



MINUTES
SOCIAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD TUES., 2011-JAN-04, 4:45 PM
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET

PRESENT:

Z. Maartman, Chair
J. Kipp

E. Forrester
J. Neville

REGRETS:

V. Alcock-Carter
J. Cowling
J. Lekisch
J. Templeman

B. Barton
A. Evans
R. Meyerhoff
S. Welch

STAFF:

J. Horn, Social Planner

C. Hall, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 pm without a quorum.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM 2010-DEC-07

Deferred to next meeting.

4. ITEMS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

5. DELEGATIONS

- a) John introduced James Latour, who was contracted to update some of the indicators in the Social Status Report.

Mr. Latour advised that since being contracted in October, he has conducted basic research around the focus areas. He has completed a questionnaire which will be sent out next week to 50 representatives of social service agencies, organizations and societies.

Mr. Latour reviewed the 2007 Update with the Committee members. The following are some of his observations regarding present conditions:

Education and Learning

Dogwood completion rates have dropped, which is a concern to the School District. Rates are 5% below the province's average. Early years indicators indicate that a significant number come from at-risk families. There does appear to be some improvement happening however.

Employment and Income

The employment rate has dropped, and the median income rate is still below the provincial rate. The average women's income is still lower than the median rate, but has increased since the last update.

Housing and Shelter

In October, Nanaimo's rental vacancy rate was 3.3%. A discrepancy exists between rental rates and income. Social assistance provides \$375/mo. to spend on rent, but the average rent is higher than \$600.

Safety and Security

Crime rates are dropping in Nanaimo, but the general population, especially women and seniors, do not feel as safe as they did 10-20 years ago. In reality, Nanaimo is safer than it was 10 years ago. The Committee commented that this is a universal concept, in part caused by the media only reporting on negative issues.

Community Life

As part of the survey, specific questions will be asked regarding public spaces in Nanaimo to determine what they are being used for and whether the public are satisfied with them, how accessible they are, and whether they are financially viable. Feedback on improvements needed will be provided to the City.

The Committee inquired whether there was a way to determine whether the drop in EI meant people were back to work, or whether their EI had run out and people were now on welfare. Mr. Latour replied that that would be difficult to determine because in some cases when EI runs out, people do not go on welfare, and some enter the black economy. J. Neville advised that he would provide Mr. Latour with references to surveys done in other areas on money received and spent, which assists in determining the black economy.

In response to a question regarding whether donations were up, Mr. Latour advised that volunteerism and donations would be looked into when updating the 'Community Life' indicator.

In response to a suggestion, Mr. Latour stated he would also look into what people are dying from in Nanaimo.

J. Horn advised that when the update to the indicators is complete, the session with non-profits that SPAC had been planning to have, can be held to discuss the updated information, and to provide the organizations the opportunity to plan around fresh data. Mr. Latour concurred that it would be nice to know that the document

would assist in guiding programming, rather than just being used to apply for funding, and that it would assist the non-profits in making sure their mission is solid before they apply for funding.

J. Kipp suggested that Mr. Latour, John Horn and Lynne Brown attend a Finance, Policy, Committee of the Whole meeting and provide Council with an update on social planning, the indicator project, and the United Way.

Mr. Latour thanked the Committee for recommending the funding for the project, following which Mr. Latour left the meeting after being thanked for his presentation.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) A letter dated 2010-Dec-14 from Nanaimo Community Kitchens submitting their final report for the "Low Cost Cooking for Health" program for which they received a 2010 Social Development Grant, was received.

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. COMMITTEE UPDATES / COUNCIL UPDATE / INFO ITEMS

- a) PNAC – No report.
- b) Grants Advisory Committee – No report.
- c) Safer Nanaimo Working Group – No report.
- d) Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness – No report.
- e) Council Update – No report.

10. STRATEGIC PLANNING

11. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting date is Tuesday, 2011-Feb-01.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.