

DRA Board Meeting Minutes

19 April 2016

Location: Songhees Meeting Room, Victoria City Hall

Present: Board Members: Ruth Annis, Wendy Bowkett, Ian Sutherland, Kaela Schramm, Eric Ney, Nicholas Harrington, Cathy Brankston, Erika Luebbe, Doug Boyd, City Councillor Margaret Lucas, City Downtown Community Development Coordinator, Michael Hill.

Regrets: Karen Gallagher, Don Elliott, Robert Florida.

Meeting called to order: at 5:35 by Kaela.

1. Approval of agenda. Approved by Ian, second by Wendy. Nicholas added one item under new business.

2. Approval of minutes of 15 March 2016 meeting. Approved after discussion.

3. Approval of minutes of 16 February 2016 meeting. Tabled.

4. Councillor's report: Margaret Lucas (Charlayne was unable to attend).

- Margaret is council liaison for James Bay and shares duties with Charlayne for Downtown/Harris Green. Margaret is prime for business issues in our area.
- James Bay Neighbourhood Association hosted a meeting last week with the developers from the Empress Hotel. Conceptual plans, basically a block design of new building on previous PCL bus site. Inside and outside building restorations/renovations. Emphasis on restoring outside gardens along Belleville St to bring the public back to the Empress and give everyone an opportunity to walk through the grounds.
- DVBA has planned a second annual Car Free YYJ Day on June 19th, along Douglas Street from Chatham to Courtney. Website www.downtownvictoria.ca. Volunteers needed. Six hours of entertainment, have fun, chance to meet with neighbours. DRA will host a booth. Car Free Day organizers want used bicycles to erect an innovative bike sculpture along Douglas Street. Tentative plans to donate bicycles to Habitat afterwards.
- DVBA has narrowed selection of a new executive director and is expecting the chosen candidate to start by June.

- Open Space, 2nd floor, 510 Fort Street, will present Civic Heritage Trust 50 Years of Revival on May 24th. Special Old Town Reunion moderated by Martin Segger.
- Tourism Victoria reported an 80% hotel occupancy in Victoria for the month of March, an all-time record. Amazing media coverage in Vogue Magazine and Toronto Star “Why Victoria should be your next Weekend Getaway”.
- Jocelyn Jenkyns, Deputy City Manager, is compiling a report on Airbnb. Significant concerns regarding the loss of affordable housing. This report will cover all of Victoria, however Downtown and James Bay are most affected. San Francisco has come to agreement with Airbnb to charge assessments to create a more level playing field with hotels.
- Downtown “Friday Night Street Party” was discussed. Security, safety, garbage collection were the biggest issues.
- Tent City on Provincial property was also discussed. Portland Hotel Society has been brought in to live and manage site 24/7. The key objective is to transition people to housing by September. Regional Director, Roger Butcher from BC Housing is involved in discussions. Question was “will there always be more moving in as current people are placed in housing”. Yes. Many of the original occupants have been given accommodation at My Place and Choices. Significant amount of unemployed workers are moving from Alberta to Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton, and Victoria.

5. City Liaison report: Michael Hill

For complete details of Michael’s report, “Downtown April Update”, see pages 7-12

- Biketoria cycling path report is scheduled April 24th.
- DVBA’s Douglas Street project introduction has been deferred to just before the May long weekend. This will be the kick-off to our public realm plan and way-finding initiative. Fresh new look. Tenders out right now.
- This Thursday, Committee of the Whole will decide on a bylaw amendment regarding overnight sheltering for 4 parks. Report is on-line. A very strong response from neighbours and neighbourhood associations.
- New art installation on Centennial parkade staircase. Yates Street parkade will have an interactive art display soon.
- Earth Walk is being held on April 23rd.
- Times Colonist 10k run Sun April 24th.

- MEC Bikefest will be held from 10am - 4pm on April 30th (website: events.mec.ca).
- Ship's Point Pop-Up design contest coming soon. A DRA board member is on the jury.
- Community land use process meetings are continuing.
- BC Transit priority bus lane meeting tomorrow April 20th.
- JSB public realm update, work will proceed with continued community discussion.
- City's new security firm Footprint Security (www.footprintssecurity.com) will be responsible for commissionaire's duties and Late Night...Great Night! security. Mandate is a focus on customer service, more supportive, not policing. Moving around town more.

