

Newcastle Community Association – Regular Meeting

Tuesday, June 6th, 2024, at 7 PM on Zoom

The meeting was called to order by NCA President Karen Kuwica at 7:00 PM.

1) Review and adopt minutes of May 2024

President Karen Kuwica informed the membership that we would review and adopt the May minutes in the next meeting due to the fact that the Secretary, Belinda Climenhaga, had just had eye surgery and was unable to do the minutes.

2) New Business

No new business.

3) Review the Outcomes of the Annual Consultation Meeting between the Nanaimo Neighbourhood Associations and the City of Nanaimo

Nancy Mitchell, Suzanne Groulx, and Belinda Climenhaga from the NCA Executive represented the Newcastle Neighbourhood and presented the 3 Neighbourhood Priorities to the staff and City Councillors. Nancy Mitchell provided a summary of the talks to the membership. The three priorities as agreed by the membership of the NCA were:

- Improve Safety Along Stewart Avenue.
- Improve Personal and Neighbourhood Safety/Vacant Property Bylaw
- Promote the Newcastle Neighbourhood/Community Amenity of a Dog Park at the Old Husky Gas Station on Terminal Avenue.
- In addition the added requests of removing the bus shelters and benches along Terminal Avenue and signage to discourage feeding the rabbits in the park on Newcastle Avenue.

Nancy Mitchell inscribed the format of the evening to the membership. The discussions were facilitated by Chrissy Woods from the City Of Nanaimo at the NCA table. They involved three different sessions with members of City Council and City staff. Our table spoke with Councillor Erin Hemmens, Mayor Leonard Krog, and Councillor Sheryl Armstrong.

- Nancy Mitchell felt the most useful thing of the evening was that we got to speak with City staff about our concerns directly i.e. Charlotte

Davis (Parks Operations Manager), Dave LaBerge (Bylaws Manager) , and Jamie Rose (Transportation Manager).

- Outcomes of the discussions with the City staff were that Jamie Rose agreed to inform the NCA of the proposed changes/plans along Stewart Avenue by July 17th.
- Councillor Sheryl Armstrong and Dave LaBerge have been reluctant to enact a Vacant Building Bylaw as they felt it was unnecessary and illegal to do so. As a result, the NCA felt that we should go to the Public Safety Committee and suggest that the City at the next Union of BC Municipalities get the province to make changes to the Community Charter to allow a Vacant Property Bylaw.
- Charlotte Davis said that she was open to the idea of a dog park on the old Husky gas station site on Terminal Avenue. She would also look into signs about feeding wildlife in the park on Newcastle Avenue. Extending the banners between Cypress Avenue and the Pearson Street Bridge was also discussed.
- Suzanne Groulx also brought up the need for ashtrays to deal with the large amount of cigarette butts found along Newcastle Avenue with Charlotte Davis. Charlotte Davis felt that since smoking was not allowed in parks, there was no need for them. Suzanne mentioned the possibility of placing them before the entrance to Newcastle by the funeral home and non-smoking reminder signs.
- Nancy Mitchell said that she said the City staff would forward the NCA to what we had agreed upon during the meeting by May 31st, 2024.

4) Second Annual BBQ & Blues June 23rd 4 -7 PM

Karen Kuwica was looking for volunteers for the BBQ. Help was needed for set-up and take-down, as well as working the event.

- Janet Bouchard donated a grocer gift card which was greatly appreciated.
- Suzanne Groulx was able to get Thrifty's Food to donate use of a tent and a \$100 Gift card.

- Karrie Brennan was able to get Tim Horton's to donate a tent for the event and was looking in to a gift card also.

5) Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network (NNN) on the Objectives of the NNN

Nancy Mitchell explained that the Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network was an umbrella organization of neighbourhood groups that were both recognized and unrecognized by the City of Nanaimo. At their next meeting they were set to reset their objectives to make sure that they were clearer.

- Nancy Mitchell reported that there was some disagreement in the NNN as to whether they should take issues on as a whole group or leave it up to the individual neighbourhood associations.
- Nancy Mitchell personally felt that since it was an umbrella organization it was difficult to come to an agreement on issues as the neighbourhoods were all very different with different concerns, demographics, etc.
- In the NNN, there were 14 neighbourhood associations recognized by the City and 4/5 that weren't. The unrecognized associations might have some difficulty being acknowledged by the City as they didn't fulfill the City's criteria i.e. holding AGM's
- Nancy Mitchell felt that the most important work of the NNN was to build stronger neighbourhoods through the exchange of information whether they were recognized or not by the City.

6) Developments Update

Karen Kuwica informed the membership of the development updates for 250 Terminal Avenue and that the rezoning application would go to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd reading on June 17th. She also noted that Nancy Mitchell had been very diligent on keeping up with updates and going back and forth with the Planning Department with the City.

- Nancy Mitchell reported that the Zoning Bylaw Report about zoning changes would not be available until next Thursday. The site plans though were available on the City of Nanaimo's website under "*What's Building.*"

- Nancy Mitchell noted that on the site plans, the fence was 8m in height, something the NCA had asked for, and that there was a 1.8 landscape buffer. The number of units remained at 50 although the NCA had asked them to be reduced. She also noted that the building height remained at 5 storeys although the Neighbourhood Designation for Newcastle only permitted 4. The building did have a step-back of 4 stories on the residential side of the street so although there were 5 storeys it appeared to be 4.
- There was some concern among the membership that there were only 4 parking spots on the site plan. Nancy Mitchell explained that the empty lot meant for affordable housing would be used for staff parking and once the affordable housing was built, parking would be moved underground for 250 Terminal Avenue.
- Nancy Mitchell felt that it was important that the NCA decide what we wanted as a neighbourhood regarding small changes to the plans and what we should receive for having “temporary housing” that may go on indefinitely. We also needed to have a timeline for construction of a permanent building. She was also eager to see the proposed zoning changes which were not yet available as she felt they would be proposing new zoning for 250 Terminal Avenue due to its use.

7) Neighbourhood Updates

- Karen Kuwica reported that Violet Hayes had been in touch regarding the current occupants of 250 Terminal Avenue. Violet Hayes informed her that they moved in to Cornerstone on June 15th. They were now fixing up 250 Terminal Avenue to receive the new tenants shortly.
- There has been a lot of activity of the Old White Spot property. People have been sheltering on the property and the boulevard. The gates to the garbage enclosure are also broken. Karen Kuwica also reported a disturbing incident with the individuals who were sheltering in the garbage enclosure and an unidentified woman which resulted in a call to the RCMP and CSO's who were quick to respond.
- Karen Kuwica noted that if you see a non-emergency situation in need of attention you can contact the **CSO's** between 6 am – 1 am at

250-268-7440 or contact the ***RCMP Non-Emergency Line*** at **250-754-2345**.

- Karen Kuwica noted that there was an electrical fire at 160 Vancouver Avenue (Bryden Court) as a result of a bathroom fan which affected 2 units.
- Fred MacDonald reported that 360 Vancouver Avenue appeared to be cleaning up their yard due to pressure put on the Bylaw Department and that neighbours should keep reporting to the City. He also noted that the Business Licensing Department appeared to be more sympathetic to the neighbourhood concerns and was hoping that when their licence came up for renewal next April, it would not be approved.

Note: if you see someone who appears to be suffering from mental health distress call the following numbers. 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, July 9th, 2024, at 7 PM on Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga