

# **DRA Board Meetings Minutes**

## **June 11, 2019**

**Location: Esquimalt Nation Meeting Room @Victoria City Hall**

**Time: 5:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

**Board members:** Paul Gandall (chair), Ruth Annis, Dianne Flood, Ian Sutherland, Matthew Yee, Nicholas Harrington

**DRA Members:** Wendy Bowkett

**City Council Liaison:** Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe

**City Staff:** Mike Hill

**Guests:** Jenny Farkas, President, North Park Neighbourhood Association

**Regrets:**

**Board Members:** Doug Boyd, Sandra Severs

**Call to Order/ Introductions/Approval of Agenda**

Paul called the meeting to order. Jenny Farkas, President, North Park Neighbourhood Association, was introduced and welcomed. The agenda, as circulated, was approved.

**Approval of the May 12, 2019 Minutes**

The minutes were approved.

**Downtown Update:**

Mike's report is attached to the minutes. No significant questions were raised.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

**1) Discussion of the MGNG 2018 deliverable**

Assistance in implementing grant was requested, and Dianne agreed to assist Paul.

**2) Truth and Reconciliation Grant**

Dianne reported that the committee proposed approaching the Victoria Film Fest to explore sponsoring a film by First Nations director or featuring First Nations actors or issues, either by way of financial support to bring in additional such films or to sponsor a speaker or panel for discussion of a proposed VFF First Nations film. The committee also wants to proceed with a sign for the Community garden, acknowledging it is located on First Nations land. The Board gave their approval in principle with Dianne undertaking to bring the two projects back to the Board in the fall for approval before any expenditure of funds is committed.

**3) North Park NA Proposal for Greater Integration**

Paul and Jenny, as respective Association presidents, proposed they would attend each other association's Board meetings for a few months, to get a better sense of common

issues and how greater integration might be of value and could work. The Board approved this proposal.

Jenny reported that NPNA is planning a charrette for the 900 block of Pandora, which is on the border with the Downtown Harris Green neighbourhood, and also that they have requested a meeting with the Mayor that the DRA may want to participate in.

**Action: Paul is to follow up on both of these items and also inform Sandra as the DRA representative on the 900 Pandora Block Community Group.**

#### **4) Crystal Pool**

Paul led discussion about the possibility, raised by some councillors, of construction of the replacement of Crystal Pool on either the grounds of Central Middle School (on Yates Street) or at 950 Kings Street. Discussion included the issue of equitable access of all citizens, and especially disadvantaged citizens, to city recreation and other regional resources. The 950 Kings Street location was identified as too far for ease of access by the ever increasing population in the downtown.

Jenny reported that NPNA continues to favour the parking lot of the SOFMA, with Royal Athletic Park a reluctant second choice. They are concerned why the SOFMA discussions broke down without the City indicating the reasons for that, and why the City recently re-negotiated the RG Properties lease until 2042, making the use of that parking lot more problematic.

**Approved:** To support NPNA in their efforts for additional disclosure of the negotiations with RG Properties regarding the SOFMA.

## **New Business**

### **1) Liquor Policy**

Mike Hill made a presentation on the City's undertaking to develop a liquor policy. A leading consultant in best practises has been hired to consult with stakeholders, including residents and the hospitality industry, and to develop a policy for council's consideration that will include late night issues and public safety. That work is underway, with Ian reporting he had a good one-hour meeting with the consultant where he raised the DRA's issues of residential conflicts and loud and disruptive late night activities. An interim report is expected in late summer for feedback, and a report to council is expected in the fall.

Mike also presented a May, 2019 Review of the Downtown Late Night Program, showing amongst other things that most people generally feel safe downtown at night.

Questions were raised about the sample of persons canvassed and whether that influenced the statistics presented. Mike acknowledged the sample was limited to persons who were out in the downtown in the late night and for that reason may not reflect the broader population. Comments were made that people who did not feel safe out at night downtown would have been automatically excluded from the survey and that Council and others should be made aware of that impact on the survey results when the Review is presented to them.

## **2) Harris Green Village**

A major re-development in the area between Yates and View Streets and between Quadra and Cook Streets is being proposed. The developer is holding some initial consultations with residents in the area to seek their input.

## **3) Web Site Administrator**

After many years of very diligent and very efficient work, Erika has handed over the reins of web site administrator to Doug Boyd. Much appreciation for Erika's hard work and years of contribution to the DRA was expressed.

