

**VICTORIA DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**MINUTES OF THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Via ZOOM**  
**February 9, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**Board members:** Paul Gandall (chair), Doug Boyd, Dianne Flood, Nick Harrington, Dale Dearing, Sandra Severs, Mathew Yee, Ian Sutherland, Ruth Annis

**DRA members:** Cathy Brankston, Andy Wachtel, Heike Reiter, Leslie Welsh, Michael Demakiling, Pamela Madoff, Wendy Bowkett

**Guests:** Councillor Geoff Young (Council Liaison), Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe, Mike Hill (City Staff),

Paul Gandall, President of the Downtown Residents Association, thanked everyone for attending and acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen speaking people, known as the Songhees and Esquimalt.

**Call to Order and Declaration of Quorum** – Paul Gandall welcomed those attending this AGM via ZOOM and called the AGM to order at 5:35 p.m. A quorum of voting members was evident.

**Approval of Agenda** – As there were no objections or additions, the agenda was approved as presented.

**Minutes of the 2020 AGM** –As there were no objections, the Minutes were approved as circulated.

**Report from the Chair-** Paul Gandall gave a brief overview of the DRA's work in 2020 highlighting the challenges of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges, the committees of the DRA continued to support the broad range of interests and issues of concern to the neighbourhood communicating via social media and newsletter to residents of the neighbourhood. He highlighted the development of a new website. The Yates Street Community Garden continues its valuable work of strengthening food security for those living in the Downtown. The Land Use Committee worked tirelessly on behalf of the Downtown tracking and commenting on redevelopment proposals. The Urban Livability Committee focused on the plight of those displaced from services during the pandemic. The Association remains in a healthy financial position.

Paul thanked Councillor Thornton-Joe for her years of support of the DRA and welcomed Councillor Young who now replaces her as Council Liaison. The contributions of outgoing Board member Ruth Annis and Mathew Yee were also acknowledged with thanks.

**Report from the Treasurer** – Mathew Yee presented the Treasurer’s Report of the 2020 Financial Statements and proposed budget for 2021.

**Motion: To approve the Treasurer’s Report and proposed budget for 2021.**

**Moved:** Mathew Yee                      **Seconded:** Doug Boyd                      **CARRIED**

**Committee Reports:** These were all posted on the DRA website for review by the membership prior to the meeting.

The Committee Reports were approved as presented.

**Presentation of New Website-** Dale Dearing, Chair of the Community Engagement Committee, walked members of the DRA through an on-line demonstration of the new site which is set to go live by the end of February. The goal in moving to a new site was to make the website less static and more dynamic so that there would be opportunities provided for people to be involved in the work of the DRA. At the present, 90 percent of the content has been migrated from the old site. New opportunities like calendaring and blogging are available in the new design. The first phase launch at the end of the month will give board members and residents an opportunity to explore the features of the new site and evaluate their use. Further changes will be made in response to feedback.

**Nominations of Board members:**

**Motion: That Sandra Severs be appointed a Director of the Board, term to expire 2024**

**Moved:** Paul Gandall                      **Seconded:** Dianne Flood                      **CARRIED**

**Motion: That Dianne Flood be appointed a Director of the Board, term to expire 2024**

**Moved:** Paul Gandall                      **Seconded:** Doug Boyd                      **CARRIED**

**Motion: That Michael Demakiling be appointed a Director of the Board, term to expire 2024**

**Moved:** Paul Gandall                      **Seconded:** Nicholas Harrington                      **CARRIED**

There were no further nominations from the floor for positions on the Board of Directors. Dianne Flood, Chair of the Governance Committee, encouraged those who were attending the AGM to stay for the Board meeting and to consider joining the work of the DRA.

**Other business and questions from the Floor:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association  
Treasurer's Report  
January 1 to December 31, 2020**

**Prepared and presented by Mathew Yee**

**Victoria DRA AGM  
Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

In accordance with the Victoria Downtown Residents' Association (DRA) Constitution, the following Report, Financial Statement and Budget have been prepared for the Annual General Meeting for the review of the Membership. The details are attached following the report.