6. Community Development Committee: Wendy

- The last Roving Refinery was held at the Hilton Double Tree's Table 21. A smaller turnout than usual.
- Wendy has canvassed many businesses to host coming events, however all visited were not interested at this time. Busy season is starting, so September would be a better fit for all. Options are a rebranding, with more promotion on our website, twitter, and Facebook to reach out to more downtown residents. Perhaps charging a nominal fee, that we could then donate, would ensure attendance.
- Regarding the "Party in the Parklet" that was proposed last summer, but ultimately postponed, we should relook at planning this event before September. Mike suggested another location for an event could be the empty parking lot beside the Italian Deli on Blanshard.
- **Victoria Matters update:** Thanks to Kaela for submitting the Strategic Planning grant application. Meeting scheduled for Tuesday April 26, 5 pm at City Hall with Charlayne and Marianne to plan event and decide which other community partners should be invited

Next CDC meeting: 5:30 pm, Thursday May 5th at The Drake

7. Urban Livability Committee: Eric/Nicholas

- The last meeting took place on April 13th, and was attended by Nicholas and Eric. Going forward with the "Pipe Down" campaign was the sole topic of

discussion. Eric advised that he does not have the time to coordinate the initiative, and therefore will poll the DRA board to assess who is interested in committing to proceeding. Marketing material and a plan are needed. The latest conversations with police were last spring. A discussion was held. Doug suggested reaching out for volunteers through social media.

- **Update on downtown community garden:** The city made the official announcement last week. No official name has been chosen as yet. The Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, City Studio Victoria, City of Victoria and the DRA are involved. The Steering Committee is comprised of 5 members. Nicholas Harrington, Janet Strauss, and Bronwyn from the DRA, Donna McKenna and Zinnia Clark from Cool Aid. Meetings are held weekly. The committee has met with Katie Hamilton and Virginie Lavallee-Picard from City of Victoria, and Sarah from the University. Discussions were held to implement a basic management structure, questions and answers to introduce into the course material. The university course is scheduled May 9 - May 30. The garden would then be turned over to DRA. Nicholas will send an expression of interest request to Katie to secure insurance coverage. Nicholas has also applied for a strategic plan grant.

7. Land Use Committee: Ian

- **952 Johnson St: McCalls Funeral Home.** Daniel and Stephen Cox. CALUC meeting took place March 5th. Subsequently, new information from the city stated only a special use permit was required, not a CALUC. Rezoning will be required eventually. The heritage designation should be completed before then.
- **721 Government St: Empress Hotel. Bosa.** Pre-CALUC meeting with LUC members took place March 22nd regarding development of old bus depot site. Conceptual design. Simple massing. How to fit in with the neighbourhood. Ruth mentioned Humboldt Valley Committee concerns at the CALUC meeting. She stated that the Bosa architect then met her at the Humboldt Valley condo sites, and took many pictures from different floors. A meeting is scheduled with HVC and Bosa this Thursday April 21st. Ian and Wendy will attend.
- **CALUC process review:** 2nd meeting April 6, next meeting April 20th. Ian explained that every 5 years this process is looked at. No significant changes. UDI (Urban Development Institute) is working separately with city staff on the process review.

- **Biketoria update:** Ian sent a letter to the city outlining DRA's concerns, such as: the proposed routes on Government Street, the planned extension of the Government Street Pedestrian Mall to Pembroke Street, commercial loading requirements on Government Street, emergency vehicle access in light of the proposed single lane of traffic on Fort Street, lack of proper traffic modelling. The letter suggested that the City 'pick one route and build it end to end'. Margaret mentioned she has heard significant concerns from other neighbourhoods. The report comes forward from Biketoria to the City's engineering department, who then give their recommendations, in consideration of input from the neighbourhoods and the consulting group. There will still be significant consultation after the initial report. Not one group has said they don't want a bike route.
- **Proposal: Protecting Victoria's Character Homes:** A discussion was held. DRA does not have very many character homes/heritage properties. Decision was made to ask to be invited to the Fernwood or Rockland neighborhood presentation.

8. Governance Committee Update: Wendy

- **New DRA Statement of Purpose:** BC's new Society Act dictates that a society's constitution must only consist of the society's name and its statement of purpose. The Governance committee proposes the following draft statement of purpose for consideration by the DRA Board of Directors: "*The purpose of the Association is to provide a collective voice for residents of the Downtown and Harris Green neighbourhoods to create and promote a desirable urban living environment within the neighbourhood boundaries as defined by the City of Victoria*". A discussion was held. Nicholas moved that the phrase "to create" be replaced by "in order to create". A motion to adopt the draft statement of purpose, as amended, was voted on and passed.
- **Next meeting:** TBA

9. Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN): Doug

- VCAN last met on March 8th, and details of that meeting can be found in the March 15, 2016 board meeting minutes.
- The next VCAN meeting is Tuesday May 10th. Suggested topics include the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood plan, demolition of older homes, and job descriptions for neighbourhood coordinators.

