

VICTORIA DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Victoria City Hall Antechamber

March 11, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Board members: Paul Gandall (chair), Doug Boyd, Dianne Flood, Nicholas Harrington, Dale Dearing, Sandra Severs, Mathew Yee

Regrets: Ian Sutherland, Ruth Annis

DRA members: Carol Auld, Andy Wachtel, Heike Reiter, Leslie Welsh, Nell Ross, Kim Cameron

Guests: Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe City (Council Liaison), Mike Hill (City Staff), Pamela Madoff, Candice MacDonald (CoolAid Society), Cathy Brankston, Gregor Campbell

Guest Speaker: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities, City of Victoria

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.

Presentation by Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities, City of Victoria: "Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan"

Thomas Soulliere described in detail the City's master plan for parks and open spaces. In describing Victoria's urban forest, he said that tree canopy coverage in the Downtown core is only 8% compared to 26% for the rest of the city. Questions were raised about the City's future plans and why there were no plans to create parkland downtown. The greening of boulevards and traffic medians, while important, do not reflect the needs of urban residents. Residents stressed the importance of the City acquiring more green space for Downtown residents.

Call to Order and Declaration of Quorum – Paul Gandall thanked the speaker and called the AGM to order at 6:30 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 2019 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 2019. He highlighted the multi-faceted work of the committees in supporting the broad range of interests and issues of concern to the Association. He invited those present to support that work, contributing their ideas and labour by joining the work of the DRA.

Report from the Treasurer - Doug Boyd presented the Treasurer’s Report of the 2019 Financial Statements and proposed budget for 2020.

Motion: To approve the Treasurer’s Report and proposed budget for 2020.

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

Committee Reports: These were all posted on the DRA website for review by the membership prior to the Meeting. The Committee chairs were introduced and questions of the committee chairs were invited from the floor.

Highlights: Members of the DRA affirmed especially the work of the Land Use Committee and the Communications Committee for keeping residents informed about the changing nature of development in the downtown core.

A question was raised about the Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society and whether the DRA had involvement in issues related to the Inner Harbour.

Action: Paul Gandall will make contact to gain further information.

With no further comments or questions received, the Committee Reports were approved as presented.

Nominations of Board members:

Motion: That Paul Gandall be returned to the Board for a further term

Moved: Leslie Welsh **Seconded:** Dianne Flood **CARRIED**

Motion: That Mathew Yee be returned to the Board for a further term

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

Because there were no further nominations from the floor for positions on the Board and because the complement of Board members has not exceeded the maximum mandated by the bylaws, a further nomination was made.

Motion: That Ian Sutherland be returned to the Board for a further term

Moved: Paul Gandall **Seconded:** Mathew Yee **CARRIED**

From last year’s minutes:

Wendy Bowkett moved that Mathew Yee be elected to serve a three year term, expiring in 2022, on the Board of Directors of the Victoria Downtown Residents’ Association. Ian Sutherland seconded. As there was much support and no objections, the election of Mathew Yee to the Board of Directors was approved.

Amendment to the Association Bylaws (attached to the minutes)

The motion to amend the bylaws was agreed to by the members of the DRA.

Moved: Paul Gandall

Seconded: Doug Boyd

CARRIED

Other business and questions from the Floor: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Victoria Downtown Residents' Association
(the "Association")

NOTICE OF SPECIAL RESOLUTION

To: The Members of the Victoria Downtown Residents' Association

TAKE NOTICE that a special resolution will be proposed as part of the general meeting of the members of the Association held on Wednesday, the 11th day of March, 2020, at 6:00 at The Antechamber, City Hall, 1 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W.

The text of the **SPECIAL RESOLUTION** is as follows:

- 1) That Section 5.6 "Directors' Terms" of the Bylaws of the Victoria Downtown Residents' Association be amended to read as follows:

Directors Terms

5.6 Members of the Board elected at the AGM shall be elected for a three (3) year term. Board Members may serve a maximum of two (2) three-year terms, at which point they shall resign. Retiring Board Members are eligible for re-election to the Board for another three (3) year term, if there continue to be vacancies after all nominations from the Voting Members have been considered.

- 2) Further, that the amended Constitution and Bylaws of the Association be registered in accordance with the *Societies Act*, SBC 2015, c. 18.

