

DRA Board Meeting Draft Minutes

15 November 2016

Location: Songhees Meeting Room, Victoria City Hall

Present: Ian Sutherland, Wendy Bowkett, Doug Boyd, Erika Luebbe, Robert Florida, Kaela Schramm (co-chair, who jetted in from Vancouver for the meeting), Cathy Brankston, Eric Ney, Ruth Annis

Regrets: Nicholas Harrington, Don Elliott, Cathy Brankston, Michael Hill, Downtown Community Development Coordinator and Charlayne Thornton-Joe, City Counsellor, who arrived after the formal meeting was over for a brief discussion. See below.

Minutes Prepared by Robert Florida

1. **Called to order at 5:40 - Agenda Approved**
2. **Approved Minutes of Oct 18, 2016 board meeting**
3. **Presentation Greater Victoria Harbour Authority Canada 150 Lower Causeway Project:** Simon Renvoize of GVHA and Mark Crisp of Stantac presented a brief slide show outlining the relatively minor improvements being planned for the Inner Harbour Causeway for the Canada 150 year celebration. They mostly involve improved lighting, pavement, benches, and opening up of the area. Later in the meeting, under the Land Use Committee report, the Board agreed to prepare a letter to the City endorsing these plans. The Board appreciated their clear and succinct presentation.
4. **Questions or items for further discussion on Mike's downtown monthly report, which report is appended below.** Two items were discussed. (1) Downtown re zoning. Ian and Eric will meet with City planning staff who are currently working on revisions to the rules for zoning in the DRA area. (2) The City has apparently decided not to act to change the current rules on short term rental in strata residences at this time. Currently, it is pretty much up to the individual stratas to decide. Some of our Board members thought this was fine, others would like to see more regulation by the City.
5. **Community Development Committee: Wendy**
 - DRA Promotional Poster - Doug is working on this with the help of other DRA members
 - DRA Social: Instead of a Board Meeting in Dec, a Social is planned for Board and DRA committee members at Zambris on 13 December.
 - Vic Matters - Update - Kaela: No progress.

Next Meeting: T.B.A.

6. **Urban Livability Committee** No report
7. **Land Use Committee: Ian**
 - Empress Hotel - Porte Cochere proposal. Concerns that the proposed addition may violate set back regulation. Also need to be evaluated as to impact on this important heritage building.

- Empress Hotel - Redevelopment of bus depot. CALUC in December or January likely.
- Yates St Marijuana Dispensary. This was the first request for a rezoning hearing under the new city by law governing Cannabis dispensaries. See next bullet for discussion.
- **DRA Marijuana Dispensary Policy.** In spirited discussion, the Board agreed (1) that, due to concerns about the current illegal status of marijuana federally and provincially and the possible involvement of organized crime in supplying dispensaries, we decline to facilitate CALUC meetings for re zonings. (2) However, since the City is going ahead with the process of regulating said dispensaries, it is important that residents have the opportunity to make their opinions known. Therefore, we ask that City Staff organize CALUC meeting for these re zonings if they must proceed with them. (3) Furthermore, we suggest to the City Council that issuing temporary use permits is a much wiser way to proceed as such permits are administratively fast and simple and do not make permanent commitments to their recipients. Since the Federal and Provincial Governments are in the process of revising laws and regulations on this issue, rushing to granting permanent zonings is not a good idea. (4) Though it is too late, we lament the city's precipitous plunge into this morass. (5) Ian will draft a letter to all counsellors and mayor from the Board on this issue.
- Some members also thought the 200 meter rule for dispensaries was much too lenient, and noted that the Province may well develop another standard. Perhaps the eventual answer should be to make the legal, license, and zoning system for marijuana retailing parallel to the time tested system for alcohol.
- The board agreed to support the GVHA sesquicentennial renovations of the Causeway at the Inner Harbour. See #3 above.

8. 6:35 - Governance Notes: Wendy

- Policy Binder - Participation of board members on an ongoing basis.
- Ongoing Governance Procedures
- See the first row in the following column for a summary of this meeting's discussion.

Date	Owner	Board Self-Governance Policies		Status
Nov 2016	Eric	3	Recruiting, nominating, orienting & training board members	Eric presented a preliminary report at the Nov board meeting. Will present a full report at the next meeting.
Nov 2016	Don	12	Board development & succession planning	To be presented at Nov board meeting for discussion.
Jan 2017	Nicholas	2	Process of AGM	To be presented at Jan board meeting for discussion.
Jan 2017	Cathy	8	Role of executive member of Board: Secretary	To be presented at Jan board meeting for discussion.

