

MINUTES
DOWNTOWN NANAIMO PARTNERSHIP
TUESDAY, 2006-AUG-01, BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL

Present: Bill Bestwick, Chair
Merv Unger
Blake McGuffie
Bruce Barnard
Dee Klein
Nancy Mitchell

Joy Cameron
Eileen Harakas
John Horn
Rick Hyne
Camela Tang

Staff: George Hanson, Partnership Managing Director
Andrew Tucker, Acting Director, Planning and Development
Fran Grant, Recording Secretary

Regrets: Doug Backhouse

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved with the following additions:

- New Hope Shelter update
- Web Site update
- Tendering process
- Internet domain

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by B. Barnard that the Minutes from 2006-Jun-06 be adopted. CARRIED.

4. DELEGATION

a) Darcy Olsen, Cambie Hotel – withdrawn

5. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

6. PARTNER REPORTS

- a) OCQA - Minutes from 2006-May-17 were considered.
MOVED by B. Barnard, SECONDED by J. Cameron that the Minutes be received.
CARRIED.
- b) NCCA – Minutes from 2006-Jun-22 were considered.
MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by J. Horn that the Minutes be received.
CARRIED.
- c) City – There were no new items related to the DNP.

7. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Arts, Culture & Entertainment:

C. Tang gave a verbal report:

- Disappointed that the request for a feasibility study on a performing arts centre was turned down by Council.
- Perhaps not enough historical information was provided to the new members of Council on the DNP Board.
- Arts, culture and entertainment projects are vital to a vibrant downtown but have been stalled at every turn.
- Feasibility study is critical to Nanaimo the Arts District & the Arts community, and they will continue to work on this issue.
- Arts events in Nanaimo have been very successful and appreciate that the City invests in these types of events.
- Looking forward to meeting with City staff on warming up the waterfront plaza, booked for Friday, Aug. 04.
- Reminder of all the festivals being held in the Downtown in August.
- In September the Infringing dance will be held at three different venues.
- Bite of Nanaimo also happening in September.

M. Unger noted for the record that Council decisions are made by all nine members of Council, and that the three Council representatives on the DNP are not dummies.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Art is powerful and can attract many people to Nanaimo.
- Council has been supportive of Arts and Culture.
- This is the DNP's budget and feel that this study should have been approved. This study would make recommendations for the future when the dollars for development would be available. Should revisit this issue in the future.

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by D. Klein to receive this report. CARRIED.

b) Business Development – Meeting Notes from 2006-Jun-22 were considered.

N. Mitchell noted that:

- Committee feels that the issue of parking should be revisited again. City should spearhead this and have a strategy in place by 2007.
- The City is about to open its new conference centre and it is not appropriate to have free 2-hour parking across the street.
- The current Parking Advisory Committee meets on Friday afternoons and this is not a convenient time for business owners.

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by B. Barnard to receive the meeting notes. CARRIED.

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by B. Barnard that the City re-establish the Parking Advisory Committee with a meeting time appropriate for all stakeholders and that membership include the City downtown bylaw officer; and that the City conduct a thorough review and discussion of downtown parking (on and off-street, underground and surface) with a view to completing a comprehensive downtown parking strategy by 2007. CARRIED.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Concerned that the parking issue has needed action for several years.
- The City has made piece-meal changes over the years but it's now important to look at parking comprehensively. It should continue to meet the needs of the new downtown and with a progressive approach to increasing urban expectations with the completion of the NNC.

- c) Housing, Design & Development – Draft Minutes from 2006-Jun-21 and 2006-Jul-19 were considered.
MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by N. Mitchell that the Minutes be received.
CARRIED.

Terminal Avenue

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by N. Mitchell that the DNP allocate up to \$2,000 to host a facilitated evening workshop including dinner for landowners and significant stakeholders in the Terminal Avenue area, and that the DNP allocate up to \$50,000 for a higher level of service towards a comprehensive development report including physical design and economic guidelines for a successful community design in the Terminal Avenue corridor.

Discussion:

- A get-together of people to discuss this issue should not cost \$2000.
- Need to find out what property owners want and what they envision. Bring them together with other stakeholders to talk about working together.
- Do not want to lose sight of the area. Need to plan before it is too late.
- Looking at matching funds to come from the property owners, not necessarily the City.
- This motion should be split into two separate motions.

MOVED by M. Unger, SECONDED by B. McGuffie that the motion be tabled until the next meeting. CARRIED.

B. McGuffie suggested that at the next DNP meeting, D. Backhouse be asked to present the BIABC Conference charrette presentation.

Heritage Façade Improvement Grants

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by J. Cameron that the DNP approve a Heritage Façade Improvement Grant in the amount of up to \$20,000 for 499 Wallace Street subject to the Housing, Design and Development Sub-committee's further review and approval. CARRIED

In answer to a question from a Committee member, G. Hanson advised that the money is available in the 2006 budget contingency fund. A report to City Council will be required to authorize the additional funds for the Heritage Façade Grant Program.