The effect of this change is to remove a limit on the number of terms that a Director may serve in a specific Officer position.

The text of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association" is available on the Association website at:

https://victoriadra.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-DRA-Constitution-Bylaws_FINAL.pdf

Date of Notice: February 21, 2020

**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association
Treasurer's Report
January 1 to December 31, 2019**

Prepared and Presented by Doug Boyd, Treasurer

Presented at AGM on 11 March 2020

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 15th reporting year for the DRA since the Society became a financial entity on 1st Nov 2004. Our fiscal year end is 31st December.

Total revenues in 2019 were \$7289, compared to the budget amount of \$8340. A significant contributor to the difference was reduced payments from the City for CALUC meetings. This difference has no net impact on our financials since these funds are reimbursed to the CALUC committee chair for meeting expenses.

Our base funding from the City was \$4129, based on a per-capita amount, using 2016 Census data. Revenues from Committee activities and events of \$1663 were from the Truth and Reconciliation film event and December social event. These were more than offset by expenses for these events, including the donation to the Victoria High School indigenous program. Revenues were supplemented by the insurance reimbursement, membership fees and bank interest. Revenue from membership fees increased from \$265 in 2018 to \$385 in 2019.

In 2016, the DRA received a Strategic Plan Grant of \$3750 for the purpose of holding public forums with a focus on Truth and Reconciliation. We held a very successful Truth and Reconciliation film event in November 2019 at the Vic Theatre. Expenses for this event were \$2323. Revenues were \$1363 in ticket sales and donations. A donation of \$1250 was made to Victoria High School for their indigenous program. The balance remaining in the Strategic Plan Grant account is \$1427, as of December 31.

In 2019, total expenses of \$6895 were substantially less than the budget amount of \$13,400. The major reason for this was that we did not have any expenditures for the Kiosk Project, that we had received a Neighbourhood Grant of \$5000 for in 2018. We also did not have any other major community events, other than participation in the Car Free Day event on Douglas Street in June.

Other than Committee activities and events, our second largest expense category is General & Administration expenses of \$1481, which includes AGM

expenses, memberships in Volunteer Victoria and Volunteer Canada, and printing. Cost of Liability Insurance, which became a requirement in 2017, was \$768. We receive a reimbursement of \$606 from the City for this expense.

Also, in 2019, the Yates Street Garden project continued to be a major endeavour. The project has a separate bank account. Revenues and expenses are reported below.

For the 2020 Budget, forecasted revenue of \$6740 consists of Base Funding from the City, Membership Fees, revenues from Committee Events & Activities, and the Insurance Reimbursement. Forecasted expenses of \$11,718 include regular General & Admin costs, Liability Insurance, Communications (ongoing costs for web hosting), and attendance at External Events. We have increased the Committee expenses budget to \$4500, and shown a separate entry of \$5000 for the Kiosk Project for which we received the Great Neighbourhood grant in 2018. We also plan to continue to participate in street festivals.

The balance in our main bank account as of January 1, 2020 was \$20,436. This includes the Great Neighbourhood grant of \$5000, as discussed previously.

Yates Street Community Garden

In 2019, primary revenues for this project comprised the Great Neighbourhood Grant (\$3594) and Community Garden Volunteer Grant from the City (\$10,000) and Membership fees (\$3853). Primary expenses were for Contract Services (\$10,333) and for materials, furniture, tool rentals, administration and web site (\$4448). The balance in the Yates Street Community Garden bank account as of January 1, 2020 was \$10,476.

Victoria Downtown Residents' Association
Statement of Income
January 1 to December 31, 2019, compared to 2018

	2018	2019
	(\$)	(\$)
Revenues		
Annual base funding	4,129.00	4,129.00
Great Neighbourhood Grant	5,000.00	0.00
Membership fees	265.00	385.00
Interest	4.54	5.45
Committees (Activities & Events)	1,408.95	1,663.16
Insurance Reimbursement	606.00	606.00
CALUC Reimbursement	1,750.00	500.00
Total Revenues	<u>13,163.49</u>	<u>7,288.61</u>
 Operating Expenses		
General and Administration	1,915.69	1,480.73
Liability Insurance	768.00	768.00
Communications – Website	99.02	0.00
External Events	0.00	0.00
Committees (Activities & Events)		
Election Events	1,292.70	0.00
TRC Event	0.00	3,573.29
Get Downtown	377.79	0.00
Street Events	1,394.84	232.43
Other/Dec Social	1,130.30	340.39
CALUC Committee	1,750.00	500.00
Total Committees	<u>4,195.63</u>	<u>4,646.11</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>4,519.59</u>	<u>6,894.84</u>
Net Income	<u>629.76</u>	<u>393.77</u>