This is the 16<sup>th</sup> reporting year for the DRA, since the Society became a financial entity on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. The DRA's fiscal year end is December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Total revenues for 2020 were \$10,571.06, compared to outgoing expenditures amounting to \$3,192.95. Significant contributors to the difference was the city providing a base grant of \$8,464.00, slightly more than double the expected amount of \$4,129.00; itself derived from a per capita funding model based on the 2016 census. Grant increases went towards residents' associations which do not have a community centre, of which the DRA is one of. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic curbed normal outreach efforts throughout the 2020 calendar year, significantly reducing expenditures.

The single largest expenditure for 2020 was a \$2,520 for re-development of the DRA's website. Based on timing, this expense has been split into two payments of \$1,260, for the 2020 and 2021 budget years. Funds for this effort came from a 2019 Great Neighbourhood Grant of \$5000, originally intended to fund the creation of a mobile information kiosk. After consulting with the city, the board elected to re-purpose those funds. Other major expenses were insurance and various membership fees.

The DRA is holding various other funds from previous years. These include a 2020 City of Victoria grant for \$1,220.00, to be used for a Crisis Intervention Workshop. In 2016, the DRA received \$3,750.00 to hold events related to Truth and Reconciliation. \$1,177.00 of that money remains unused. These funds remain allocated in the 2021 budget.

The DRA is currently applying for a Strategic Grant from the City of Victoria, to be used for piloting a Community Outreach Program. If successful, the DRA intends to "top up" the grant with \$4,000.00 from existing funds. This amount will also be shown as allocated for 2021.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the balance in the DRA's main bank account was \$28,907.13.

**Yates Street Community Garden**

The Yates Street Community garden continued to develop in 2020. Primary revenues for this project were comprised of a Community Garden Volunteer Grant from the City (\$10,000) and Membership

fees (\$2995.00). Primary expenses were for Contract Services (\$10,000) and for materials, furniture, tool rentals, administration and web site (\$2626.43). The balance in the Yates Street Community Garden bank account as of January 1, 2021 was \$10,162.71.

**Victoria Downtown Resident's Association**  
**Statement of Income**  
**January 1 to December 31, 2019 compared to 2020**

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>
Annual Base Funding	4,129.00	4,129.00	8,464.00
Membership fees	385.00	400.00	280.00
Interest	5.45	5.50	1.06
Committees (Activities & Events)	1,663.16	1,600.00	0.00
Insurance Reimbursement	606.00	606.00	606.00
Crisis Intervention Workshop Grant	0.00	0.00	1,220.00
CALUC Reimbursement	500.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>7,288.61</b>	<b>6,740.50</b>	<b>10,571.06</b>

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>
General and Administration	1,480.73	1,250.00	476.17
Liability Insurance	768.00	768.00	808.00
External (gifts)	0.00	100.00	170.24
Kiosk Project (re-purposed for website)	0.00	5,000.00	1,260.00
CALUC Meetings	500.00	0.00	250.00
Committee Activities	4,146.11	4,500.00	228.54
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>6,894.84</b>	<b>11,718.00</b>	<b>3,192.95</b>

<b>Net Income</b>	<b>393.77</b>	<b>-(4,977.50)</b>	<b>7,378.11</b>
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**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association  
Budget for Fiscal Year 2021**

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>
Annual Base Funding	8,464.00	8,464.00
Membership fees	280.00	300
Interest	1.06	5.00
Committees (Activities & Events)	0.00	1000.00
Insurance Reimbursement	606.00	606.00
Crisis Intervention Workshop Grant	1,220.00	0.00
CALUC Reimbursement	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>10,571.06</b>	<b>10,375.00</b>

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>(\$)</b>	<b>(\$)</b>
General and Administration	476.17	1,250.00
Liability Insurance	808.00	808.00
External	170.24	100.00
Kiosk Project (re-purposed for website)	1,260.00	1,260.00
Kiosk Project (2019) remainder	0.00	2,480.00
Crisis Intervention workshop (2020)	0.00	1,220.00
Truth and Reconciliation (2016)	0.00	1,770.00
Community Outreach pilot ("top up")	0.00	4,000.00
CALUC Meetings	250.00	0.00
Committee Activities	228.54	1000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,192.95</b>	<b>13,888.00</b>

<b>Net Income</b>	<b>7,378.11</b>	<b>-(3,513.00)</b>
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**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association  
Land Use Committee Report  
09 February 2021**

The DRA Land Use Committee (DRA LUC) continued to meet throughout 2020 and offered input into various rezoning and variance applications as well as several City-based initiatives within Downtown Harris Green.