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by J. Horn that the DNP approve a Heritage Façade Improvement Grant in the amount of up to \$1760.39 for signage at 17 Church Street. CARRIED (1 opposed)

In answer to questions from the Committee, B. McGuffie noted that:

- This sign is designed to be sympathetic to the heritage character of the building.
- The signage criteria has to meet heritage sign guidelines and this proposed sign does.

G. Hanson noted that the intention of the original Façade Improvement Grant program was for awnings and signage and that, in addition to encouraging heritage preservation, the program is intended to help make heritage buildings commercially viable so as to enhance the potential that owners will maintain to a high standard and that these standards will further affect the design decisions for neighbouring non-heritage properties.

St. Paul's Anglican Church

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by N. Mitchell that the DNP provide a letter of support in principle to St. Paul's Anglican Church for their concept for a residential development at 100 Chapel Street; and that the letter indicate that the DNP encourages them to include storefront commercial space on Chapel Street, design to include enhancement and access to the Cenotaph Park, and to include 'affordability' in the housing component as they propose. CARRIED.

Marriott Hotel Proposal:

B. McGuffie noted concerns by the HDD Committee regarding the design of the hotel/condo tower:

- A draft letter is being drawn up by staff regarding comments from the HDD.
- The Design Advisory Panel is not a public process. No process has been set up by Council for public input on design issues.
- Can discuss this issue at a future meeting when design plans are available.
- T. Swabey will be attending the next HDD meeting to talk to this issue.

d) Promotions:

G. Hanson noted:

- The free Blues Fest being held this weekend is supported by the DNP.
- DNP also helped with the recent CHLY 'Streetastic' event held at China Steps.

MOVED by M. Unger, SECONDED by J. Horn to receive the Report. CARRIED.

e) Personnel:

G. Hanson reported that:

- The Marketing Events Coordinator, Heather Waters, is leaving and Corry Hostetter has been hired to replace her.

In answer to a question from the Committee, G. Hanson gave the following clarification of the role of the Personnel Sub-committee:

- The Sub-committee is there to review the performance of the Managing Director and to assist when called upon to help with personnel matters of the Managing Director.
- Hiring of support staff is the responsibility of the Managing Director and not the Personnel Sub-committee.

- The Sub-committee has not met since about October of 2005.

The Committee asked that clarification of Personnel Sub-committee membership be added to the September Agenda under Outstanding Issues.

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by E. Harakas to receive the Report. CARRIED.

f) Financial:

B. McGuffie distributed copies of the audited DNP Financial Statements for 2005 and the budget actuals for the first six months of 2006. He also noted that as costs for the audit have increased, that this job be put out to tender for 2006.

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by B. Barnard that the Financial Report be received. CARRIED.

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by M. Unger that the audit process be put to tender. CARRIED.

8. OUTSTANDING ISSUES

a) DNP Structure – update

G. Hanson noted that:

- He will be meeting with T. Swabey and the City's solicitor on Wednesday, Aug. 02 to work on the Structure Agreement.
- This meeting is expected to produce good results and move the process forward.
- The financial component will be separate from the society structure bylaws. It is expected this will be carried over from the original agreement.

b) Safety and Security - update

G. Hanson advised that:

- A City staff report and recommendations are going to Council on Monday, Aug. 14.
- The report asks that two new committees be set up immediately to deal with social and enforcement issues. The DNP will be represented on these committees.
- Another recommendation is to increase the number of RCMP in the downtown.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Even if the number of RCMP working in the downtown is increased by four, that works out to only one new officer per shift.
- Would like to have representatives from the Living Room, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), and those who organized the homeless census attend the next DNP meeting as a delegation.

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by M. Unger that delegations from the Homeless Census, Living Room, VIHA, and the Island Crisis Care Society be invited to attend the next DNP meeting. CARRIED.

c) Pearson Park Signage:

MOVED by N. Mitchell, SECONDED by M. Unger to ask City staff to bring a report on this issue to the next meeting. CARRIED.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Report from A. Tucker re: Transfer of Funds from Residential Conversion Tax Exemption Reserve to DNP Capital Budget.

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by J. Horn that the DNP request City Council to authorize the transfer of \$94,000 from the Residential Conversion Tax Exemption Reserve to the DNP Capital Budget. CARRIED.

- b) Liquor License Application (Location Transfer) – Dizzy's:
A. Tucker distributed information packages and gave a brief overview.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Have been contacted by downtown business owners who are very concerned about parking constraints and that this type of business will just add to the congestion.
- Feel there are already more than enough licensed premises in the downtown.
- The DNP did not support the original license application and does not support this move.
- Vision for the downtown is for a place to live, work and play. This type of establishment is not conducive to this vision.
- Strongly oppose this transfer as the clientele it attracts cause problems for other businesses especially those that are open 24-hrs per day (i.e. those offering accommodation to visitors).
- When the Press Room nightclub closed, late night anti-social behaviour in the Skinner Street area dropped significantly.
- This type of facility will not help attract new business development to the downtown.
- Would be counterproductive to attracting more residential development.

MOVED by B. McGuffie, SECONDED by J. Cameron that the DNP strongly opposes the transfer of Dizzy's liquor license from 44 Commercial Street to 241 Skinner Street. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Committee asked that G. Hanson forward their comments on this application to Mr. P. Wipper as well as to the Mayor and Councillors.