Feb 2017	Erika	1	Process of policy making	To be presented at Feb board meeting for discussion.
Feb 2017	Robert	11	Governing style	To be presented at Feb board meeting for discussion.

Submitted				Status
July 2016	Wendy	5	Roles, responsibilities & functions of Board members	Awaiting approval of Item 3, to ensure they are complimentary, before being approved.
July 2016	Ruth	9	Role of executive member of Board: Chair	Approved.
Sept 2016	Kaela	6	Roles, responsibilities & functions of Committees	Edits and/or approval at Oct board meeting
Oct 2016	Doug	7	Board member code of conduct	Awaiting approval
Oct 2016	Ian	10	Lines of communication & authority	Approved (?)
Sept 2016	Karen	4	Roles, responsibilities & functions of the Board	Not completed

9. Finance Updates: Doug

Update on finances for Yates Street Garden project:

- Funds received to date total \$6500; \$5000 from the City and \$1500 from sponsor grants
- Expenses paid to date total \$2846; these are for pallets, box lines, soil and other items
- Balance is currently +\$3654

Some notes re the above:

- we are expecting an additional \$3000 from the city re the My Great Neighbourhood grant
- of the \$5000 received from the city to date, \$3000 is for a Neighbourhood Garden co-ordinator for 2016; to date there has been no expense paid for this
- We owe approximately \$1340 to Camosun College for materials for box construction
- Doug's synopsis: all is well.

Next meeting is Wednesday, November 16 - no agenda had been issued as of yet. Subsequent to the meeting Doug circulated minutes and some policy documents of interest to the DRA Board.

11. Business arising from Minutes:

- **Late Night Taskforce:** Eric attended a recent presentation. He reports that the City hopes to start this process up again.
- **Vacation rentals report update**

12. New Business:

Meeting adjourned at: 7:20

Date of next Meeting: 13 December. A social meeting at Zambris for the Board and Committee Members.

At approximately 7:21 Charlayne arrived from her previous meeting. There was about 15 minutes of discussion, with two major points. (1) Charlayne announced that VIHA has selected three properties to propose to use as Safe Consumption sites for drugs as a harm reduction matter. One is next to Our Place on Pandora and will be open for all. One is in the Old Central Care home on Johnson St. and will be for residents only. And the last will be in Rock Bay near the shelter. There will be two public hearings, one downtown and one in Rock Bay. (2) Ian, primarily, outlined our concerns about cannabis dispensaries as reported in item 7 above. Charlayne listened carefully, asked good questions, and expressed a great deal of interest in the use of temporary usage permits rather than permanent rezoning. Our letter will follow shortly.

The Post-Meeting Meeting dissolved around 7:35.

Appendix:
November 2016 Downtown Update

In Your Neighbourhood

Centennial Square Fountain

Council has requested a report from staff with regards to the Centennial Square fountain, its heritage designation, and options for use of the square. The report is also to consider the context of other pending action items relating to Centennial Square, including:

- Permanent washroom facilities;
- Children's play feature / work of art;
- Consideration of naming as Lekwungen Square.

Street Vendor Bylaw Amendment

Council has also directed staff to report back at the next Quarterly Update on the implications of amending the Street Vendors Bylaw to accommodate downtown merchants to sell wares directly in front of their stores.

Late Night Economy

Representatives from the Downtown Residents Association attended a meeting to review the status of the City's Late Night Strategy. Transportation, public safety and disturbance, liquor service and public health and the development of the late night economy were the themes discussed. While no urgent concerns were expressed, a number of opportunities for improvement were identified. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss next steps.

New Web App for Accessing the City

On November 4, the City launched ConnectVictoria, a new smartphone app. ConnectVictoria will allow residents to search for jobs, latest news, media releases, events, contact information and submit a service request through their mobile device. The service request function will also allow residents to report potholes, street light outages and other issues right from the app. Residents can take a picture of the issue, pinpoint it on a map, and submit directly to staff from their phone.

