada. A federally sponsored program. **Wicked Victoria** will be held **Sun Oct 30<sup>th</sup>** noon to 5pm. See [gvfs.ca/wicked-victoria](http://gvfs.ca/wicked-victoria). A free family oriented event, parades, costumes, games, kids zone, and more. City’s Arts & Culture manager, Sarah Turner, is working with the event co-ordinators. DRA will be manning a booth. Stop by to say hi and find out more about DRA.
- Late Night Great Night: Charlayne requested update. New meeting Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. Agenda sent out to invitees. Will be looking over 2010 report, also the similar presentation

from last May. Eric Ney / DRA will attend. Charlayne will check to see which councillor will attend.

- Nicholas asked what is happening with the tree replacements, primarily Douglas St. Mike's info was sent onto Wendy, as she has been tracking progress. Nicholas will send report to all board members. Mike said there is a desire for different trees. The public realm plan will talk a lot about type, size, and characteristics of trees that are suitable for downtown. Charlayne mentioned Government Street Hornbeam trees are causing a lot of problems, they block lighting for sidewalks, heritage building architecture is being blocked, and signage is blocked.
- Ruth commented that the [Hornbeam] trees are a sculptural element on the street, look so impressive with winter lighting. She added that our City is devoid of good sculpture. Government Street looks good most of the time, but Douglas Street is a cultural wasteland. Needs an architectural form that is repeated and repeated. Needs street presence. DVBA had a plan for Douglas Street in the last charrette. Mike said tree canopy is not regular, and we don't have the lamp standards either that we can ornament. Goal is to re-enforce that Douglas is downtown's primary street.

#### 5. Community Development Committee (CDC): Nicholas

- CDC met on Oct 4th. Discussion of the poster was tabled as Doug was away. Graham offered to develop a blurb/catchy phrase to be used in the poster. Graham will forward to DRA for consideration.
- **Roving Refinery/DRA Social Club:** The DRA will try a Social Club event in late November or early Dec. A location will be chosen, and we will experiment with charging a \$5.00 non-refundable fee for tickets. If members show up, they will each get a complimentary ticket for 1 drink. No shows will forfeit their \$5.00
- CDC was successful on their application for a 2016 Strategic Plan Grant in the amount of \$3750.00 from the City. The money will be used for a Victoria Matters event series on Reconciliation and Decolonization. Plans are to proceed with a first session headlining Dr. Robina Thomas, associate professor at UVIC, in late Nov or early Dec. Kaela will follow-up with Dr Thomas. Charlayne mentioned that an event next year will fall in very well with the City's plans for "Year of Reconciliation"
- **Next meeting:** TBA

#### 6. Urban Livability Committee: Nicholas

- Yates Street Community Garden update: We received confirmation from Mike Hill that the garden has been awarded \$5000.00 (\$2000.00 of which was advanced in August) from the My Great Neighbourhood Grant. We received a \$500.00 Community Partnership Grant from VanCity. We continue to fill the raised planter

boxes from piles of soil on site, and have recently purchased two wheelbarrows to facilitate this task. Garden social media links: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/yatestgarden/>. Twitter: @YatesStGarden <https://twitter.com/YatesStGarden> email [yatescommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:yatescommunitygarden@gmail.com)

- Nicholas will contact the representatives of the Yes2SCS to attend a ULC meeting regarding supervised consumption services.
- The CDC has agreed to participate in the second annual Wicked Victoria event. Volunteers will be needed. Please sign-up when you receive the Doodle Poll.
- **Next meeting:** TBA