- c) China Steps Signage:
G. Hanson showed the Committee conceptual drawings of the proposed signage and also noted that the owner has been working with the Business Development Subcommittee and the signs have been approved in the Capital budget for \$3275 (plus tax).

MOVED by J. Horn, SECONDED by E. Harakas that DNP supports spending \$3275 (plus tax) on the China Steps signage. CARRIED.

- d) Capital Budget:
G. Hanson noted that:
- \$240,000 has been budgeted for the 'warm up the Harbour Front Plaza' project.
 - Planning to put up to \$40,000 into design work which is the upper-end estimated design cost.
 - Will consider looking for additional funds through corporate fundraising once a design is approved.

- The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department also has \$100,000 ear-marked for public art in this plaza and the design work will tie in with the 'Live Site' initiative and other known and anticipated program uses.

C. Tang noted that:

- Preliminary thoughts will be addressed at the meeting on Friday, Aug. 04 and the project will, of course, require ultimate approval by Council once a design is developed.
- Guidelines will come back to the DNP for review.

MOVED by C. Tang, SECONDED by N. Mitchell that the DNP approve up to \$40,000 on design work for the 'warm up the Harbour Front Plaza' project. CARRIED.

e) New Hope Shelter:

G. Hanson advised that:

- The New Hope Shelter Advisory Committee (NHSAC) has had two meetings in the last two months.
- Design and programming concerns were voiced by members of the NHSAC and so far those concerns have not been addressed. They are:
 - It seems that programming by the Salvation Army may not result in the 'living room' facility being as accessible as has been expected.
 - The need to accommodate smoking in the building on the main floor has not been addressed. Even though in response to the concern raised a thought is that the second floor smoking room could be made available, this raises building security issues and it can be anticipated that the easier path will be for people to stand outside in front of the building to smoke. It is estimated that 80% of the clientele are smokers.
 - The combination of building design and space challenges, programming and policy questions, combined with the habits of the demographic being served, seem to suggest that the present course will not achieve some of the City and downtown stakeholder expectations.
 - One of the key interests of the City and downtown stakeholders from the outset of this project several years ago were that it include an accessible living room component so that those in need could find a safe place and get off the street and so that from the standpoint of the dignity and comfort of the clients and for the benefit of community image and public relations, people seeking food and shelter would not have to congregate outside in front of the building on busy Nicol Street.
- It seems that these concerns have not and are not being given serious attention and that the end result will be somewhat less than we have expected.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Since the City is contributing \$300,000 towards this project, they should have some say in it. Can Council look into these issues? Perhaps a letter should be written to Council outlining these concerns.
- Salvation Army is a large corporation and the local management may not have the power to make these changes.
- Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness (NWGH) could take some of these issues on board and may have some leverage with the Salvation Army.

G. Hanson will give a verbal report to the NWGH and report back to the DNP at the next meeting.

MOVED by M. Unger, SECONDED by J. Cameron to receive the report. CARRIED.

f) Website:

G. Hanson noted that:

- The redeveloped website will be officially launched on Aug. 10 with a special event at the Old City Station Pub.
- The event will be by invitation and runs from 5:00 – 8:00 pm.
- The DNP budgeted \$5,000 for website redevelopment in 2006 and DNP staff have negotiated with Techweavers in the Old City Quarter to develop the new site at no cost to the DNP.

MOVED by M. Unger, SECONDED by J. Horn to receive the report. CARRIED.

g) Tendering:

R. Hyne asked if the DNP has a tendering process for projects over a certain dollar value that would give other business an opportunity to bid?

G. Hanson advised that:

- Tendering would slow the process considerably and would add to cost and staff time.
- The DNP always looks for the best product for the price.
- The DNP goes out of its way to deal with downtown businesses.
- A request for proposal is done as a matter of course for large projects and because we do not have an RFP policy we enjoy the flexibility to negotiate with product and service providers until we get the deals we want, including sponsorship.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Have a requirement that businesses belong to the NCCA or OCQ in order to bid on projects.
- If there have not been any problems with the process, why change it?
- Just has to be perceived that we have an open process.

MOVED by M. Unger, SECONDED by J. Horn to receive the report. CARRIED.

h) Internet Domain:

C. Tang advised that:

- The DNP's website is "nanaimodowntown.com" but she has learned of a new website calling itself "downtownnanaimo.com".
- This could be very confusing to the public.

R. Hynes advised that he owns the "downtownnanaimo.com" website.

Some comments from Committee members were:

- Nothing can be done to change other website names. An attempt can be made through the courts but this can be very expensive.
- Need to make sure that comments made during DNP meetings do not appear on the other website.

- It may be legal, but it is unethical for an NCCA Board member and an alternate to the DNP to set up a website to compete for traffic with that of the DNP.

MOVED by B. Barnard, SECONDED by J. Horn to receive the report. CARRIED.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS

None.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, 2006-Sep-05 at 5:15 p.m. in the Board Room, City Hall.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

g:\commplan\dt\dnp\min_agen06\min_Aug01