10. Downtown Service Providers (DSP): Tabled

11. Business Arising from Minutes:

- Ruth spoke on the outcome of the recent transit terminal proposals, both the BC Transit terminal, and that of the Douglas Street commercial buses terminal on. The option chosen was the original proposal that came to the city. There are no increases in the number of buses, just the routings were altered. Approximately 500 buses a day. Some options were a great concern to HVC and Ruth said the area greatly appreciated the level of support from DRA. 150 people attended the HVC meeting. Ruth mentioned the bus route options went from 1 to 5 at one point, was not widely advertised, and caused some upset. The Commercial bus terminal will be on Douglas Street, in front of Crystal Gardens and the BC Transit stop was moved to the north end of the block. The City has stated that this is an 18 month trial. A suggestion from HVC to not take all buses into James Bay was given to transit and city officials. Transit seems to be interested in pursuing a further change. This would significantly reduce traffic through James Bay. Most buses do not have stops in James Bay. Broughton Street could be a better street for a route change.

12. New Business:

- Car Free Day 2016 June 19th 11am-6 pm: DVBA has hired Sarah to run program. DRA's application for a booth is in. Applications will be reviewed in the next few weeks. No certainty until payment is received. Wendy will monitor approval and then send out a shift schedule. Will need volunteers for 2 hour shifts, set-up, and tear-down. Requested west side and a little further from the stage. Nicholas suggested that perhaps we could borrow a pyramid garden, which would help us promote our new community garden. Nicholas or Eric will follow-up.
- Wendy asked if our annual base grant application has been sent to the city. Doug, as treasurer, will follow-up. Usually an email is sent to DRA, nothing received so far.
- **Brianne Czphyha**, Stormwater Management Specialist, City of Victoria Engineering and Public Works, will present the City's Stormwater policy to the DRA at our next board meeting. Time will be allotted for Q&A.

Meeting adjourned: at 7:15 pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 17, 2016, 5:30 pm, Songhees Meeting Room, City Hall

In Your Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood Block Party

On March 14, the City hosted a “Neighbourhood Block Party” at the Da Vince Centre in Vic West. After a keynote address on the importance of getting to know our neighbours, participants sat down together to identify places they love, community gathering space and active streets in their neighbourhoods. The resulting map will be made available for further exploration of ideas for projects in the neighbourhood.

Back Up Beepers Downtown

In response to a request from the Downtown Residents Association, Council approved a [motion](#) presented by Councillors Thornton Joe and Lucas that “...Council direct staff to report at the next quarterly update on the resources needed to: Explore what other cities are doing, whether there are policies that the City can implement and whether there are other costs needed to have this considered.” Beepers can be disruptive to residents and technology now offers options to address this nuisance sound. Initial discussion suggested that changes with municipally owned vehicles would likely proceed while broader changes in senior government policy are pursued.

777 Herald Street Approved

At their April 12th meeting, Council authorized the issuance of the Development Permit with Variances for 777 Herald Street, in accordance with plans date stamped January 24, 2018 and ensuing the ongoing provision and maintenance of the sky garden. The building will be Victoria’s highest at 26 storeys.

930 Fort Street and 515 Chatham Street

At their April 19 meeting, Council will be considering a [report](#) recommending that Council instruct staff to prepare the necessary Zoning Regulation Bylaw Amendments that would authorize the proposed development outlined in Rezoning Application No. 00593 for 930 Fort Street, that first and second reading of the Zoning Regulation Bylaw Amendments be considered by Council, and a Public Hearing date be set once stipulated conditions are met.

A [report](#) relating to the construction of a five-storey, mixed-use building containing ground-floor commercial uses and residential units above will also be considered.

Great Neighbourhood Grants

The program is open only until April 15, 2018. Please review the [guidelines and application form](#) online and contact City staff to finalize your application. In the Downtown neighbourhood, there are currently applications in the works for a bee pollinator awareness event at the Yates Street garden and a community outreach project from the DRA..

Garden Micro Grants Awarded

On March 22, Council approved awarding of [Micro Grants](#) (\$500) to [all applicants](#). Micro grants are intended for eligible community groups delivering a service or program for volunteer coordination of commons and community gardens. This included a grant to the Victoria Disability Resource Centre for the Yates Street Garden site.

New Victoria Fire Hall and Emergency Operations Centre

A new Victoria public safety building will be built downtown under an agreement reached with local developer Dalmatian Developments Limited Partnership, a Jawl Residential and Nadar Holdings Ltd. venture. The state-of-the-art, post-seismic rated facility will be located on Johnson Street as part of a new

mixed-use development adjacent to Pacific Mazda. BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) has agreed to lease 3,200-square-feet of space from the City to operate a stand-alone facility for paramedics and four ambulances. The agreement is subject to the developer bringing their overall project through the rezoning process, which includes the construction of the new public safety building. Learn more [here](#). Council approved allocating \$35.9 million from the City's Debt Reduction Reserve in the 2018 - 2022 Financial Plan for the project.

