

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SAFER NANAIMO WORKING GROUP HELD
2009-SEP-22

PRESENT:

Councillor Fred Pattje, Co-chair
Councillor Merv Unger, Co-chair
Matt Hussmann, DNPS
Tom Hickey, Public Works
Doug White, Snuneymuxw First Nation
Inga Nielsen-Cooper, Tillicum Lelum
Dave LaBerge, RCMP
Tim Davidson, Bylaw Services
Marg Fraser, VIHA
John Horn, Community Planning
Gord Nixon, Community Policing
Gary O'Brien, RCMP
Bruce Anderson, Community Planning
Lorna Medd, VIHA
Jeff Ritchie, Parks
Gail Honeyman, Recording Secretary

Welcome

Councillor Pattje welcomed Councillor Doug White of Snuneymuxw First Nation to the group.

Status – Supportive Housing

Three societies have expressed an interest in operating the supportive housing on Wesley Street. The applicants will be interviewed and a decision should be made by the middle of next week.

The Tenth Street project is moving ahead quickly. It is going through the rezoning process. The design is about 60% completed and it is expected that the building will be finished sometime next summer.

Councillor Pattje expressed surprise that the Tenth Street housing will not have full time staff. Mr. Horn explained that this project is mainly for people with economic issues rather than social issues and full time support is not required.

CPSO - Staffing

The funding for the ambassador program at the CPSO is no longer available. Mr. Hussmann indicated that staffing models are being developed. It is understood that the DNPS will provide staff support. The DNPS budget has not been finalized and there is a need to meet with City Bylaw Services and the RCMP to map out a strategy. Mr. Davidson said that the City's commitment remains the same – Bill Kiselbach is the Bylaw Enforcement Officer dedicated to the downtown. Constable O'Brien said that the RCMP is still providing resources – RCMP members attend when they can and volunteers work out of the office. It is hoped that an RCMP officer can be there full time in January. Councillor Unger pointed out that there should always be someone in the office to provide service to the public.

Needle Boxes

Mr. Horn said that there are four needle boxes in the downtown area. There were 675 needles collected from the boxes. Correspondence was received from a business owner on Nicol Street complaining about the box in the parking lot of the unit block. This particular box is the most highly used. There was a discussion regarding the box and Mr. Hickey indicated that Public Works could move it if required. The general consensus was that the box should not be removed from the site but possibly moved out of sight lines. The graffiti should also be removed from the box.

Councillor White indicated that a lot of drug users congregate on the beach near the north end of the reserve. He wondered if someone could work with their health department with regards to a clean up of the site. He said that any assistance would be appreciated. Mr. Horn said that there is one needle box that is rarely used and that it may be better used at this location.

Corporal LaBerge said the RCMP are aware of the stress at the north end of the reserve. He indicated that Liahona Security is putting on a CPTED course in Nanaimo and perhaps could use this area as a training site to produce a CPTED plan. The industrial lands around this location are becoming derelict. The Nanaimo Regional Corrections Centre was approached about brush clearing at this location but they will not work on private land. They may consider clearing the public land.

Harris House Update

The health clinic has been operating for approximately six months and is well established. There has been moderate impact on the neighbourhood. Discussions have taken place with the school board with a view to diminish crime in the area. The school board does not presently have any substantive

plan for their property but they are willing to make it into a commercial parking lot.

There is no Good Neighbour Agreement in place for Harris House. The local business association does not want to sign one at this time.

The Wesley Street/Harris House area is under review at the CPTED Level II course which is being attended by Randy Churchill and two RCMP officers from Nanaimo. Cpl. LaBerge indicated that there are some tremendously derelict properties in this area. It is one of the largest undeveloped areas in the City.

Snuneymuxw First Nation

Councillor White said that they are looking into resources available inside and outside the community. There will be more input for the next meeting.

OCQ/NCCA/Harris House

The OCQ has questions about the saturation of social services in the downtown area. There are no easy answers. Decisions must be made about the dispersal of social housing, etc. There must be a balance in neighbourhoods. Discussions need to take place.

MOU – Communication/VIHA

This matter arose because of the lack of communication when the health clinic was moved to Harris House. A memorandum of understanding has been prepared. VIHA and the City will communicate with each other about anything that will impact either of them. The contacts are Ted Swabey, General Manager of Development Services for the City and Allison Cutler, Executive Director of VIHA. It was suggested that SAFER be the point of contact as the members are probably more aware of the issues, and information can be more effectively disseminated.

Dr. Lorna Medd – safe “crack” kits

There are more people smoking crack cocaine than injecting it. Studies have shown that mouthpieces make it safer and diminish the spread of communicable diseases. There have been studies done on the impact of these kinds of harm reduction measures in other BC communities. The distribution of kits would give an opportunity for engagement with the addicts. There will be no cost. VIHA would like to begin a process here.

Councillor Unger said the name carries a negative connotation. Perhaps the image could be changed to promote the harm reduction aspect.

Cpl. LaBerge asked if the reports could be made available.

Mr. Horn asked how the kits are being distributed in other municipalities. Dr. Medd will find out. Distribution should not be visible from the street. There should be some method to give privacy.

Councillor Unger said that prior to any kit distribution; the community needs to be educated. Harm reduction should be emphasized.

Tour existing supportive housing - Vancouver

Rain City Housing has a number of projects in Vancouver similar to the proposed projects in Nanaimo. Council has been invited to tour their facilities. The tour will take place next week.

CPSO Reports

Mr. Hussmann said that the reports were prepared as a requirement of Service Canada. There was a fair amount of research done and the findings are well summarized. There are no real surprises.

The meeting terminated at 11:35 a.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for 2009-Oct-20 at 10:30 a.m. It is an open meeting.