Despite the global pandemic, the pace of new development applications continued throughout 2020. In all, sixteen significant projects were presented to the public and reviewed by the DRA LUC. The development projects we've been asked to participate include:

- **1106 Blanshard St, Montrose Winter Garden Hotel** – David Fullbrook with D'Ambrosio – Rezoning for Site Specific Zone and Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment for Core Business area density. Proposal is to develop NW corner of Blanshard and Fort. Project proposes 20-storey tower for Airbnb-style hotel. Density requested 6.16:1 from 3.0:1 and requested height of 65.5 m from 43.0m. The density calculation for this application is unconventional in that it will include the separate adjacent property to the north, The Montrose Building, which will be designated heritage but not seismically upgraded. The Montrose will be maintained with residential above small Commercial Retail Units (which are being renovated as vacancies arise).
- **611 Chatham St – Nicola Wealth Real Estate** – Development Permit with Variances for proposed 5-floor, 274-unit market rental residential with ground floor commercial on 1.5 acres over 9 lots facing Chatham, Herald and Government Sts. Variance for height requested from 15m to 17.34 m for Herald St and 15.81m for Chatham.
- **1045 Yates St, Harris Chrysler (Phase 1)** – Starlight – Development Permit with Variance concurrent with a Rezoning Application related to area of 4.9 acres over two sites. Proposal includes: 5-storey podium with 19 & 21 storey towers with a 6:1 FSR. Rental for 510 residential units, including 6 (3BDRM) townhouses and 436 onsite parking stalls & 654-bike parking.
- **900-block Yates (Market On Yates & Harris Green Village) between Quadra to Vancouver and Yates to View, as well as the eastern half of the 1000-block Yates (mid-block to Cook)** – Starlight – Rezoning and OCP Amendment for two sites on the south side of Yates between Quadra & Cook: 1.35 hectare full 900-block Yates and the 0.63 hectare eastern half of the 1000-block Yates, 1045 Yates. Proposal includes: 5-storey podium with 27, 28 & 32 storey towers with a 6:1 FSR.
- **1314 Wharf St, Northern Junk** – Reliance Properties – Rezoning for the redevelopment of existing heritage buildings and 47-unit residential with ground floor commercial, mixed use addition, concurrent Heritage Alteration with FSR 3.36:1.
- **550 Pandora** – Chinese Freemasons Housing Society & M'akola Devt Services with Architect Alan Lowe – Rezoning with an OCP Amendment for a 5-storey, 36-unit affordable rental apartment building with 2 ground-floor commercial retail units. Proposed FSR 3.62 above 3.0 permitted with height of 16.17m above 15m permitted. Creation of affordable housing units will be funded by BC Housing but operated by Chinese Freemasons Housing Society.

