

Newcastle Community Association – Regular Meeting

September 3rd, 2024, at 7 PM on Zoom

The meeting was called to order by NCA President Karen Kuwica at 7:03 PM.

1) Review and adopt minutes of July 9 2024.

- A motion to adopt the minutes by Nancy Mitchell and seconded by Darrel Gyorfi Passed.

2) New Business

Developer Doug Backhouse gave an update on the Seaglass project at 360 Stewart/ 345 Newcastle. He noted that pre-sales were underway and 5 of the 17 units had been spoken for. Next step is a building permit which was applied for in March 2024 and could take up to a year to be approved by the City. He noted that the BC Building Code has been updated to remove the requirement for a second exit stairwell in buildings up to six storeys but too late to take advantage of in this project.

3) Stewart Avenue Calming Update

Director Nancy Mitchell gave an update on a meeting about traffic calming on Stewart Avenue she and Fred MacDonald had with Jamie Rose, Transportation Manager at the City of Nanaimo on July 16 2024. The subject has been identified by the NCA membership as one of our neighbourhood priorities. The meeting was held in advance of community engagement by the City on the subject which is expected to be held sometime in the fall. Discussion centered on:

- Whether the NCA should hold a pre-engagement workshop to figure out what traffic calming measures we would like to see as a community before the City engagement takes place.
- The neighbourhood should take into consideration how measures would impact factors such as economic activity for businesses and parking in the area (less parking could push vehicles onto neighbouring streets).
- Members Darrel, Doug, Fred, Karen, Irene and Nancy volunteered to form a subcommittee to discuss the subject further.

4) Public Safety Follow-Up Meeting with Minister Shelia Malcomson

- President Karen Kuwica reported on a meeting with Minister Sheila Malcomson regarding violent prolific offenders on Aug 22 2024.

- The meeting was requested by the Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network as a follow-up to a meeting on April 13 2023 with the province and representatives of Nanaimo's neighbourhood associations with regard to the province's plan to target violent prolific offenders with an inter-agency team-based approach.
- President Karen Kuwica noted that, according to Nanaimo's neighbourhood associations, not much has changed since then and there has not been any feedback or updates provided by the Province. Prolific offenders are still being released into the community. Eleven prolific offenders were targeted in Nanaimo and all are now back on the street. Nanaimo was recently named the 6th most dangerous community in BC.

5) Dog survey/ Dog Park

- If a workshop was held to discuss Stewart Avenue, suggestion was made that we could organize a survey at the same time regarding creating a dog park in the neighbourhood as it is also one of our neighbourhood priorities.
- Karen Kuwica noted that she had seen 5 new dogs in the area and a younger population on the seawall who might want to use this type of amenity.

6) Newcastle Safety Audit Review

- Newcastle Neighbourhood Safety Audit was completed in 2021 in conjunction with the Community Policing Coordinator.
- Participants walked through the community and identified potential trouble spots i.e. overgrown vegetation as places to hide, dark streets at night with no lighting, vacant buildings.
- The new Community Policing Coordinator, Dan Hopkins, has drafted an update on the Newcastle Safety Audit to assess whether the recommendations in the report have been actioned. The NCA Executive will be meeting with Dan on Sept 6 2024 to provide our comments on the draft.
- President Karen Kuwica asked members if they felt safe walking at night around the neighbourhood. Of the people who responded, most felt safe to do so.
- Mention was made of motorcycles driving very fast on Vancouver Avenue between 9:30 and 10:30 pm

7) ILLUMINIGHT Planning

ILLUMINIGHT is the annual holiday lights festival held in December in the Newcastle neighbourhood. Judging takes place the second Sunday in December.

- Last year, the NCA organized a community dinner and bake sale to raise funds for the NCA. Treasurer Fred MacDonald said that there were enough funds available this year to do it again.
- President Karen Kuwica noted that we would need more volunteers this year to make sure that things went smoothly. She proposed using the Nanaimo Yacht Club again for the event, the same band, and same menu. [NB: Yacht Club is confirmed for Dec 15 2024]
- Dinner (baked potato and toppings) would be potentially \$15, wine \$7, and a hot drink \$2.
- Some discussion about a 50/50 draw or raffle. Fred to investigate licensing.

8) Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network (NNN) Update

- The next NNN meeting will be held October 15th.
- Major item on agenda is to confirm purpose and objective of the group.
- City Planning staff will also present an updated “Planning 101” course which will be beneficial considering all the new building and zoning legislative changes the Province of BC has introduced recently.

9) Development Updates

- Director Nancy Mitchell said that there was no new development projects other than Seaglass on Stewart Ave and The Station on Terminal Ave N.
- The City of Nanaimo is continuing to replace the water main on Townsite Avenue. There will be some traffic issues/ road closures when they start working on the section between Holly Ave and Vancouver Ave in mid to late October.

10) Neighbourhood Updates

- Sad news. President Karen Kuwica reported that a neighbour on Mt. Benson passed in their home and went undiscovered until yesterday.
- There was also an individual found deceased on the 210 Caledonia property recently. Both deaths are not considered suspicious.

- Karen Kuwica reported that the old 7-11 on Terminal Avenue is now under new ownership. The property was purchased by a young developer who lives in Port Moody. It is currently being rented out for parking to the surveyor next door. She has spoken with the new owner and let them know that it would be an excellent opportunity to use the space for a neighbourhood coffee shop.
- Karen Kuwica also reported that she heard gunshots in the area and called it in to the RCMP.
- Treasurer Fred MacDonald reported that the dumpster is back in front of 360 Vancouver Avenue and that they continue to run what is an illegal recycling business under the zoning bylaw.
- Belinda Climenhaga reported that there was a tent set up on the vacant property by Terminal Ave/ Cypress the other day.
- Rob Squire said that a tent was set up on his side yard. The RCMP responded and dealt with it quickly.
- President Karen Kuwica informed the membership that there was an encampment in the St. George Ravine with access by the Spot Motel.

11) Block Watch Updates

- President Karen Kuwica stressed the importance of Block Watch in our community and the sharing of information. It helps create a sense of community and safety in our neighbourhood.
- Bryden Court, 160 Vancouver Avenue needs a Block Watch Captain. Anyone interested, please contact Karen Kuwica for information.

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, October 1st, 2024, at 7 PM on Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga