

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STREET ENTERTAINERS REVIEW COMMITTEE  
HELD 2009-JUL-22

PRESENT:

Councillor Merv Unger  
Councillor Fred Pattje  
Randy Churchill, Bylaw, Regulation and Security  
Veneta Roberge, Business Licences  
Bill Kiselbach, Bylaw Services (Downtown)  
Matt Hussmann, Downtown Nanaimo Partnership  
Bill Poppy, Street Entertainer  
Jeff Ritchie, Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Cpl. Dave LaBerge, RCMP Bike Patrol  
Mike Davidson, Nanaimo Port Authority  
Gail Honeyman, Recording Secretary

Councillor Unger opened the meeting and made introductory remarks. He welcomed the input from those present to work on a way to simplify the bylaw.

Mr. Churchill introduced Mr. Bill Poppy who is one of the representatives for the street entertainers. The other street entertainer on the committee was not present. Mr. Churchill pointed out that this is an opportunity to simplify the bylaw.

Mr. Poppy:

- make the bylaw less cumbersome
- feels that there are some things that were not thought about when the bylaw was written
- there are sites where there are no people
- could there be temporary spots opened when cruise ships come in
- consideration should be given to providing sheltered spots

Cpl. LaBerge:

- how would it flow as an entertainment venue rather than panhandling

Mr. Hussmann:

- it is important to deal with this matter.
- concerned with amplification used by street entertainers

- concerned about unlicensed buskers and those who have not had auditions

Mr. Davidson:

- feels that street entertainers are a positive influence in the community
- there are issues with street entertainers who are not licensed and who have not had auditions
- the Port is a willing participant in this process
- wonders if there are other street entertainers other than musicians
- street entertainers must allow for the free flow of traffic on the waterfront
- changes to spots would have to be approved by the Port Authority Board

Mr. Ritchie:

- Parks has a vision of more entertainers bringing more people into the area.

#### Street Entertainer Spots

Mr. Churchill

- suggested that there be a walkabout to determine where possible spots could be. The recommendations would then be brought back to the meeting next month.

Councillor Pattje:

- there should be different requirements for different types of street entertainers.

#### Simplify the Bylaw

There was a discussion about the bylaw. The street entertainers feel that it is confusing. Mr. Hussmann volunteered to work on simplifying the bylaw. He feels it has to balance the interests of the street entertainers and the business community.

#### Auditions/ambassador program:

Mr. Poppy:

- feels there is a lot of interest in this
- everyone entertaining is reflecting the community they are part of and should present a neat and clean appearance
- auditions are a necessary and should ensure the performers are competent
- there should be two or three people conducting the auditions who have a musical background
- musicians should have to meet certain criteria

Councillor Pattje:

- the Parks and Recreation culture committee may be willing to look at doing the auditions.
- auditions would have to be set once or twice a year

Mr. Churchill:

- the committee may have to discuss this further
- the human rights of all street entertainers must be respected including those who may have mental health issues or addictions.

Mr. Poppy:

- there may be some musical organizations in town who could help

Mr. Hussmann:

- perhaps involve the music educators at the schools and university
- asked if there was a formal busker association that entertainers could contact

Mr. Poppy:

- busking goes back to the middle ages
- there is a tradition
- the value of street entertainers is not presently recognized
- the busker festival helps
- wondered if the street entertainers could participate in concerts in the park in the summer
- need to improve the way that buskers are perceived
- street entertainers are viewed as panhandlers but they have specific skills

Discussion:

Ms. Colleen Walsh

- supports the buskers
- volunteered to help in any way
- street entertainers on the waterfront lift spirits
- street entertainers play an important role

Ms. Bruni Bruni:

- the street entertainer representative did not communicate with the street entertainer community
- there has to be a starting point
- would like to go on the walkabout
- feels a spot should be opened by the ice cream outlet on the Port Authority property

Mr. Churchill:

- street entertainers were canvassed and six applications were received. Representatives were selected from those most interested
- no one should feel that they are not part of the process

Mr. James Cunningham:

- is at the meeting to listen

Ms. Kathy Davis:

- spoke to as many buskers as possible
- does not believe that all buskers were informed of the meeting
- feels the current bylaw is punitive

Mr. Tim Lander:

- the City should encourage the malls to allow buskers
- busking should be allowed outside liquor stores
- allow musicians to play together without a group licence

Mr. Carl Evans:

- is a new street entertainer
- does not feel that he is represented
- did not know who was representing the street entertainers on the committee

Councillor Unger:

- this is a starting point, not a continuation point
- the process is going in a new direction

Ms. Davis:

- it is important to engage the public
- we must move on from the past
- this is a good start

Mr. Kiselbach:

- seems to be a lack of communication. Is there somewhere that notices can be posted

Councillor Unger:

- the Community Policing and Services Office could possibly be sued for posting notices and information pick up

Mr. Churchill:

- notices may be posted on the City's website
- there will be another meeting in the near future

Cpl. LaBerge:

- suggested the Blues Underground may be a resource

Councillor Unger:

- street entertainers can phone the Bylaw Services office at any time
- there must be a process for regulating the street entertainer spots
- some of the spots have impacts on property owners
- committee will work on identifying all street entertainers