- **1150 Cook St, Pluto's** – Dan Robbins & Fraser McColl – Development Permit with Variance for a 16-storey (47.57m) over the 10-storey (30m max) market rental building with an FSR of 7.78:1. The proposal includes 129 residential units above ground floor commercial space, 41 parking spots, and 143 bike spots.
- **975 Pandora (Seventh Adventist Church)** – Townline – Rezoning and Building Permit for 121 residential rental units in 4-storey podium and 15-storey tower at 5.46:1 FSR with ground floor commercial. Vehicle parking at 118 meets and exceeds requirements as does bike parking at 240. There are also 125 storage lockers.
- **749-767 Douglas, Apex Site** – Telus with Aryze – Rezoning and an OCP amendment to increase density to construct a new office building with ground floor commercial uses. Proposal is for a 53.21 m office tower with 127 parking stalls (below the required 221) and 140 bike spots (136 required). Currently the OCP prescribes a maximum density of 4.0:1 on this site. The applicant is seeking an increase in permitted density to 5.57:1 and an increase in permitted height from 45m to 53 m.
- **1244 Wharf St, Yates Block** – Robert Fung & Cascadia Architects – Rezoning to allow for hotel use. No additional storeys requested for this Heritage Designated building. Also, Heritage Alteration with Variance application for substantial rehabilitation of the site through the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of exterior and extensive reno of interior. Proposed renos include creation of 22 residential units on the upper two levels with related storage uses below Wharf St, reno of the existing commercial retail units at the Wharf St level, and the creation of new harbour facing commercial retail units at the lower two levels.
- **579-585 Johnson St** – Hartwig Industries w Studio 531 Architects – Development Permit with Variance. Two massing studies have been debated between stakeholders. Both within the 3:1 density allowed in the Old Town zone but both would exceed the 15.0 m height limit. Stakeholders have voiced different points of view for approaches to the treatment of existing buildings and new development within one of the most intact blocks of heritage properties in Old Town while also conforming to Old Town guidelines and policies.
- **504 Herald, Herald St Brew Works** – Mike and Lee Spence – Development Permit with Variance: Applicant seeking a permit to construct a rooftop patio with an occupancy of 99 additional liquor primary seats; bringing total occupancy to 277 from the previously approved 178. Anticipated use is not included in this application, only construction.
- **937 View St** – Nelson Investments w de Hoog & Kierulf – Development Permit with Variance to build an 18-storey, 267-unit market rental tower with zero vehicle parking but 307 bikes spots on R48 land and located in Fort St Heritage Corridor using pre-fabricated components. Proposed FSR 7.95:1. The applicant is not proposing to rezone away from the R48 zone but is requesting a height variance.
- **1010 Fort St:** Abstract Developments – Rezoning for the development of a 13-storey building with ground floor commercial and 55 residential units above with 7 vehicle parking and 97 bike parking spots. Proposed FSR 5.37.
- **1124 Vancouver:** J. Gordon Enterprises – Rezoning to construct a six-storey rental apartment building. Proposed density of 3.25:1. Two CALUC meetings held to discuss proposed development but applicant was unable to provide comprehensive relevant



information at either meeting. The third CALUC was postponed until the information is complete and the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed and supports the project.

- **1312 Broad, Duck Block** – UVic Properties/Chard – Rezoning, Development Permit and Heritage Alteration for 6-storey 139-unit hotel with ground floor commercial with FSR 4.0. Includes an OCP amendment for a very significant increase in density offside of the Official Community Plan maximum densities for Old Town and best practices of Heritage Conservation but Staff has relieved the applicant of the requirement for an OCP amendment for this application.

Despite the large number of development applications, the DRA LUC also focused on major City of Victoria initiatives relevant to land use in which the LUC was involved, including:

- **Bicycle Master Plan** – 2020 Project Designs and Network Update relevant to Government Street North route. On 09 Jul 2020, staff assured mayor and council that the design plans for Govt St North bike lanes will be complementary to any future development of the Pedestrian Mall.
- **Downtown Core Area Plan Review** – The DRA LUC members have participated in several workshops to identify potential improvements to the Downtown Core Area Plan. Proposed amendments are to be brought to Council in early 2021
- **OCP Amendments** – and promote a policy for the City to not support OCP Amendments without a compelling rationale.
- **Meeting with Karen Hoese, City of Victoria, Director of Planning** – In light of revised public consultation process related to current state of emergency, discussed need for improved information sharing through Development Tracker, need for more accurate and comprehensive information on Public Notices, timing challenges between delayed delivery of Public Notices and deadline for feedback to the City, consider basic staff review of applications for technical specifications prior to proceeding to public for comment, need planning staff reports to apply consistent DCAP and OCP policies and guidelines across all projects with more objectivity showing how projects do/do not conform to DCAP, OCP and Heritage conservation principles.