**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association
Budget for Fiscal Year 2020**

	Actual 2019 (\$)	Budget 2020 (\$)
Revenues		
Annual base funding	4,129.00	4,129.00
Membership fees	385.00	400.00
Interest	5.45	5.50
Committees (Activities & Events)	1,663.16	1,600.00
Insurance Reimbursement	606.00	606.00
CALUC Reimbursement	500.00	0.00
Total Revenues	<u>7,288.61</u>	<u>6,740.50</u>
 Operating Expenses		
General and Administration	1,480.73	1,250.00
Liability Insurance	768.00	768.00
Communications	0.00	100.00
External Events	0.00	100.00
Committees (Activities & Events)	4,146.11	4,500.00
Kiosk Project	0.00	5,000.00
CALUC Meetings	500.00	0.00
Total Operating Expenses	<u>6,894.84</u>	<u>11,718.00</u>
 Net Income	 <u><u>393.77</u></u>	 <u><u>-4,977.50</u></u>

**Victoria Downtown Residents' Association
Land Use Committee Report
19 February 2020**

The DRA Land Use Committee (DRA LUC) continued to meet throughout 2019 and offered input into various rezoning and variance applications as well as several City-based initiatives within Downtown Harris Green.

The pace of new development applications continued rapidly in 2019. In all, eleven significant projects were presented to the public at meetings and reviewed by the DRA LUC. The development projects we've been asked to participate include:

- **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 275 from the previously approved 178.
- **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):** Rezoning of 4.9 acres over two separate sites. The project includes R-48 zoned property. Early concepts are for between 1200 - 1500 rental residential units in five towers ranging in height from 15 to 25 storeys over a 6-storey podium, 100,000 sqft of commercial space, and a 0.5-acre public area, which may be partially green space and the rest hard surface over two levels. Starlight proposes that this will be a multi-phase and multi-year project, which will allow existing anchor tenants to remain in the complex.
- **937 View St:** Nelson Investments w de Hoog & Kierulf – Development Permit with Variance to build a 15-storey 253 rental units with parking for 15 vehicles and 172 bikes on R48 zoned land and located in Fort St Heritage Corridor using pre-fabricated components. Proposed FSR 7.8:1
- **952 Johnson (McCalls Funeral Home):** Cox Developments – Rezoning to create 15-storey market rental with commercial on ground level and retain and heritage designate the existing chapel for future commercial use.
- **975 Pandora (Seventh Adventist Church):** Townline – Rezoning and Building Permit for 166 residential rental units in 8-storey podium and 16-storey tower at 5.50 FSR with ground floor commercial. Vehicle parking at 133 exceeds requirements as does bike parking at 229. No retention of church building.
- **1010 Fort St:** Abstract Developments – Rezoning for the development of a 12-storey building with ground floor commercial and 55 residential units above with 7 vehicle parking and 97 bike parking spots. Proposed FSR 5.37. Setbacks do not comply with DCAP.
- **1124 Vancouver:** J. Gordon Enterprises – Two CALUC public meetings held to discuss proposed development but applicant was unable to provide comprehensive relevant information at either meeting. A third CALUC public meeting will be postponed until the information is complete.
- **1150 Cook St (Pluto's):** Dan Robbins & Fraser McColl – Development Permit with Variance. At 15 storeys, this project is over the 10-storey height limit that defines the density for the R-48 zone and the proposed density (8.98 FSR) is significantly above the OCP maximums.

