

Newcastle Community Association – Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 7th, 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 April 2024.

- A motion to adopt the minutes by Suzanne Groulx and seconded by Janet Bouchard. Passed.

2) New Business

No new business.

3) Review the Neighbourhood Priorities for the Annual Meeting with the City in May.

The NCA would like to review and discuss their priorities for the Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network (NNN) consultations with the City of Nanaimo meeting in May. Nancy Mitchell reviewed the NCA's 3 priorities based on feedback from the membership. Please see the attachment for discussion.

- After Nancy Mitchell discussed the priorities, President Karen Kuwica opened the floor for discussion
- Irene Wende added that she would like to see bus shelter safety added to the list regarding the bus shelters located on Terminal Avenue by Midland Tools and across from the Ramada Hotel. She also felt that vacant lots should also be included.
- Nancy Mitchell mentioned that vacant lots could also be included as part of the Vacant Building Bylaw the NCA was proposing during the meetings with the City.
- Karen Kuwica proposed a motion that the NCA was to proceed with their priorities as presented by Nancy Mitchell in addition to bus shelter safety and to include vacant lots with the proposed Vacant Building Bylaw.
- Improve Personal and Neighbourhood Safety.
- Promote the Newcastle Neighbourhood.

4) No Number 4 Agenda Item Listed/Proceed to Agenda Item 5.

5) Second Annual BBQ & Blues June 23rd

- Karen Kuwica suggested that the time be changed from 4–8 PM to 4-7 PM. The membership agreed.
- Karen Kuwica was also looking for volunteers for ticket sellers, chefs, and other positions. Ticket prices were also discussed. Karen Kuwica felt that they may have to be increased this year due to increased food costs.
- Nancy Mitchell would also work on another Scavenger Hunt to be included in the flyer.
- The Bake Sale would also be moved indoors to help provide more area for food prep and prevent the chocolate items from melting in the sun.

6) Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network Report

Nancy Mitchell discussed that at the last meeting of the NNN they agreed to send a letter to all the community associations whether they supported associations which did not meet the City's criteria for recognition, in particular the Westwood Lake Community Association. Westwood Lake were adamant that they would not be subject to the City's criteria and bureaucracy to be recognized as an official association. At the same time, Westwood Lake wanted to be included when the City held policy and planning sessions with the recognized community associations.

- Nancy Mitchell explained that our position was we tried to be accountable and credible when it came to a neighbourhood association and it didn't take much effort to meet the City's criteria. She said that the Old City Quarter Association was strongly against Westwood Lake's participation since they didn't meet the criteria the City put forth.
- A motion was made by Peter Giovando that we don't sign the letter. Suzanne Groulx seconded the motion. Passed.

7) Development Updates

Members of the NCA Executive toured the New Cornerstone Development on Prideaux Street beside the Fire Station before the new residents moved in.

- Nancy Mitchell said the facility was being run by the John Howard Society. Jennifer Fox from BC Housing was also there and agreed to a meeting at the end of May/beginning of June to discuss the MOU signed with the City of Nanaimo for another 3 years.
- More concrete plans were needed so the extended temporary housing does not continue indefinitely. Nancy also understood that some design changes were made to the proposed building at 250 Terminal Avenue. Instead of modular construction, it was going to be a stick build (wood frame construction).
- It was also reported that the new residents moving into 250 Terminal would be long term shelter users and not directly from the street.
- Nancy Mitchell also followed up on The Station development (539 Terminal Avenue) and found out from the architect that a building permit had been issued by the City as well as a demolition permit for the two remaining houses on the property. Construction would likely begin in June.
- The New Zoning changes were discussed. R1 Zoning (single family residence) was changed to R5 which would allow for multiple family residences on a lot. In the Newcastle Neighbourhood, both sides of Vancouver Avenue would be affected. No mention of form or character were mentioned in the new zoning changes.
- Nancy reported that the City also passed a new bylaw that would require developers to hold public meetings for development applications that required multiple variance changes. They would also be required to inform homes within a 100 m area from the proposed development instead of previous requirement of 10 m. Nancy was pleased with the new bylaw changes.
- Nancy Mitchell also wanted to discuss the *Downtown Safety Action Plan (DSAP)*.

- The DSAP was the result two years ago from a pilot project. The most visible aspect of the plan was the Community Safety Officers (CSO's) doing sweeps which included problem areas in the Newcastle Neighbourhood.
- Staff was submitting a report to City Council on the costs associated with 3 different scenarios including increasing the amount of officers, increasing the coverage area and increasing coverage of The Clean Team.
- The report would be used when looking at costs for the upcoming City's budget in 2025.
- Karen Kuwica reminded the membership that the **CSO** number is **250-268-7440**.

8) Neighbourhood Updates

- Janet Bouchard was wondering if there were any updates about 360 Vancouver Ave. Fred MacDonald reported that the residents at that address felt that they were being harassed and that the City had exhausted all their enforcement options.
- It was discussed at the last NCA meeting that they NCA should look into title searches for the cost of \$16 so the NCA could address issues with rental properties directly with the owners.
- Karrie Brennan offered to volunteer her services to look up the information and donate the costs associated with the searches as it was easy for her to access the information as a Realtor.
- Karen Kuwica reported that someone was laying under a blanker at the corner of 333 Vancouver Ave/Mount Benson. CSO's were called and moved the person along.
- She also reported an incident along the Seawall Sunday evening when an individual with no shoes appeared to be in some mental distress. The RCMP were called.

- Rob Squire reported that a tent was put-up on Cypress Avenue across from his house. RCMP were called but the individual was gone by the time they arrived.
- Karen Kuwica pointed out that it was important that if anyone saw anyone put up tents on private property that the CSO's be called to help connect the individuals with services or help prevent any issues before they begin. If they CSO's can't help, they will often call the RCMP who will respond to their calls.
- She also warned the neighbourhood that there was an entrenched encampment under the pedestrian bridge at the foot of the Millstone River that connects to Millstone Avenue.
- There was also an encampment by the Pearson Street Bridge Park on the Millstone Embankment. Two deceased persons were pulled up by the Fire Department but their camp was left. As a result, it had been reestablished and built up. There is little appetite by the City to clean up the area as the last clean-up cost \$50,000 and they were not reimbursed by MOTI. There are also jurisdictional issues with responsibility for the area so it is a difficult problem to solve when it comes to responsibility for the bank.

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, June 6th, 2024, at 7 PM on Zoom._

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga