

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

**Tuesday, February 4 2025, at 7 PM on Zoom**

The meeting was called to order by NCA President Karen Kuwica at 7:05 PM.

### **1) Review and adopt minutes of January 7, 2025**

**Peter Giovando moved adoption of the minutes of Jan 7 2025. Suzanne Groulx seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

### **2) New Business**

- Update about the trees on Bryden/Vancouver Ave which have been obstructing views of the corner and stop sign and people have been congregating behind the trees. A work order has been generated with the City of Nanaimo and they will be removed. A separate work order will have to be generated for the suckers popping up as the tree removal company was only contracted to remove the trees.
- According to the City, it is the job of the property owner to cut trees; and up to the neighbourhood association to make a complaint to bylaws.
- A walkabout of the Newcastle neighbourhood was suggested to help identify other issues that need attending to with a tentative date of Saturday April 12 2025. The format will be similar to the Neighbourhood Safety Audit conducted several years ago.

### **3) AGM March 4<sup>th</sup> , 2025**

- The Annual General Meeting will occur on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2025 before the NCA regular monthly meeting.
- Nancy Mitchell will send out reminders to those members who need to renew their memberships.
- In order to vote at the AGM, memberships must be current and up-to-date.
- Executive Director Suzanne Groulx will be the nominations chair. Please email Suzanne Groulx if you would like to nominate someone for consideration for a place on the NCA Executive.

### **4) Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Community Organization Presentation**

- The RDN Alliance group originally started in Nanoose and is concerned about rising taxation and the trend in municipal government to remove certain democratic processes which would bypass voter approval of large public work projects.
- It was agreed to invite them to make a brief presentation at the March meeting after the AGM.

### **5) Emergency Personal Preparedness Presentation, February 24<sup>th</sup> , Nanaimo Yacht Club 7PM**

NCA is sponsoring a presentation by the City's Emergency Measures Coordinator available for all residents on February 24<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30 PM at the Yacht Club. There will be a speaker from the City of Nanaimo. Snacks will be served. Attendees can also bring a water bottle as filtered water will be available.

### **6) Save Our Streets (SOS) Forum Presentation to the Nanaimo Public Safety Committee**

- The City of Nanaimo Public Safety Committee has invited NCA President Karen Kuwica who is a member of the SOS to make a presentation on Feb 12 2025 about the results of the SOS Forum held in Vancouver on Jan 23 2025. Karen, Fred and Suzanne attended the forum.
- She discussed how the efforts of the SOS through education and awareness have helped organize frustrated individuals and communities across BC to deal with the opioid crisis and mental health issues facing our communities. The Newcastle community was at the epicentre of the crisis and how we organized around the issues has been foundational in SOS's work.
- Fred MacDonald was especially impressed with the presentation done by the keynote speaker, Marshall Smith from Alberta, whose focus on recovery has been very critical to resolving some of the issues. His presentation is available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/Uum8Kbz1fO4?si=wLHJ2p3zyz7ac6AN>
- President Karen Kuwica noted that the SOS is all volunteer but provides the most opportunity to promote change and asked if the membership was interested in making a donation to the SOS to assist them in continuing their work. **Nancy Mitchell moved that \$100 donation be made to the SOS, seconded by Fred MacDonald. Motion passed.**
- It was also moved by Nancy Mitchell, seconded by Peter Giovando that travel costs of \$40 be paid to each of Karen Kuwica, Fred MacDonald and Suzanne Groulx for attending the forum.

## 7) NCA Nanaimo Public Safety Committee Meeting Presentation-Update

- At the Public Safety Committee meeting on Dec 18 2024, a motion was passed to ask the NCA to make a presentation to the committee sharing their concerns and experiences regarding the impact of homelessness on residents and local businesses. The request went before City Council at its meeting of Jan 20 2025 at which time certain councillors expressed concern as to why one particular association should be invited to this committee and requested that Council defer consideration of this item until after a discussion at a future Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) Meeting regarding possible amendments to "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272" [NB: Mayor Krog was the only member who saw the invitation as a reasonable request on the part of the Public Safety Committee and voting against this motion]
- The next GPC meeting is scheduled for Mar 10 2025. It's not known whether this subject will be on the agenda.
- In the meantime, Karen has been invited to the Public Safety Committee meeting of Feb 12 2025 to present the results of the SOS Vancouver Forum.
- We are also still waiting for the Vacant Property Bylaw report to be discussed at the Public Safety Committee. In the interim, it was suggested if there are issues with vacant properties in the neighbourhood e.g. The Old Bino's or White Spot, send an email about them to both Bylaws and City Council.

## 8) Nanaimo Neighbourhood Network (NNN) Meeting February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

NCA Executive Nancy Mitchell who attends the meetings hopes that they will finally get a chance to discuss the revised purpose and format of the NNN so that the group can be clearer about its function and mandate.

## 9) Development Updates

- No new updates.
- Karen noted that she has submitted a request to the city for a change in the lot lines on her property to make it more usable. One very skinny lot on the south side of the property will be moved to behind the house on the east side of the property. This changes the depth of each of the lots which has triggered a variance to the zoning bylaw and requires City Council approval. Notification of this variance has been sent to neighbours. Council will consider the application at its meeting of Feb 24 2025.
- If you wish to view the application , it can be found on the City of Nanaimo's website under "What's Building"

## 10) Neighbourhood Updates

- Fred MacDonald spoke to Business Licensing at the City regarding the property at 360 Vancouver Avenue and what appears to be a junk removal business being operated on the property.
- According to the City, they have a license only for a "mobile landscaping" business; and the business owner hasn't renewed his licence yet for 2025. The NCA will follow-up and remind the department that it appears they are conducting a business outside the scope of their current business license.

## 10) Block Watch Update

- Block Watch Captain Karen Kuwica reported that the RCMP were looking for a mobile couple in the neighbourhood who are often involved in violent conflicts between themselves.
- Junk is piling up on the embankment and ladders have even been installed to make movement easier. The City is leaving any clean up to the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT). Follow-up to try and get DFO and MOTT together will be done in March.

**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, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**, at 7 PM on Zoom following the Annual General Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Belinda Climenhaga