- **1312 Broad (Duck Building):** UVic Properties & Chard Devt – Rezoning, Development Permit and Heritage Alteration for 6-storey 139-unit hotel with ground floor commercial with FSR 4.0 (from 4.39). This project exceeds OCP limits for OCP density by 33% and height by one storey. This project has been relieved of the normal requirement for an OCP amendment by staff citing heritage rehabilitation goals being achieved. The proposed heritage rehabilitation strategy appears not to comply with national standards.
- **1314-1324 Wharf (Northern Junk):** Reliance Properties – Rezoning for the redevelopment of existing heritage buildings and a residential with ground floor commercial, mixed-use addition, concurrent Heritage Alteration with FSR 3.39.
- **1620 Blanshard (Gateway Green):** Tri-Eagle & Jawl Residential – Temporary Use Permit to demolish the two-storey commercial building and provide 62 surface parking spaces.
- **1700 Blanshard (Hudson Place Two):** Townline – Development Permit w Variance for a 23-storey 245-unit rental building w 6-storey podium w ground floor commercial. Variance for building massing setback at the upper storeys. Proposed FSR 7.47.
- **Blanshard Block (Montrose Winter Garden Hotel):** David Fullbrook with D'Ambrosio – Site Specific Zone and OCP amendment for Core Business area density. Plan to develop NW corner of Blanshard and Fort. Project proposes unique tower design for modern low-staff hotel catering to tech industry/millennials. Density requested 6.16: 1 from 3.0:1 and requested height of 65.5 m from 43.0m. The remainder of the block, The Montrose Building, will be designated heritage and maintained with residential and small CRUs (which are being renovated as vacancies arise).
- **Pacific Mazda Site (Firehall Site):** Jawl Residential – Rezoning to increase density and add residential uses for a phased development including 4 development areas with 4 towers. Mixed housing, commercial and retail space, a public plaza and a new post disaster building. Application required an OCP amendment for significant increases of density over OCP maximums.

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:

- **Inclusionary Housing and Density Bonus System:** concerns regarding the defunding of Community Amenity Contribution and Affordable Housing Funds, eroding entry level home ownership opportunities and upholding the OCP.
- **OCP Amendments:** The DRA LUC, with support from VCAN and all of the other neighbourhood associations, continues to support and promote a policy for the City to not support OCP Amendments without a compelling rationale.
- **Old Town Design Guidelines Review:** Continued to participate in the ongoing review and amendment of the Old Town Design Guidelines to provide additional clarity and enhance Staff and Council's authority to enforce.
- **Meetings with Planning Staff:** To discuss: Zone R48 (Harris Green), preservation and protection of heritage in Old Town, aspects of DCAP that might be considered for revision or refinement such as lack of adequate tower separation, existing Design Guidelines not being enforced, and encouraging staff to allow the creation of orphan lots for creation of future parks.

In addition to the items above, the LUC initiated the following:

- **Request audit of the Community Amenity Contribution Fund:** for a current and accurate balance of the fund, identify the funding added to date, and an accounting of expenses made from the fund by project, including proposed expenditures.
- **Conflict between commitments:** in the Official Community Plan to expand Government Street Pedestrian Mall to Chatham vs proposed Bike Lane for Government Street.
- **List of Community Amenities:** develop a list of amenities needed in the Downtown Harris Green neighbourhood as identified by residents and committee members.

The DRA LUC also reviews Liquor License applications and on this topic, the committee provided input on the following applications and initiatives:

- 45 Bastion Square – Wind Cries Mary
- 538 Yates – Chuck’s Burger Bar
- 570 Yates – Leopold’s Tavern
- 777 Douglas – Executive House Hotel
- 805 Gordon – Union Club
- 1002 Blanshard – Clarke & Co
- 1450 Douglas – Café Veneto
- 1450 Douglas – Veneto Tapa Lounge
- 1820 Government St – January Gin Joint & Eatery
- City led creation of a Downtown Liquor and Late Night Policy.

Based on the criteria that the DRA LUC consistently applies when responding to Liquor License applications, the DRA LUC also crystalized those practices by developing:

- DRA LUC Late Night Food Primary and Liquor Primary Policy.

The bimonthly DRALUC meetings continued in 2019 to discuss Land Use Policy, current land use applications, and City-initiated projects. 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 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 Livability Committee Report – 2019

After a period of inactivity, the Urban Livability Committee enjoyed renewed energy this past year with meetings taking place in the Fall months.

Sandra Severs was named Chair of the Committee. She brings ten years of experience working in non-profits focused on issues related to poverty, homelessness, mental health and addictions. Sandra also serves as Secretary of the DRA having joined the Board in June 2019.