The DRA LUC also reviews Liquor License and Storefront Cannabis applications. To guide the response to all Liquor License applications, the committee applies the DRA LUC Late Night Food Primary and Liquor Primary Policy that was developed and ratified in February 2020. On this topic, the committee provided input on the following applications and initiatives:

- 1140 Government – The Churchill Pub
- 510 Pandora – Swans Pub
- 1150 Douglas, Bay Centre – Seed and Stone/Songhees Nation Cannabis
- 901 Gordon – Seed and Stone/Songhees Nation Cannabis
- 1400 Quadra – Clarity Cannabis
- 504 Herald – Herald Street Brew Works
- The City-led creation of a Municipal Alcohol Policy for Downtown Liquor and Late Night that was deliverable in 2019 remains outstanding and the LUC awaits its completion and approval by Council.

The bimonthly DRALUC meetings to discuss Land Use Policy, current land use applications, and City-initiated projects were discontinued in person due to the pandemic. Committee participation continued remotely and for site meetings that were capable of maintaining physical distance protocols. The DRA LUC appreciates the involvement of members and residents in the process during the past year, and we encourage all residents to attend the public consultations when possible and relay their concerns or support, as the feedback obtained really does find its way into the built form.

Residents with an interest in urban planning are encouraged to learn more about the DRA's Land Use Committee.

**Ian Sutherland**  
**Chair, Land Use Committee**

**Urban Ecology and Agriculture Committee Report**  
**Downtown Residents' Association**  
**Annual General Meeting, February 9, 2021**

During 2020, the efforts of the DRA's Urban Ecology and Agriculture Committee were devoted exclusively to improving upon, and keeping safe the members of, our downtown community garden—the **Yates Street Community Garden**. Other relevant issues, initiatives, and projects are also the mandate of this committee, and as the YSCG has now grown to full maturity, it is hoped that the UEAC will have the capacity to broaden the scope of its activities in 2021.

Here are some of this past year's highlights and accomplishments:

- On February 29, 2020, the Yates Street Community Garden held its third Annual Membership Meeting (AMM) at the Cook Street Village Activity Centre, to which all members of the Garden were invited, to review the prior year's successes, discuss any challenges, socialize and renew their memberships in the Garden. 38 Garden members attended the event.
- More than 85 raised bed planters were available for cultivation during the 2020 growing season, and all of them were in use. We registered 90 garden members at the beginning of the growing season (February), and an additional 21 members were registered throughout the 2020 growing season as some members moved on. We currently have over 80 names of want-to-be gardeners on our official wait-list.
- Our goal for the 2020 season was to use available space to increase growing capacity and to engage the Garden membership to build community and connections at the YSCG, and throughout Victoria's garden community.
- The Yates Street Community Garden participated in two rounds of seedling distribution during the year, acting as a centre for the general public to pick up seedlings that were grown at the City's nursery in Beacon Hill Park under its Get Growing, Victoria! initiative.
- In celebration of Pollinator Week, Garden members signed up for 'Open Garden' shifts to allow members of the public to visit the garden and apiary, and learn about the mason bees. During Pollinator Week, the YSCG also gave away 25 starter tomato plants of various heritage varieties.
- In the 2020 season we completed the following projects:
  - ★ Added two boulevard plantings along Yates street. One of these plantings was during and to celebrate Pollinator Week, and native pollinator plants were used.
  - ★ Added five small potted fruit trees (1 plum, 2 columnar apples, 2 figs).
  - ★ Built a community garden bed out of cedar and planted it with a variety of berries.

- ★ Designed and constructed a vertical planter in the Garden for community use. Created a how-to video for the project and shared it with Garden members and on social media for the wider community to view.
- ★ Created a how-to video series, aimed to help gardeners with projects and provide tips for improving yields/decrease pests.
- ★ Added 2 accessible boulevard beds out on the sidewalk in front of the Garden for community harvest, and commissioned and installed a territorial acknowledgement sign on the Garden's front fence for all to see. The two boxes were lined, filled and planted by volunteers, for neighbours and members of the community at large to harvest from. The sign reads, "We Gratefully Acknowledge That The Land On Which We Garden Is The Traditional Unceded Territory Of The Lekwungen Peoples. Both of these projects were made possible by a City of Victoria, My Great Neighbourhood Grant.

