

Newcastle Community Association – Regular meeting

Tuesday, February 7th, 2023, at 7 PM on zoom.

The meeting was called to order by NCA President Karen Kuwica at 7:06 PM.

1) Review and adopt minutes of January 10th, 2023.

A motion to adopt by Nancy Mitchell and seconded by Peter Giovando.
Passed.

2) New Business

No new business

3) AGM March 7th, 2023

- President Karen Kuwica gives notice of the upcoming AGM on March 7th, 2023. It is time to elect the NCA board of directors. Positions are President, Treasurer, Secretary and up to 6 Directors at Large. You are invited to become a member of the executive; your commitment is only for one year, NCA are meeting once a month, the executive members are meeting 2 to 3 times a year. Meetings are via zoom. Your commitment is not very time consuming but very valued by residents of our neighborhood.
- Nancy Mitchell will be emailing members whose two-year membership is about to expired. You can now pay online via our website. <https://newcastlecommunityassociation.ca/>

4) Notice of Motions at Council Meeting Monday February 6th (item 14 link)

Debate will take place at the next city council meeting on February 20th, 2023, on two notices of motions:

- a) Councillor Hemmens: That Council direct Staff to prepare a report outlining the costs of designing, construction and servicing (water & electric) emergency basic shelter housing for 100 people on City property.
- b) Councillor Manly: That Council write a strongly worded letter to the Federal and Provincial governments requesting that:
 - The Government of Canada engage in an immediate process of justice reform to create a comprehensive alternate system like the Portugal model where people with addiction and mental health challenges who break laws are steered through a court system

with fully funded and functional treatment facilities, rehabilitation, and community service programs.

- The Provincial Government immediately fund the detox and treatment beds needed to assist people with addiction and mental health challenges; and
- The Federal and Provincial Governments provide the investments needed to address the homelessness crisis, which in turn has been feeding the mental health and addiction crisis.

5) Nanaimo Yacht Club Dock replacements

Bill Jones, Nanaimo Yacht Club Commodore sent an email informing the neighborhood of upcoming dock and sheds replacement construction later this year. This might impact the street parking in the neighborhood as the Club members will not be able to park in the Club parking lot during the construction. The Commodore will attend the April 4th, 2023, Membership meeting to provide more information. Attached is the renovation plan.

6) CAC Newcastle Place Report

Nancy Mitchell and Fred MacDonald attended the CAC meeting on January 26th, 2023.

Attached are the meeting minutes.

7) Chinese Memorial Gardens Update

- Karen Kuwica, Fred MacDonald and Evelyn Samplonius attended a meeting at the Chinese Memorial Gardens with Charlotte Davis, city project manager, a park designer, Park and Recreation staff, neighbours from both Newcastle and Brechin Hill neighborhoods, and members of the Nanaimo Chinese Cultural Society. The Gardens has been cleaned up, some vegetation was trimmed. Funds from the Capital improvement plan will be used to improve and upgrade the Gardens. The following are details of anticipated actions:

- **Maintenance project**

-

- To do this winter:

-

- - Large scale cut back and removal of vegetation throughout park using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Includes removal of large cedars and other vegetation at front wall (area to be turfed).
- - Power washing of stairs, pagoda, benches and signage

- - Repainting of benches and pagoda- Red (as per Chinese Heritage Society)
- - Decommissioning of ceremonial burning area. Fireplaces to be bricked up and chimneys to be capped.
- - Repairs to wall by the stairs.
-
- To do this Spring/Summer:
-
- - New park name sign
- - New interpretive signage (Jerry- I will contact you about this and we will share draft with the group).
- - Predesign work on potential capital park improvement as below
- - To be confirmed- potential removal of 2 x Dawn redwood trees at Front wall (only if absolutely necessary, for wall/safety issues)
-
- **Capital improvement project**
-
- - Improved drainage, irrigation and new plantings
- - New amenities including waste receptacles, picnic bench, benches.
- - Stewart avenue wall remediation
-
-
- This is positive outcome for both neighborhoods.

8) Safety Rally – Country Club Mall – Review

Karen Kuwica reported that some residents of Newcastle attended the rally. There was a lot of news coverage. Alarming concerns about safety were raised. The city mayor attended the event.

Related safety concerns were discussed:

- Belinda Climenhaga reported details of a walk around the downtown core at 9 AM sometime last week. People openly doing drugs on the streets, human waste on the stair steps, garbage, etc. More police and bylaw officers' presence but no action was taken. Some businesses have their blind closed with a sign to knock to be let in. Very upsetting, dirty, sense of hopelessness, no enforcement. Bylaw officers attend only when called. Diana Krall square is dirty, a real disgrace. The Downton is in critical crisis.
- President Karen Kuwica reinstated that NCA is a resilient neighbourhood and action oriented to promote positive changes.

It was noted that resident can email their concerns to MP's and their official opposition critics. She will email a list of critics.

- It was noted that since the decriminalization of up to 2.5 grams of hard drug last month, drug users practice aggressive behaviors when approach by law enforcement officers and do not cooperate.
- Following the rally a Nanaimo resident wrote to Sheila Malcolmson, Nanaimo MLA raising safety concerns. Attached is the reply from MLA Malcolmson.

9) Advocacy to Council re: development of 250 Terminal

Nancy Mitchell, NCA Director at Large, wrote a letter advising the city of our understanding of Newcastle neighbourhood land use designation in the new City Plan as "Neighbourhood" and no longer "Corridor" and our expectations that BC Housing will conform to the city plan when presenting zoning applications for 250 Terminal. The Executive have also written to VP Development Services, BC Housing regarding our key requirements in development of 250 Terminal

10) New Bus Depot coming.

Local businesses owners and residents have serious safety concerns about the proposed location of the Bus Depot on Terminal Avenue. A rally is organized for February 12th at 1:30 PM at 595 Terminal Avenue.

11) Development Update

Nancy Mitchell reported that there are two active developments. The Station development on Terminal Avenue received a demolition permit; demolition should get started. The 6 units building development on Cypress Street is on hold right now.

12) Neighbourhood update/Block Watch

- The white Spot building should be boarded up as it is regularly vandalized.
- Owners of 210 Caledonian Avenue are focusing on developing the property: good news for the neighborhood.
- The old Howard Johnson has been boarded up. Big development project is planned.

- It was noted that the 7/11 building has been tagged and lots of people have been observed around the property.

Note: if you see someone who appear to be suffering from mental health distress call the following number. Triage will be performed, services, food or medications will be offered.

AT nighttime: call the RCMP at 250-754-2345

During the day: call **COR** at 250-741-7645 or **ACT** at 250-739-5705

Check out our website at: <https://newcastlecommunityassociation.ca/>

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 7th, 2023, at 7 PM in person at the Nanaimo Yacht Club

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Submitted by Suzanne Groulx