#### **7. Victoria Community Association Network: VCAN: Nicholas**

- Nicholas attended last month's Sept 21st meeting. The main topic of presentation was PlaceSpeak ([www.placespeak.com](http://www.placespeak.com)), a location-based public consultation platform. PlaceSpeak was introduced to the members by Bruce Cuthbert. In collaboration with the City, PlaceSpeak has launched a new free service, which allows residents to be notified online about proposed land-use changes in their immediate neighbourhood. Built off the data available within the City's Open Data Catalogue. Victoria is the first Canadian City with this service. PlaceSpeak will use its unique "geolocation" process to send notifications to residents who want to know what is being planned for their area. The City is considering using PlaceSpeak for general community consultation, but has not yet committed to doing so.
- Ruth mentioned a problem finding surveys on-line. Examples given were a BC Transit survey last summer. This survey was not distributed to interested stakeholders. Also the City's Parks survey was not widely known.
- Charlayne feels the staff liaison will help with this issue, and the City does send out reminders of surveys end dates. The Connect Newsletter is sent out to households. Mike mentioned many communications are sent out, perhaps too much. Mentioned the Visual Victoria site has examples, which participants found helpful.
- Nicholas will send out the draft board meeting minutes as soon as they are completed, in order to distribute more timely information.
- **Next Meeting:** Wed November 16<sup>th</sup>

#### **8. Land Use Committee: Robert**

- Robert said that the first application for rezoning had come to LUC for a medical marijuana dispensary. A discussion was held. The issue is a moral dilemma as this is an illegal activity. Robert will ask Ian to have a LUC meeting asap. Charlayne & Council recognize some of the same concerns that DRA has mentioned. A criminal police check, manager on duty are some of the requirements set forward by the

City. Charlayne suggested instead of a CALUC, LUC could send an official statement to outline LUC/DRA position. Victoria has had 2 cannabis compassion clubs for 25 years. The users are allowed consumption on site.

## 9. Responses to Questions Raised Last Meeting: Mike Hill

### Stormwater

- **Concern:** DRA members asked whether the storm water utility was still being implemented and whether there is any new information available.
- **Response:** Yes. Question addressed in October Update

### Marijuana Dispensaries

- **Concern:** Concerns were expressed by several members regarding the new bylaws. Questions revolved around whether the licensing would be restricted to medical marijuana providers and if the bylaw would be enforced.
- **Response:** 1. The City's regulations are for businesses selling cannabis for medical purposes. They do not legalize or permit the sale of cannabis; this is the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. 2. Monitoring and enforcement on bylaw requirements has begun. The Storefront Cannabis Retailer Rezoning Policy has received final approval from City Council. As of September 23, all pot dispensaries in the capital City must obtain a \$5,000 business license and pass a complex rezoning process, at a cost of \$7,500, in order to operate legally. The new rules include shorter hours, no on-site consumption, age restrictions and a ban on advertising. Dispensaries also must be at least 200 metres from schools. The most contentious requirement is a 200-metre buffer between each marijuana dispensary. Many of the approximately 40 marijuana storefronts currently operating within City limits are closer than that. If more than one dispensary meets the zoning requirements within a 200-metre area, the first through the rezoning process is likely to succeed.

### Late Night Task Force

- **Concern:** An update on the late night task force meeting, originally discussed in July, was requested.
- **Response:** The meeting is scheduled for November 1 at 3:00pm. Eric and Ian have been invited as requested by the DRA. Eric will attend.

### Transient Accommodation

- **Concern:** An update on the discussion relating to vacation rental properties was requested.
- **Response:** A report providing options for policy regarding short term vacation rentals which was requested by Council will be discussed at their October 27 Committee of the Whole meeting. There are currently no regulations specifically pertaining to short term vacation rentals outside of zoning and business licensing requirements.

## Neighbourhood Equity

- **Concern:** The DRA did not make a submission for funds to cover costs in the request from the City to identify costs which may have unfairly burdened the neighbourhood associations without community centres. Is it too late to submit something? Where will this go from here?
- **Response:** On September 23, background documents on the equity issue were sent to the Chairs. The Director of Finance has indicated that neighbourhoods can have until the end of September at the latest to submit a budget to support a request for additional funding.

## 10. New Business: Nicholas

- Earlier this year, the DRA sponsored a My Great Neighbourhood grant application by local artist Shawn Shepherd for the painting of his Shopping Bags Mural design at the back of the sushi restaurant at 940 Fort Street. We are pleased to announce that Shawn has been awarded the full \$5,000 that he applied for. The money will be issued to the DRA on his behalf if and when Shawn meets the project's other requirements.
- Nicholas and/or Kaela will meet with Mike and Shawn to go over terms and conditions, and sign a letter. Mike explained some City's grants are available to individual citizens, however they need to partner with non-profits such as neighbourhood associations to apply for the grants. The City would like the neighbourhood association members to be involved in these type of projects. Planning staff has been accommodating, working to help these type of projects to go through.
- **Reminder:** The Yates Street Community Garden's steering committee is looking for volunteers to assist on several working groups, namely: Grant Applications; Sponsorships & Neighbour Relations; Communications. Doug suggested we go beyond the board and ask members to participate. Listing specific tasks would possibly attract more helpers, i.e. fill boxes with soil on a certain date. Nicholas will approach the steering committee.