In July 2019, we learned that the Yates Street Community Garden (along with eight other gardens in the City of Victoria whose licenses were ending) had been granted new 5-year licences of occupation. While to this date we are still waiting for the City's legal services department to provide us with the new agreement for signing, we understand that the YSCG will continue to grow in its current location until at least August 20, 2024!

This garden project has brought a diverse group of Downtown-Harris Green residents together with the common goal of gardening and creating community. We've experienced a renewed sense of community ownership, identity and spirit as we engage in this work. The importance of community, stewardship and sustainability is ever present, and guides our efforts. We are eternally grateful for the opportunity to grow our garden, skill levels, friendships and partnerships. It has taken a lot of hard work in getting our Garden to where it is today—a beautiful, blooming community garden in our neighbourhood. It has been worth every ounce of effort it took to get us here.

On behalf of the Urban Ecology and Agriculture Committee and the Yates Street Community Garden, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the financial and functional support that we continue to receive from the City of Victoria and its Staff—Thank you!

Please visit the Garden's website—[www.yatescommunitygarden.ca](http://www.yatescommunitygarden.ca), as well as our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Thank you,

**Nicholas Harrington**  
Chair, Urban Ecology and Agriculture Committee



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Annual Report

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2020

**Objective:** *To foster a diverse, vibrant, and safe quality of life for residents of the Victoria Downtown Community.*

**Chair** Dale Dearing

**CEC Members:** Denise Nicholl, Douglas Boyd, Allan Miller, Virginia Miller, Pat Chapman, Dale Dearing

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### Summary

In the first quarter of 2020:

- we completed final drafts of documents that organize, standardize, and enhance volunteerism of planned projects
- Belize Cargo Trike was selected to be used for a mobile engagement & marketing campaign during various annual events. A colourful information & marketing card was developed to be handed out at these events. Projects timelines were set, with a plan to have Trike Crew, volunteer training program, and the new website in operational (being developed by committee member) for May 2020 (and definitely by June for **Car Free Day**).

Then COVID-19 Pandemic hit and all in-person event planning, meetings, and public activities were suspended.

- After a few months hiatus in accordance with provincial lockdown requirements, we started virtual CEC committee meetings in late summer with a primary focus on accelerating website development. A new strategy was proposed by chair Dale Dearing, which was to employ a professional website developer who would transfer the core elements of the current website to an interactive and engaging website. CEC committee agreed; the idea was presented to the DRA board and approved. A Victoria-based website developer commenced work on the new website in late November 2020 and is forecast have it completed mid-February 2021.
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## **Meetings**

CEC committee conducted several virtual meetings from late summer onward (no in-person meetings are being held in accordance with guidance from BC health authorities).

## **Membership**

2 members have resigned from the committee. No new members have joined

## **Projects & Planning**

### ***Trike Event***

The Trike Project is suspended

### **Website**

A strategy shift was instituted late summer to accelerate the development of a new DRA website intended to be a central platform for engaging and informing the Downtown and Harris Green community. A professional Victoria-based website developer was hired in late November 2020. The new website is almost finished, looks great, and is expected to be complete by mid February 2021. An overview of it will be provided at the February 9, 2021 AGM meeting.

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CEC committee members continue to provide valuable support, participation, and guidance in these challenging times, which enables the CEC, as well as DRA, to move forward on creative strategies for community engagement.

As CEC chair, I want to say a warm THANK YOU to each member of the CEC committee as well as each member of the DRV Board, for caring about our community, volunteering their time, and providing leadership in these unprecedented times.

Dale Dearing, Chair

**Community Engagement Committee**

## **Urban Livability Committee Report – 2020**

The work of this committee was curtailed by the social distancing restrictions of the COVID 19 pandemic. Despite the limitations, the chair continued efforts to stay up-to-date with developments in the City and to respond on behalf of residents as appropriate.