Sandra became the DRA contact person on both the **900 Block of Pandora Good Neighbour Committee** as well as the **Downtown Service Providers Committee**. Both committees exist to monitor the challenges and mitigate the effects of poverty, homelessness, mental health and addictions on housed and unhoused residents of the Downtown-Harris Green neighbourhoods.

A **Great Neighbourhood grant** was applied for and received. The purpose of the grant is:

- **Goal: To run a pilot half-day workshop for residents and business employees of the Downtown providing a simplified form of non-violent crisis intervention training.**
- **Purpose: To increase the skillset and decrease the anxiety of those coming in contact with street-entrenched individuals**
- To help residents and employees understand the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness by introducing them to fellow residents of the city who have lived experience of homelessness
- To provide residents/business employees with skills and confidence to engage homeless individuals in the city in a respectful and caring manner.
- To address feelings of insecurity and fear experienced by many business employees and housed residents of the Downtown Victoria when encountering folk struggling with homelessness and/or mental health or substance use concerns.
- To build relationships of empathy and understanding

The committee will be working with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness to design and deliver the workshop. Information about participation in the workshop will be available through the DRA website and Facebook pages in the Spring of 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Severs. Chair

Communications and Membership Committee Report 2019

Prepared for the 2020 Annual General Meeting

- **Newsletter:**
Newsletters were issued every month, covering DRA Committee activities, City activities, and other items of interest to members. Statistics from Mail Chimp indicate that the open rate ranged from 46.1% (March) to 54.3% (November). Mailchimp reports that the average open rate for non-profit sector communications is 38.5%.
- **Membership:**
In 2019, we had 23 new members register and 34 renewals. Hopefully, with the new initiatives being undertaken by the Community Engagement Committee, we will have better numbers this year. 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 973 followers on Twitter.
- **Other Activities:**
The Committee organized a “Bike Walkshop” along Vancouver Street in May. The Walkshop was facilitated by City of Victoria staff led by Alannah Rodgers, Active Transportation Project Coordinator, and focused on the Bike Path proposed for Vancouver Street. It was very well attended with residents asking questions and expressing their views about various aspects about the design and implementation of the bike lanes.

Community Engagement Committee (CEC) - Report 2019

Chair: Dale Dearing

CEC Members: Renee Layberry, Pat Chapman, Fred Shean, Denise Nicholl, Dale Dearing, Allan Miller, Virginia Miller

Ex officio: Doug Boyd and Dianne Flood, Co-Chairs Communications and Membership (CMC)

CEC Objective:

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

LEADERSHIP

Suzanne stepped down as Chair of the Community Engagement Committee and moved to Port Alberni, February 2020. Dale Dearing agreed to assume the role of Chair and continue to lead the CEC and its activities going forward.

MARKETING

- CEC blurb on VV website “Causes to Consider”
- CEC Newsletter

MEETINGS

CEC committee has met on a semi-regular basis to discuss projects and developments, and will endeavor to continue this pattern.

MEMBERSHIP

There is a talented core CEC membership group who are enthusiastic and committed. Meetings are fun, noticeable progress is made, and things get done between meetings.

PARTNERSHIPS

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Volunteer Victoria (VolVic) and Victoria Downtown Resident Association (VDRA), agreeing to work together to implement, manage volunteer involvement in the VDRA and community quality of life initiatives. VDRA will collaborate with VolVic to gain support and development of expertise for volunteer recruitment and training, as well as collaborate on training resources. This partnership has already helped CEC to develop Volunteer Handbook, job descriptions, and supporting materials for recruiting and working with DRA volunteers.

PROJECTS

Website

Our strategy is to update the website, using it as a more interactive tool for communication, information repository, marketing, recruitment, and so on.

The CEC committee has been working on the design of the web pages and story-boarding the new content while maintaining the current valuable content hosted on Wordpress. Fred Shean has offered to develop the DRA website using website host WIX. The scope is to refresh the entire DRA website to be more engaging. (pilot test the new website early March 2020)

Trike Event

The Trike is progressing as we build towards conducting our first Trike Event. Denise Nicholl continues to check on the Trike order/arrival status and will report back.

