

Newcastle Community Association: Monthly Member Meeting

April 4th, 2023 via Zoom

Draft Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Karen Kuwica at 7:06 PM who introduced the new directors of the NCA Board elected at the AGM on March 7 2023:

- Karen Kuwica (President),
- Fred MacDonald (Vice President & Treasurer),
- Belinda Climenhaga (Secretary); and
- Directors at Large: Nancy Mitchell, Peter Giovando, Daryl Gyorfi & Kerrie Brennan (Director at Large/ Business Liaison).

1. Approval of minutes of February 7th, 2023. *Motion by Nancy Mitchell to adopt the minutes, seconded by Darrel Gyorfi. Passed.*

2. Millstone Remediation Project

Nancy Mitchell discussed the application made to the city requesting \$7500 under the Watershed Grant Program to prepare a plan to remediate the bank along the Millstone River and make it less attractive as a camping spot. Funds would be used to consult with the various parties with an interest in the land and engage a biologist/ landscape architect to create a ravine restoration plan. [NB: the application was turned down but city staff have indicated that they would have their environmentalist look at the situation]

3. Nanaimo Yacht Club C Dock Replacement

Commodore of the Nanaimo Yacht Club, Bill Jones, made a presentation regarding their plan to replace C Dock. Work is expected to begin in October 2023 and be completed by the summer of 2024. Construction would take place off site and the docks would be transported to the site in stages and assembled in the north parking lot during the off season. Approximately 2/3 of the club's parking spaces would be used at that time. The height of the sheds will be equal to or slightly higher than present but will not interfere with views. The club wants to keep the disruptions to the neighbourhood to a minimum and will advise of any pile driving activity. *Motion by Nancy Mitchell to support the Nanaimo Yacht Club proposed C dock replacement, seconded by Peter Giovando. Passed*

4. Newcastle Place Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Report

Fred MacDonald, Karen Kuwica, and Nancy Mitchell attended the last CAC Meeting on March 30 2023.

Highlights were:

- Eviction of one drug dealer who has now gone to live with family;
- Paladin Security are not doing as many patrols around the neighbourhood as before and, given the aggressiveness of some of the gatherings on the White Spot property, are not being proactive in asking people to move along that are loitering in the area and are calling the RCMP instead;
- White Spot is concerned with the activity around the vacant restaurant but don't want to put a fence around it as they are trying to rent it. One of their property maintenance employees was assaulted when on site and had rocks thrown at him;
- the City has been absent from the last couple of meetings of the CAC so a letter will be sent to city staff to see what bylaws is doing about concerns with the bank and the White Spot. [NB: City staff met with Karen, Fred and Nancy onsite, April 21 2023]
- the RCMP have been using the White Spot parking lot to park and do reports which discourages social disorder by their presence. It was suggested that it would be helpful if they did the same thing at the 7/11. It was also suggested that the RCMP bike patrols expand their route into Newcastle.

5. Upcoming meeting with BC Minister of Public Safety: Mike Farnworth

The presidents of the 14 community associations who meet the criteria set out by the City of Nanaimo for Neighbourhood Associations have been invited to meet with the Minister of Public Safety, Mike Farnworth when he is in Nanaimo on April, 12, 2023. Suggested items to be brought up at the meeting include:

- in order to make a dent in the issues communities are currently experiencing regarding public safety getting those on the street with mental health and addiction issues is a priority
- There has been a steady decline in services available to help those with mental health and addictions and communities are now suffering the consequences.
- more psychiatrists, for example are needed to sign off on involuntary care.
- We need to know that the provincial government has a detailed plan with a time frame to help people with mental health and addictions issues get treatment
- Concern is that there are currently 12 unsolved murders in Nanaimo and resources allocated to the Street Crimes Unit and bait car program were being reallocated reducing the amount of police presence on the street.

6. Nanaimo Area Public Safety Association (NAPSA)

Karen reported that there will be another NAPSA rally simultaneously in various communities across BC on Thursday, April 27 2023 with Nanaimo's at Diana Krall Plaza.

7. Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network (NNN)

Nancy Mitchell reported that neighbourhood associations will be meeting with City Council on April 26, 2023 to discuss issues and priority actions. Newcastle has submitted the following taken from our discussion on neighbourhood priorities at the NCA Annual General Meeting on March:

- a) Increase Safety on Stewart Avenue:
 - Fix potholes
 - Add push buttons to existing crosswalks
 - Undertake a traffic calming plan to lower speeds
- b) Enhance Personal security
 - Establish a city-resident Newcastle Recovery Action Committee to implement a holistic plan for security and safety in Newcastle
 - Eliminate sheltering opportunities such as along the Millstone River
 - Expand RCMP Bike Patrol and Community Safety Officers to Newcastle
 - Increase bylaw patrols on vacant residences and businesses and engage owners in mitigative measures
 - Implement a Vacant Property Bylaw which requires vacant property permits to hold property owners accountable for managing their vacant properties.
 - Get the BC Housing rezoning application for 250 Terminal out into the public domain so that we can move forward with a master plan for that property, in consultation with Newcastle residents, that is of a manageable size and scope for the site and the neighbourhood.
 - manage visible signs of decay like graffiti removal, overgrown bushes, broken guard rails, and untidy boulevards
 - provide economic development business recruitment support to replace business closures and strengthen business retention.
- c) **Promote pride in our Neighbourhood**
 - Street Banners specifically for Newcastle
 - Heritage interpretation plaques
 - Install Welcome sign
 - Update heritage walk brochure

8. Development Update

Nancy Mitchell informed us that plans had changed for a proposed multi-family development at 921 Terminal Avenue. The new plan calls for a smaller development of 5 units to be built on the site. She believed the new design is better for the neighbourhood. It is more aesthetically pleasing and will result in more eyes on the street. This is the only new development permit application she is currently aware of.

9/10. Block Watch/ Neighbourhood Update

- Belinda Climenhaga noted an increasing amount of social disorder around the 7-11, on the Howard Johnston's property, and at 1045 Terminal Avenue (the old Bino's restaurant). She also noted an increased RCMP presence in the neighbourhood, the previous weekend.
- Karen Kuwica noted that the RCMP had been doing tactical training in the area. Apparently members of the RCMP Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of BC were in Nanaimo from Friday, March 24 through Sunday, March 26th working with officers from the local detachment to target people involved in weapons and gang-related crimes.
- Karen Kuwica reported about another camp on private property at 210 Caledonia which is awaiting development permit from the City of Nanaimo. RCMP removed campers from the property.
- Camping continues to be an issue on the bank by the Castaway Motel and residents in the area have seen food being delivered by non-profit organizations.
- Some concern was expressed about two houses on Vancouver Avenue across from Marine Vista apartments. There appears to be large amount of garbage in vehicles parked outside the neighbouring houses. The residents explained that the items in the vehicles were left over from jobs from a junk removal company. When the residents were finished work, it was too late to take to the dump. The items would be disposed of the next day. The residents in both houses work for the same company.
- The red truck parked in front of the Vancouver Ave entrance to the St. George Ravine Park for awhile was noted. Apparently it belongs to the house on the NE corner of St. George /Vancouver Avenue.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Next regular meeting: May 2, 2021.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga, Secretary 2023.