A large part of the agenda at City Hall this year concerned the loss of sheltering spaces for those without housing due to public health orders regarding social distancing. Closing winter response shelters early in March 2020 and decreasing regular shelter space and services resulted in a large number of people forced to shelter in tents on the street. In addition to the tent communities which emerged in a large number of public parks around the city, encampments were set up at Centennial Square and along the boulevard on Pandora Street. Both locations provided access to washroom facilities and allowed service providers to support non-housed residents and connect them to housing as it became available.

Action by BC Housing secured a number of hotel sites which allowed a large number of people to move out of tents and inside. Housing at the Comfort Inn, Paul's Motor Inn, Capital City Center Hotel, in particular, relieved pressure on Pandora and Centennial Square eventually resulting in both sites being removed from the list of places where camping is permitted. The Urban Livability Committee sent a letter to Mayor and Council on behalf of the DRA expressing our concern about Centennial Square, in particular, being used for camping given the limited resources available there and the pressure exerted on the downtown core with its already limited public space.

Space at Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre was used to provide additional space for shelter until August 2020. A call by North Park Neighbourhood Association to re-open the arena during the winter of 2020/2021 has been supported by the DRA as well as the request to the CRD to use Oak Bay Lodge to house homeless seniors.

Sandra continues to monitor both the work of the **900 Block of Pandora Good Neighbour Committee** as well as the **Downtown Service Providers Committee** as non-profits in the City work with City Council and provincial government agencies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on those who are unhoused.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Severs, Chair

## Report of the Governance Committee for 2020

The Committee's work this year focused on applying to the City for additional funding for 2021.

Specifically, the DRA has now requested that in its 2021 budget deliberations Council approve an allocation to it of \$47,000 as a pilot project. These funds will enable the DRA to retain a part-time staff person up to 25 hours per week to assist in targeted outreach activities to build a broader and more diverse DRA membership, identify and deliver on residents' needs and improve access and equity to civic resources, actively seek other potential sources of funding to meet community needs, and conduct on-going evaluation of and reporting on DRA activities.

The staff person would also assist the DRA in exploring opportunities to locate a small office space in a downtown location to provide a physical community "heart" where downtown residents people can meet and problem-solve, and which would also be partly paid for by these additional funds.

Council is still deliberating on the 2021 budget and we are awaiting the outcome of those deliberations.

Also, an application is being finalized for a Strategic Grant for a pilot community outreach program for a targeted needs assessment and subsequent development of a resource directory. That application will be considered in April, with results being expected in May, 2021.

In addition to the funding applications, the Committee attended to filing at the BC Registry of the amendment to the Bylaws and Constitution, approved at the 2020 AGM.

Dianne Flood,  
Committee Chair



## **Communications and Membership Committee Report 2020**

Prepared for the 2021 Annual General Meeting

- **Newsletter:**  
Monthly newsletters were issued, covering DRA Committee activities, City activities, and other items of interest to members. Statistics from Mail Chimp indicate that the open rate ranged from 36.8% (January) to 54.5% (May). Mailchimp reports that the average open rate for non-profit sector communications is 38.9%.
- **Membership:**  
In 2020, we had 16 new members register and 17 renewals, (vs. 23 and 34 in 2019). We had hoped for better numbers this year with new initiatives that were being planned by the Community Engagement Committee. However, these plans were deferred due to Covid restrictions. Also, community events such as Car Free YYJ, which are important to us for membership recruitment, were cancelled. Welcome letters describing volunteer opportunities on DRA committees were sent to all new members.
- **Social Media:**  
Regular posts were made on Facebook and Twitter. Posts were on subjects of interest to members regarding land use issues and community activities. We have 1024 followers on Twitter and 689 on Facebook.
- **Other Activities:**  
The Committee organized a survey of candidates for the City by-election on December 12. We sent a link to the survey on Survey Monkey to all candidates with 6 questions that are pertinent to Downtown residents. We received detailed responses from 9 candidates and posted these on our website and shared via social media. The DRA also participated, along with other neighbourhood associations, in presenting a virtual all-candidates forum on December 1, to which all candidates were invited.