Our timeline for having the Trike Crew, volunteer training program and new website in operation for participation in the MY CAR FREE DAY Event.

RECRUITMENT

Phone calls to DRA members were made during Suzanne's time as chair to engage people who might not otherwise realize how much we need and value their time, ideas, and talents. This activity varies and we are seeking volunteers to continue the calls. Notes of call interactions and members expressing potential interest in engaging with DRA activities were conveyed to Doug and updates to the membership list were made.

The Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on Nov 13th at Villages was enjoyed by everyone who attended. It is noted that events like this are a good way for new volunteers to get to know each other and the board members.

STRUCTURE

A Volunteer Handbook, job descriptions, and supporting materials for recruiting and working with DRA volunteers is being finalized. Final Drafts of this material has been edited and revised and we now have a good second draft. Dale will work with Renee to create the project specific content that Volunteer Victoria wasn't able provide in their first draft. (Draft Volunteer Materials Attached) All the working documents associated with the CEC projects have been uploaded to a new Drop Box Folder so that Doug and Dale will have access to them.

Community Engagement Committee

Dale Dearing, Chair

Urban Ecology & Agriculture Committee Report
Downtown Residents' Association
Annual General Meeting, March 13, 2020

This past year, the Victoria Downtown Residents' Association (DRA), re-established its Urban Ecology/Urban Agriculture Committee, which had been dormant for many years. Going forward, the Yates Street Community Garden (YSCG), as well as other appropriate issues, initiatives, and projects, will be the aegis of the Urban Ecology & Agriculture Committee (UEAC).

In 2019, the efforts of the DRA's Urban Ecology & Agriculture Committee were devoted primarily to one project—improving upon and growing our downtown community garden—the **Yates Street Community Garden**.

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

- On February 23, 2019, the Yates Street Community Garden held its second Annual Membership Meeting (AMM), 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.
- We had more than 80 raised bed planters available for cultivation during the 2019 growing season, all in use, and we currently have over 40 names of want-to-be gardeners on our official wait-list.
- In March 2019, we were surprised and grateful to learn that the City had increased the grant amount of its Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grant program for 2019. Previously, community gardens in Victoria were granted \$6,000 per year to fund an Administrative Coordinator, but last year that amount increased to \$10,000.
- Early in 2019, the Garden's Steering Committee initiated a design contest amongst the Garden membership for help in designing a sign for the garden's front entrance. The winners were Michael and Kris (congratulations!), and the result was our beautiful new garden entrance welcome sign!
- The Urban Alive Pop-Up Native Bee Apiary, a project of Pollinator Partnership Canada (P2C), Border Free Bees and Emily Carr University of Art + Design, was unveiled in June 2018. Construction of the Apiary was funded by the City of Victoria after it was selected as a winning entry in the City's first Participatory Budgeting Project, and was to be 'on loan' to the Garden for the first year, and then moved to another location. We were very pleased when P2C let us know, that they had decided that the Apiary should remain at the Yates Street Community Garden permanently!
- The 3-year Licence of Occupation for the Garden property that the DRA signed with the City in August of 2016, ended in August 2019. In late July, we were both relieved and very pleased to learn 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. In August, City Council approved all nine

licences, and while we are still waiting for the City's legal services department to provide us with the agreement for signing, the YSCG will continue to grow in its current location until at least August 20, 2024!

- This past July, we learned that the Society of Friends of St Ann's Academy are putting together a proposal to the Province for a community garden south of St Ann's, west of Arbutus Way, abutting the part of Beacon Hill Park by Southgate. The Society sees our neighbourhood as a natural partner to, and its residents potential users of the proposed garden.
- Jill Doucette, Founder and CEO of Synergy Enterprises, along with Holly Dumbarton, Project Manager for the Food Eco-District (FED), have proposed the "Street to Sky Project" which aims to open up rooftops in downtown for growing produce and vegetables. The DRA is in the process of discussing a request to cooperatively support this proposal.

This garden project has brought together a diverse group of Downtown-Harris Green residents with the common goal of creating a garden. We're experiencing 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 was a lot of hard work getting our Garden to this point, but the end result—the beautiful, blooming community garden in our neighbourhood—was worth every ounce of effort it took to get us here.

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

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

Thank you,

Nicholas Harrington
Chair, Urban Ecology & Agriculture Committee