Charlayne and Mike left the meeting at 7:05 pm

## 11. Governance Notes: Nicholas

- Two new documents were introduced: "Board Member Code of Conduct" and "Lines of Communication & Authority".
- A cursory discussion was held regarding the document Board Member Code of Conduct. A suggestion was made to table Governance approval until all board members were present. Perhaps a separate meeting to discuss ongoing governance procedures. Agreement was reached at the September meeting to wait until all

documents were delivered. Some documents are straightforward. The last policy document is scheduled to be done Feb 2017.

**Meeting adjourned:** at 7:10 pm

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday November 15<sup>th</sup> 5:30 pm Victoria City Hall

## What is Happening in Your Neighbourhood?

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### Great Neighbourhoods Grants

On September 22, 2016, Council approved the first round of My Great Neighbourhood Grants. Of the \$120,000 available, \$97,630 was approved for 22 applicants across the city based on the applicants meeting conditions outlined for each proposal. Applicants have one year to complete their project. Most requests were for community gathering spaces, art and ornamental lighting, signage and additions to community gardens.

The five grant proposals for projects in the downtown include:

- Shopping Bag Mural – installation of a mural on the back of the building at 940 Fort Street
- Yates Street Community Garden – installation of planter boxes and a new gate and fence
- Edible Streetscape – installation of 12 food planters in the central downtown area
- Innovation Tree - installation of interactive lighting in the tree in the median at Humboldt and Wharf Streets - complete
- Mural at 1001 Government Street

The full report can be viewed [here](#). The next intake for Great Neighbourhood grants will be in the spring of 2017.

### Pandora Avenue Protected Bike Lanes

Construction on the Pandora bike lane began October 3. The project includes more than one kilometer of two-way, physically protected bike lanes with new bicycle traffic signals at each intersection.

The bike lane construction started in the 500 block of Pandora near Wharf Street and will progress eastward toward Cook Street. There will be several tree removals and replacements, temporary bus stop relocations and periodic travel lane reductions. There will be no construction taking place on the frontage of any retail business during the holiday season and the project is expected to be completed by spring, 2017.

### Visual Victoria: Downtown Public Realm and Wayfinding Strategy

The City has been working with the community to address how best to improve public spaces downtown and identify how to improve city-wide wayfinding to help people find their way around. Neighbourhoods may have routes or destinations that residents have an interest in promoting (e.g. historic walking tour routes). There may be wayfinding elements that don't work well or improvements that could be made. For example, neighbourhood associations may want to improve ways to direct people to the community centre and other amenities, or enhance the signage within neighbourhood village centres.

To ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for providing input, neighbourhood associations have been invited to a meeting specifically for neighbourhoods. The time, date and location will be confirmed this week.

Residents can also attend the ongoing drop-in hours at CityStudio (742 Johnson Street) from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons. Comments can also be posted through social media using [#VISUALYYJ](#).

For more information, please visit the [Visual Victoria](#) website.

### Storm Water Utility

Victoria has moved to a storm water utility billing process, similar to billing for water and sewer. The first annual bill be mailed in early October.

The storm water system helps to manage the rain and runoff in Victoria. It will reduce flooding by moving excess storm water away from properties and separate some of the oil, metals, sand and soil that would otherwise flow into our waterways and ocean. Previously, storm water charges were included in property taxes. The new storm water utility will reflect property characteristics that are associated with storm water runoff (e.g. area of hard surface). Separation of the charges will not result in an increase in revenue to the City.

The City is also offering financial incentives through the Rainwater Rewards program for property owners who are considering yard improvements to introduce methods for managing rainwater more sustainably. More information can be found at [victoria.ca/storm\\_water](http://victoria.ca/storm_water)

### **Downtown Zoning Bylaw**

City of Victoria staff are working to complete the draft Downtown Core Area Zoning Bylaw. This zoning bylaw would function as a stand-alone zoning bylaw for the Downtown Core Area, including administrative regulations, updated use definitions and new zones beginning with the Central Business District.

