

## **Newcastle Community Association – Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7 PM on Zoom.**

The meeting was called to order by NCA President Karen Kuwica at 7:14 PM.

### **1) Review and adopt minutes of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

A motion to adopt by Suzanne Groulx and seconded by Nancy Mitchell.  
Passed.

### **2) New Business**

- Daisy Blumensaat was added to the agenda to discuss neighbourhood concern over the Millstone Riverbank and encampments along the bank.

### **3) Review of the Summer Block Party**

- President Karen Kuwica reported that the Newcastle Community Association Executive (NCA) met over Zoom to evaluate the summer block party. Observations were that:
  - it was well attended and enjoyed by the community; however, the layout of the food stations needed to be improved.
  - The ticketing process could also be improved.
  - the Bake Sale table needed to be more visible but pricing was good and participants enjoyed the quality of the food.
  - It was also noted that some people brought their own wine to the BBQ so we should consider looking into alcohol sales.
- Concept of doing a Christmas dinner was discussed and most felt that if it was priced correctly it would be well attended. Most fundraising dinners include 1 glass of wine or beer in their pricing.

### **4) 250 Terminal Avenue Rezoning**

- Nancy Mitchell reported that the City of Nanaimo has now received the application for the rezoning of 250 Terminal Avenue. The site plans and elevations have been submitted and are available for

viewing on the City of Nanaimo's What's Building:

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/whatsbuilding/Folder/RA000495>

- The ground floor of the building will no longer be commercial space but the neighbourhood doesn't know what they will be putting in the space instead. Concerns were raised that it could be used as a supervised injection site for the community at large although it was noted that the City has said in the past that there would not be any harm reduction facilities in 250 Terminal Avenue. If a safe injection site was to be placed in the ground floor we needed to make sure it would be available to residents only.
- There were also issues with the plans such as the building would be five stories instead of four which contravenes the City Plan Neighbourhood designation of our area.
- Parking was also an issue as the building only had four parking spots. With visitors coming and going and service providers visiting the building, four parking spots wouldn't be sufficient. There was also a proposed sports court on the site plan adjacent to residences which could become a potential noise issue. It should be eliminated as there are sports facilities at Maffeo Sutton Park. That area could then be used for additional parking.
- There were also questions about the smoking bench that would back onto the neighbours on Vancouver Ave., what street the entrance would be located on, and what community amenities (if any) would be built by the developer. It was suggested that a dog park would be something the community could use. It could be placed on the affordable housing lot until it is built.
- The NCA's draft list of concerns was reviewed by the members. It will be submitted to the City by their deadline of July 21, 2023.

## **5) New Businesses**

- Millstone Riverbank: recent shooting and the decline of the state of the fish habitat as a result of garbage, and waste coming from the encampments along the bank.

- Karen Kuwica introduced the Change.Org petition to “Restore Safety & Nature to Millstone Riverbank in Nanaimo” created by Daisy Blumensaat about the environmental decline of the riparian area along the bank above the Millstone Riverbank. She joined the meeting to discuss what steps we can do jointly to solve issues along the embankment.
- NCA Executive have drafted a letter to be sent to The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) about the embankment. It was pointed out that the MOTI isn't following their own regulations and environmental acts when it comes to the riparian zone along the river. Developers and land owners have to follow the rules and regulations but MOTI isn't.
- Frank Seier who is working in conjunction with Daisy Blumensaat has been in communication with The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Bylaw about the embankment. He was told by City Bylaws that it is a complex issue due to accessibility and jurisdiction issues. The embankment falls under MOTI, but is monitored and maintained by the City of Nanaimo; however because of the fish in the stream, it then becomes a federal issue.
- Karen Kuwica pointed out that after the shooting on the embankment the Mayor of Nanaimo said the embankment issues couldn't be solved until housing was provided for the people living there. However, this is not the case as the people living on the embankment were not a vulnerable population but people hiding out while engaging in criminal activities.
- The last time the embankment was cleaned it cost approximately \$15,000. Frank Seier explained that it was a difficult process as the RCMP, Bylaw, and contractors have to give notice to the campers and coordinate with high tide to allow a barge to come in and remove the garage.
- It was agreed that a letter be drawn up requesting the City to cease to allow camping in Barsby Park. Campers are able to access the bank through the park.

- Concern was raised that despite the issues re-occurring around the embankment on a continual basis, nothing is done about it. What the neighbourhood does have is the court of public opinion and that residents can use their power to email officials and put pressure on them to take action.
- It was agreed that a sub-committee be formed to review options on an ongoing basis of which Daisy Blumensaat and Frank Seier were invited to participate.

#### **6) Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network Update**

- Their first AGM was held with the new President Greg Brown who is head of the Brechin Hill Association.
- Bylaws were reviewed and the NNN would meet again in this month and in September.

#### **7) Development Update**

- Nothing new to report.

#### **8) Neighbourhood Updates**

- Karen Kuwica reported that last Friday, a man in psychosis was running around the neighbourhood with a machete. Police were called but lost him.
- Suzanne Groulx reported that a shopping cart with a broom handle in it was camping around the back of the Sands funeral home. It was believed to be a woman who was supposed to be under an adult guardianship with the province.
- It was noted that the signage along Newcastle Avenue has helped with the camping issue.

**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, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7 PM on Zoom**

Meeting adjourned at 8:27PM.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga