

Newcastle Community Association – Regular meeting

Tuesday, June 7th, 2022, at 7 PM

The meeting was called to order by President Karen Kuwica at 7:04PM.

1) Review and adopt minutes of May 3rd, 2022.

A motion to approve by Fred MacDonald and seconded by Nancy Mitchell.

2) New Business. No new business.

3) CAC – Report from Newcastle Place

The CAC meeting was held May 26th, 2022. Karen Kuwica, Nancy Mitchell, and Fred MacDonald attended on behalf of the NCA.

- The Manager of NC place reported that there have been overdoses recently. Some residents were moved out. Previously evicted residents returned following an established review process which did not include the input of the NCA.
- NC Place received a generous donation from Khalsa Aid to purchase 10 pairs of corrective glasses. More is needed to address dental care.
- Project Rise offered a 4-week training program to assist resident with return-to-work skills. The program includes 8 weeks placement in local business. Local small businesses participate with the placements such as Nanaimo Bakery, landscaping business, and more.
- The visitor policy remains the same; visits from family members must be pre-scheduled and supervised; visits are taking place in the outside gardens.
- VIH representative reported that two nurses and two outreach workers are providing primary care.
- Paladin Security Services reported two serious assaults to their officers. More violent behaviours have been observed; RCMP is called more often. White Spot property is becoming more difficult to manage; lots of drugs dealing in that area.
- RCMP representative confirmed the bike squad is patrolling. A suspicious black vehicle has been removed. The city has the highest

unhoused people ever, large seasonal migration. Unhoused people hang out in the Caledonia area. Effort is made to move them along.

- BC Housing representative reported the Samaritan Place is going well with support workers on hand. Nancy Mitchell asked if the video of the July 30th, 2020, morning webinar could be posted on the 250 Terminal Let's Talk Housing site to accompany the evening webinar which is already posted.
- Christy Wood reported that they are working on identifying "extreme heat spots" in the city to respond to the anticipated hot summer season.
- Others: Downtown Thursday markets are coming back. Lots of "for sale" and "for lease" signs observed downtown.
- Action: Karen Kuwica to contact the owner of the White Spot.
- Next CAC meeting is on July 21st, 2022, at 11 AM.

4) VIMHA – meeting.

A meeting with a VIMHA representative, Renée Cooper, Fred MacDonald, and Karen Kuwica took place about problems at the residence corner of Rosehill and Terminal Avenue. Drug dealing has been observed and information is being gathered toward evicting a resident. Response from VIMHA was positive. Fencing will be installed to secure the property from access by non resident.

5) Re-Imagine – Draft Official Community Plan. Deadline June 22 – Community Comments

Nancy Mitchell reported that we were successful in the designation of our neighbourhood, by the city, as "heritage neighbourhood" and that everything east of Terminal Avenue is now designated as a "Neighborhood" and not a "corridor". The "mixed use" areas are now "neighborhood commercial".

There are two outstanding concerns: the height of the buildings should not be interfering with the views of residents living above Stewart Avenue corridor. City staff have indicated that this is covered in current documents. Secondly, that neighbourhood associations should be formally asked to provide feedback on development permit applications similar to providing comments on rezonings and OCP amendments. City staff and Council do not support this change. It was decided not to pursue these concerns.

Thank you, Nancy Mitchell, and Peter Giovando, for such great accomplishments in advocating for our neighbourhood and its future.

6) 1045 Terminal Avenue

The building has been vandalized repeatedly and previously declared a fire risk by the city. A Special Council meeting/Public hearing on June 16th, 2022, where 1045 Terminal as a nuisance property will be discussed and voted on.

7) Chinese Memorial Gardens

Recent pictures of debris in the Gardens were posted on the association Facebook page. The NCA along with Brechin Hill, the Nanaimo Chinese Cultural Society, and the Chinese Freemasons Society have sent a letter to City Bylaws and Parks & Recreation asking that the city not allow camping on this site.

Action: Karen Kuwica to contact David LaBerge and confirm if it is now time to send a letter to council with specific request.

8) Developments Update

- Nancy Mitchell reported that a request for a building permit for a carriage house was submitted for 511 Vancouver Avenue.
- 425 Stewart Avenue and 565 Stewart Avenue are sold.
- 921 Terminal Avenue plans to build a 6-units building with pedestrian access from Terminal Avenue and parking off Cypress.

9) Neighbourhood and Block Watch updates

- Report of a break-in corner of Vancouver Avenue and Cypress. A Van was towed away.
- Vehicles have been dumped in our neighbourhood.
- Drug sell was observed on the streets.
- Three people were reported to the RCMP after settling on the rocks of the breakwater and doing drug in daylight.
- Debris on the vacant lot corner of Bryden and Newcastle Avenue. Signs of a previous fire were observed.
- If you notice a person in distress, call RCMP and ask for a “wellness check”, they are required to respond asap.
- Four encampments are set up by the ravine. Pictures were sent to the city. Lots of garbage.

- Camps are set under the Pearson bridge. Fred MacDonald will contact the Ministry of Transportation.
- The fuel tanks were removed at the Husky site in preparation for future development.
- The 475 Stewart Avenue property “no trespassing” sign is hidden under the growing grass. Owners to be contacted.
- Canco property’s disturbances appears to have calmed down. However, gathering of unhoused people have been observed. There is a lot of traffic in the area and debris.
- Lots of drug dealing have been observed at the Queen Elizabeth Park and in the surroundings of the Yacht Club. Drug activities are attracting vulnerable unhoused people.
- Fire fighters quickly responded to a fire caused by the explosion of propane tanks near to two encampments in Bowen Park.

Special Note: Nancy Mitchell added the genealogies of four houses in our neighbourhood. Check it out on our website at newcastlecommunityassociation.ca

Meeting adjourned at 8:27PM

Next meeting July 5th, 2022, at 7 PM

There will be no meeting in August

Submitted by Suzanne Groulx