The app is available for both [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

Community and Seniors Centre Annual Report

Council moved to receive the 2015 Community and Seniors Centre Annual Report at the [November 10 Committee of the Whole meeting](#). The data presented the report is intended to provide Council with a sense of how the contributions of each local community centre, together with City financial support, combine to provide a wide range of programs and services to residents.

Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan

Neighbourhoods have been invited to a workshop on Saturday, November 19 from 1 - 3 p.m. at McPherson Playhouse. The purpose will be to engage with fellow residents, City staff and the consulting team to explore topics such as social spaces, play spaces, health and fitness amenities and natural areas in Victoria's parks. This will be an important opportunity to explore the draft actions in more detail and help us determine what should be prioritized.

Neighbourhood associations are asked to RSVP to engage@victoria.ca and indicate whether representatives will be attending. Some other options for participating in the process are to:

- [Take the online survey](#) before Monday, December 5.
- Spend your lunch hour in the POP-UP PARK! on Friday, November 18 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. have some fun on your lunch in Centennial Square
- Stop by the Open House and POP-UP PARK! on Saturday, November 19 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Centennial Square and McPherson Playhouse. Bring the whole family to share your feedback and play in the POP-UP PARK.

For more information, including the draft Vision, Goals, Objectives and Actions please visit www.victoria.ca/parks.

New Urban Food Tree Pilot Program

Residents, through a community organization, can now apply to plant and maintain up to five fruit and nut trees in a local green space. The City will work with the community organization to find suitable locations. Trees must be planted from October to November. Learn more and apply to be a Tree Steward at www.victoria.ca/growinginthecity.

2017 Budget

Public input into the 2017 Budget has begun and will continue through November. The proposed budget totals approximately \$224.5 million and the draft capital budget is roughly \$51 million, resulting in an anticipated 2.91% increase for property tax and utilities combined. Citizens will be able to provide feedback via online survey, and the consultation period will culminate in a Town Hall / E-Town Hall on December 1. For more information, please check out the webpage [here](#).

Garden Suites

Residents interested in building a garden suite (carriage houses and laneway suites) on their property will no longer need to apply for a rezoning. While a development permit will still be required, it will no longer require Council approval. Simplifying the approval process for garden suites is an action of the Victoria Housing Strategy which aims to provide more affordable housing in the city. The City will seek feedback from the Community Association Land Use Committees, members of the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability, and groups that provided input into the Task Force work before presenting the updated bylaws to Council. Read the report [here](#).

Spirit of 150 Victoria-First Night Celebration Receives Canada 150 Funding

Downtown Victoria will be the place to be on New Year's Eve for *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night*, a major kick-off event to launch Canada's 150th anniversary year in 2017. Event planning is now underway for the City of Victoria to host a family-friendly, multicultural, live stage show, complete with food vendors and spectacular fireworks on the eve of Canada's 150th anniversary year.

Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night will take place on Saturday, December 31, 2016 from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Victoria's Inner Harbour, the traditional territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees People. Fireworks will be timed with those across the country, with large screens simulcasting Canada 150 First Night festivities, creating a true coast-to-coast celebration. More details will be available in December.

Visual Victoria: Downtown Public Realm and Wayfinding Strategy

The first phase of this planning process, where the community contributed their interests, issues and ideas, is now complete. The project team is currently in the process of developing directions for the plan based on this input. The next public session will be held on November 30 from 6p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the McPherson Theatre. Invitations have been sent to neighbourhood associations and updated website information has been posted. Residents can also learn more about the project at City Studio at 742 Johnson Street from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursdays *by appointment*.

The Downtown Residents Association also sits on the Stakeholder Committee, which will be meeting on December 1 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the same location.

Comments can also be posted through social media using #VISUALYYJ. For more information, please visit the [Visual Victoria](#) website.

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 east 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. The project is expected to be completed by Spring, 2017.

Short Term Vacation Rentals

The City is considering options for the regulation of short-term vacation rentals in Victoria as a means to increase residential rental stock. Currently there are thought to be approximately 300 AirBnB units in the city. An external study concluded that adding these 300 units back into regular rental stock might increase vacancy rates to some degree, but would not likely improve affordability. To allow for further discussion on the topic, staff will facilitate a workshop on short term vacation rentals with Council in January 2017 prior to any future policy considerations. Read the report [here](#).

Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole will meet November 17 and 24, beginning at 9 a.m. A Council meeting is scheduled for November 24.