**Action: Approval was given for the purchase and presentation to Erika of a token of the DRA's appreciation.**

## **Councillor's Report**

The Art in Public Spaces project has been launched, with banners and bus stop art now in place. A reach out was made to Our Place and Cool Aid to identify for some of those artists. An artist in residence will soon be announced.

Allowing horse drawn carriages continue to be a topic at council, despite the operators meeting all of the concerns expressed by the BC SPCA.

Closing Government Street to pedestrian traffic only was being discussed with the affected business owners. It was noted that this had been fully discussed at a city sponsored charrette only a few years ago and nothing happened as a result of that charrette. Limited city financial resources was identified as a barrier to much happening.

Street and social issues such as boulevard and park camping were on the rise as a result of the spring/summer closure of shelter beds. The proposed bike path plaza at Pandora and Vancouver is an issue for many local residents who are concerned it will only exacerbate existing issues in that area.

Permission for the demolition of the Plaza Hotel as a result of the recent fire was being sought, with the possibility of salvaging some historical features being explored.

The Centennial Plaza re-fresh and Ship's Point are being put on hold, with more citizen engagement being looked for, and with the lack of money dedicated to undertake these being an issue.

## **Questions on Standing Committee Reports**

### **1) Land Use Planning (LUC)**

Inclusive Housing policy: Ian reported on the apparent on-going lack of consideration being given to DRA concerns that the proposed policy will have the opposite effect to that intended and will reduce the availability of affordable housing. The proposed policy will significantly reduce the contribution to Community Amenity Contributions for the Downtown Harris Green Neighbourhoods, which are already too low and provide little or no amenities to our increasingly densified area. Additionally, redirecting that money

to housing is not permitted under the provincial legislation, as housing is not identified as a community amenity.

**Action: The LUC should continue to make the DRA's views on this issue known to council.**

Plaza Hotel: Ian noted that the OCP amendment to allow increased density on this site was given in exchange for preservation of heritage features which will no longer be possible. Given this, council should rescind that extra occupancy, now rather than later when the developer comes forward with a new plan without those heritage components, but based on the increased density.

**Action: The LUC should send a strongly worded letter to council identifying this issue.**

**2) Urban Livability Committee (ULC) - No report**

**3) Urban Ecology/Urban Agriculture Committee (UEC) - No report**

**4) Communications/Membership Committee (CMC)**

The question of attaching the committee reports to the minutes of Board meetings was given some preliminary discussion. Issues raised included increased transparency and enhanced communications with members, especially considering the move to a question and answer Board meeting style. Balanced against this was whether that requirement might place too heavy a burden on committee chairs and could result in less fulsome reports. Consideration of this item was tabled for a time when the full Board could discuss it.

**5) Community Development Committee (CDC) – No report**

**6) Governance Committee (GC) - No report**

#### **Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

**1) Budget Committee (CBC) - No report**

#### **External Meeting Reports**

**1) Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN)**

**2) 900 Block Pandora GNA -No report**

**3) Late Night Action Committee (LNAC)**

**4) Downtown Service Providers (DSP)**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:?? p.m.**

**Next Board meeting – July 9, 2019**



# June 2019 Update Downtown

## In Your Neighbourhood

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### Point Ellice Bridge

The [Point Ellice Bridge](#) is now closed to vehicle traffic in the eastbound direction (towards downtown) until approximately the end of October. The closure is necessary to safely complete comprehensive upgrades to the bridge.

The \$6.1 million project includes repairs to the concrete deck, rust protection of the steel, resurfacing the bridge deck and stripping and painting the steel on the underside of the bridge. Changes will be made to traffic signal operations at the adjacent Johnson Street Bridge to help accommodate the increased traffic.

Pedestrian and wheelchair access will be maintained during the project. Eastbound cyclists must dismount and walk their bikes across with pedestrians. Full bridge closures are not planned, but may be necessary on occasion during the project.

### Horse Carriages Downtown

Council recently discussed a [report](#) and resolutions presented by Councillor Isitt proposing that a schedule for phasing out horse carriages by 2023 be developed. As an alternative, investigation of opportunities for “e-carriages” was suggested.

Council decided to bring the prospective motions below back to Council for discussion after hearing from a delegation from the BCSPCA presents to Council at a future Council meeting.