This work originally began in 2014 with several information sessions and an open house. Since then, staff have been working to complete the entire zoning bylaw, including an external legal review. The new bylaw is intended to provide up-to-date regulations and contribute to the implementation of the Downtown Core Area Plan. Staff are planning to present the draft bylaw and accompanying communications strategy to Council in November. This will include a request for direction to undertake focused consultation with the community, land owners, the development industry and other key stakeholders prior to a public hearing early in 2017.

### **Short Term Vacation Rentals**

A staff report requested by Council to provide policy options for short term vacation rentals will be discussed at their October 27 Committee of the Whole meeting. There are currently no regulations specifically pertaining to short term vacation rentals outside of zoning and business licensing requirements.

### **Bicycle Street Vending**

At their October 13 Council meeting, Council referred the following [resolution](#) to the next Quarterly Strategic Plan Update:

- (1) That Council approve the addition of the following 2017 Action to the Strategic Plan:  
“Consolidate and update the Street Vendors Bylaw to permit the licensing, operations and regulation of responsible bicycle street vending in the City of Victoria.”

Staff were directed to report to Council on the resource implications of this resolution, should it be adopted, at the update.

### **Small Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Bylaws**

Residents will now be able to grow and sell food throughout the city, provided there are no negative impacts to neighbours with unreasonable levels of odour, noise or artificial lighting. Bylaw changes were intended to allow the community to grow, harvest, package, store and sell a range of food anywhere in Victoria, while limiting any negative impacts on neighbours. This will include unprocessed food such as fruits, nuts, seeds, eggs and honey. For more information, visit [victoria.ca/growinginthecity](http://victoria.ca/growinginthecity).

### **Leaf Mulch**

At the October 13 meeting, based on a Committee of the Whole staff [report](#), Council approved consideration of a policy authorizing the distribution of mulch to the 15 existing gardens (including the allocation of funds to cover labour for delivery) at its budget meetings on October 24 and 26.

### Leaf Pickup

Victoria residents have two options for leaf collection - scheduled neighbourhood leaf collection and bagged leaves "call for pick-up" service.

For neighbourhood collection, City trucks will make one pass down each street after each deadline. For North Park, the deadlines are November 28 and December 26. The schedule is based on the expected leaf drop of the most common tree species, as well as consideration for neighbourhoods prone to flooding. Leaves can be placed in loose piles, secured by wire mesh rings, or in clear, 100% compostable bags. Do not use other plastic bags, boxes or containers.

The "call for pick-up" service will be in operation from October 17 to December 16. Victoria residents can contact the City's Parks office at [parks@victoria.ca](mailto:parks@victoria.ca) or 250.361.0600 to arrange for their bagged leaves to be picked up on the boulevard for free, within five working days. Leaves must be bagged in clear, 100% compostable bags.

The 2016 program details will be mailed to residents the first week of October. To view the 2016 brochure, visit the City [website](#).

### Medical Cannabis

At the September 22 meeting, Council approved a new bylaw which includes rezoning and business license requirements for medical cannabis businesses in Victoria. The new regulations are designed to reduce impacts on the community while maintaining access to medical cannabis. Under the new bylaw, all storefront cannabis retailers are now required to be rezoned for this use and obtain a business licence. Some of the rezoning requirements include a 200 metre distance between retailers, and between retailers and schools. Information about the new regulations is available on the City's website [here](#).

### Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole meetings are scheduled for October [20](#) and [31](#) and November 3 and 10 at 9:00 a.m. and of Council on October 27 and November 10 at 6:30 p.m. There will also be special Committee of the Whole meetings to discuss the 2017-2021 Financial Plan on October [24](#) and [26](#) at 8:00 a.m.

### Events

- Remembrance Day
  - Canadian Scottish Regiment Parade from Armoury to Cenotaph 11:40 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
  - Remembrance Day Ceremonies 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Closures on Belleville in front of Legislature, Wharf from Broughton to Government and Humboldt up to Gordon.

For more information, check [CityVibe](#), the City's guide to events in Victoria.