Fort Bike Lane

Opening of the new [AAA bike lane](#) on Fort Street is planned for late May. Consideration is being given to a celebration of the opening following a trial period to identify any fine-tuning required.

Gorge Waterway Update

In early March, the BC Supreme Court ruled that the City of Victoria has the authority to regulate the Gorge Waterway. Last year the City sought an injunction to require owners to remove their vessels and docks that were illegally moored in the waterway. As a result of the ruling, vessel and dock owners must remove their property from the Gorge Waterway by May 7, 2018. Learn more [here](#).

Poems for the Planet

Celebrate Earth Day with *Poems for the Planet* on Sunday, April 22 from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in Centennial Square with free poetry readings from Yvonne Blomer and guest poets who will express their climate change concerns and passion for Southern Vancouver Island and the Pacific Ocean through poetry. Featured poets will include Marilyn Bowering, Stephen Collis, Marlene Grand Maitre, Heidi Greco, Anne Hopkinson, Tim Lilburn, Garth Martens, Wendy Morton, Kyeren Regher, Chris Smart and Christine Walde. Dancers Nikko Snow and Dyana Sonik-Henderson will perform in response to Bruce Cockburn's "False River," a poem commissioned by Yvonne Blomer. The event is hosted by the City of Victoria with the support of the League of Canadian Poets. www.victoria.ca/poetlaureate

Call for Entries to 2018 Victoria Book Prizes

Submissions are now being accepted for the 2018 Victoria Book Prizes that consist of the \$5,000 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize and the \$5,000 Bolen Books Children's Book Prize. Celebrating its 15th year, the Victoria Book Prize Society's annual fall awards gala showcases the literary achievements of authors and illustrators who make Greater Victoria their home. www.victoria.ca/bookprize

Hello New, Goodbye Blue

The new Johnson Street Bridge opened to traffic Saturday, March 31, following an official opening and community celebration event. Lane closures on the new bridge are scheduled for Monday to Wednesday (Apr 16-18) from 9am to 4pm to facilitate removal of the old bridge. The project is fully completed later this summer. View a video recap of the bridge replacement [here](#).



Arts Hub in Downtown?

On April 5, Council received a [report](#) summarizing an exploration of a new potential use for the former Provincial Courthouse at 28 Bastion Square. In fall of 2017, the Arts Consultant Group (ACG) was retained by the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) to examine the viability of the building as a



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downtown arts hub. Based on research and data gathered during the Create Victoria engagement process and additional engagement undertaken by the ACG Group, they recommend moving ahead with a project plan for 28 Bastion Square to become a self-funded, shared arts space for the arts, culture and creative sector.

Downtown Victoria Business Association

The DVBA will be presenting their [annual report and budget](#) to Council on April 19.

Parkade Rates Increase

In order to provide incentives to improve parking accessibility, Council has approved an increase to rates for parkades to take effect June 1, 2018. Daily maximums will go to \$16 at all parkades except for the Bastion Square parkade, which will go to \$17.50. The staff report can be viewed [here](#).

Capital Projects in the Downtown Neighbourhood

City staff will be presenting information on the 2019 capital budget and requesting local knowledge on transportation projects at the Downtown Residents Association April meeting. The following projects are currently scheduled for 2018.

Have Your Say: Victoria's Draft Climate Leadership Plan

The Climate Leadership Plan is Victoria's road map for the transition to a prosperous, affordable, sustainable and low-carbon future. It includes short and long-term strategies and actions to help the community get to an 80% reduction in Green House Gas emissions by 2050, while transitioning to 100% renewable energy. The City will be hosting a number of community workshops in the coming weeks to allow you to share your ideas and feedback on the plan.

Low-Waste Living, Wednesday, April 18, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Antechamber, City Hall. Register [here](#)

Community Workshop, Wednesday, April 25, 5 – 7:30 p.m. Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas Street. A light dinner will be provided. Register [here](#) by Wednesday, April 18

Business Workshop, Wednesday, May 2, 7:30- 9:00 a.m. Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas Street. Learn about what the Climate Leadership Plan means for your business and how you can be involved. A light breakfast will be provided. Register [here](#) by Sunday, April 28

To learn more and to share your feedback online visit Victoria.ca/climateaction

Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole meets April [5](#), [19](#) and 26 at 9am. Council meets April [19](#) and 26 beginning at 6:30pm. Residents can attend meetings or watch them online. Note that the April [12](#) Committee of the Whole meeting was rescheduled so that Council could attend the funeral of Chief Andy Thomas.