The deferred motions were: that Council refers the following resolution to the next Quarterly Update, with staff providing information on the resource implications of proceeding with the action outlined

1. That Council amends the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 to include the new 2020 action: “Develop regulations to phase out commercial horse-drawn carriage operations on city streets by 2023, providing adequate notice to operators, employees and members of the public.”
2. The Council encourages collaboration between industry, the City and provincial regulators to pursue innovation in electric-powered vehicles for hire, to provide ongoing and enhanced opportunities for experiential tourism, employment and economic development.
3. That Council refers the recommendations in the letter received by Council on May 28, 2018 and July 25, 2018, to staff to inform revisions to regulations and policies between now and 2023.

### Bus Shelter Art

Downtown bus shelters are showcasing new artworks by local, emerging artists in the City’s Commute exhibit. The selected artists were chosen by a jury made up of persons identifying as Indigenous or multicultural. The chosen artworks were created by an artist with a disability, an artist who was recently without a home, Indigenous artists and artists of colour. The six artists include Aviv Talya Dekel, Sarah Jim, Andrea Fritz, Neil McClelland, Anup Singh and Joshua Ngenda. The artworks will change every four months and run until May 2020.

### Late Night Policy

Work is beginning on a city alcohol policy. The City of Victoria does not currently have a consolidated liquor policy. In June 2018, the Late Night Advisory Committee recommended to Council that the development of a policy would help provide guidance for the evaluation of liquor-related decision-making (e.g. liquor licence referrals) and managing the late night economy. The work will be completed with the assistance of the [Responsible Hospitality Institute](#) (RHI), world leaders in best practices for managing and developing late night economies including Edmonton where they shaped that city's successful approach to the late night management. An interim report will be complete by late summer with project completion in the fall.

### Growing in the City

On June 6, Council received a [progress update](#) on Growing in the City (GITC) Programs. Since 2016, the City has increased its resources and implemented several actions to assist community-led food systems projects. These include introducing new granting streams, hiring a Food Systems Coordinator and providing in-kind support to community gardens. In consultation with community groups improvements were recommended and approved by Council. These include:

- Expanding City grant eligibility
- Piloting a City-built allotment garden
- Piloting City-sponsored distribution of gardening materials
- Investigation of the re-introduction of the "Sharing Backyards" program
- Supporting access to agricultural water rates
- Establishing food system targets and outcomes

### Neighbourhood Grants

At their June 13 committee meeting, Council will consider a staff [report](#) recommending approval of Great Neighbourhood Grants. These included three grants in the Downtown Harris Green neighbourhood:

- Food for Thought planter boxes from the Food Eco District Restaurant Society
- Inner Harbour Storytelling from the DVBA
- Walk On Film Night from the Victoria International Film Festival Society

### Equity and Crystal Pool

At their June 6 committee meeting, Council received a presentation from the North Park Neighbourhood regarding the application of equity and affordability analyses in consideration of a future Crystal Pool Facility. Councillors sponsoring the presentation stated at a previous meeting that Strategic Plan objectives support this direction and proposed measures to instill an equity and affordability lens into broader City decision-making. Council deferred a full discussion on their thoughts on the presentation to their [June 13 meeting](#).

### Inclusionary Housing Policy

At their June 13 committee meeting, Council will consider a staff report recommending adoption of the Inclusionary Housing Policy and a request for Council determination of:



## June 2019 Update Downtown

1. the project size threshold at 40 or 60 units
2. the proportion of cash-in-lieu CACs allocated to municipal reserve funds that support:
  - a. affordable housing at: 70% or 50%
  - b. local amenities at: 30% or 50%

### Plaza Hotel Demolition

At their June 13 committee meeting, Council will consider a staff [report](#) recommending elements of the Plaza Hotel to be retained as a condition to the owner's demolition permit.

### Summer Camps

Another summer of fun and adventure is planned for kids and teens! Find out about the many types, times and locations of summer camps offered through Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre. Included this year are kayaking, sailing, horseback riding, computers, farming, robotics, soccer and even surfing. Click [here](#) for the camp flyer.

### Council Meetings

Committee of the Whole meets on June [6](#), [13](#), 20 and 27 at 9am. Council meets on June 13 and 27 beginning at 6:30pm. Residents can watch recordings of the meetings [here](#).