



## **AGENDA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING**

September 25, 2018, 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM  
Board Room, Service and Resource Centre,  
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Pages

1. **CALL THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE TO ORDER:**
2. **INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:**
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**
4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**
  - a. **Minutes** 2 - 5

Minutes of the Special Community Engagement Task Force Meeting held in the Board Room, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Tuesday, 2018-AUG-07 at 4:30 p.m.
5. **PRESENTATIONS:**
6. **REPORTS:**
7. **OTHER BUSINESS:**
  - a. **Discussion Regarding Mid Year Report - Community Engagement Task Force** 6 - 12

To be introduced by Sheila Gurrie, City Clerk.

*Purpose: To discuss the outcome of the report titled "Mid Year Report - Community Engagement Task Force" provided to Council during the 2018-SEP-24 Committee of the Whole meeting.*

[Note: Report titled "Public Engagement Pilot Program Update" dated 2018-SEP-24, attached for reference.]
  - b. **Discussion Regarding Final Session of Pilot Program**
8. **QUESTION PERIOD:**
9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**MINUTES**  
SPECIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING  
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE  
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC  
TUESDAY, 2018-AUG-07, AT 4:30 P.M.

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Present: Norm Smith, Chair  
Les Barclay  
Ian Gartshore  
Nancy Mitchell  
Rosemary Secord

Absent: Robert Fuller  
Erin Hemmens  
Bill Manners  
Peter Urquhart

Staff: J. Vanderhoef, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Community Engagement Task Force Meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Nancy Mitchell advised that she would be adding an item under Agenda Item 7 – Other Business regarding a Report to Council on Sessions One, Two and Three.
- (b) Nancy Mitchell advised that she would be adding an item under Agenda Item 7 – Other Business regarding a Report to the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition.
- (c) Ian Gartshore advised that he would be adding an item under Agenda Item 7 – Other Business regarding Discussion of a November Event.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda, as amended, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Community Engagement Task Force Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Tuesday, 2018-JUL-24, at 4:30 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

- (a) Discussion and Debrief regarding the Community Engagement Session held on 2018-JUL-28, titled “Homelessness: How Do We Increase Understanding and Move Towards Action”
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Community Engagement Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- disappointment in the number of evaluation forms submitted;
- consensus that it was a successful session;
- would like to have seen more Councillors in attendance;
- anticipated negative comments did not come forward, aside from a few online submissions;
- a downtown location may have produced a different crowd;
- diversity of the crowd with different views and input;
- education/information shared;
- performance of the moderator and stewards;
- comment heard regarding the range of panel members and a request that homeless individuals be invited as panel members in future;
- need for more forward planning;
- general tone and attitudes of people who attended;
- first questions affect on peoples emotions;
- how to contact the people who attended previous sessions to follow-up;
- what are the possibilities of emailing previous attendees and in future including a check box on forms “May we contact you?”;
- some confusion regarding the instructions and process during the session;
- second question “what can you do” seemed to stump people;
- some confusion regarding the non-violent confrontation statements at the start of the meeting; and,
- adjusting how the sessions close so they do not feel so abrupt.

- (b) Reporting to Council Regarding Sessions One, Two and Three

Community Engagement Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- preparing one report covering all three session for Council;
- a committee member starting the draft of this report;
- report should be 2-3 pages with recommendations on moving forward;
- each member can send their top 3 suggestions/thoughts to Nancy Mitchell; and,
- attempt to have a draft report ready for review by the end of this month.

It was moved and seconded that the Community Engagement Task Force prepare a draft report to Council, regarding their three Public Engagement Sessions, by the end of August. The motion carried unanimously.

(c) Report to Nanaimo Homeless Coalition

Community Engagement Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- a previous meeting with the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition to discuss what the Community Engagement Task Force has been doing;
- the Community Engagement Task Force promised they would report back to the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition in September regarding session three;
- sending a copy of the current draft report to the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition;
- YouTube video needs to be clearly provided;
- making some adjustments to the draft report before sending and asking John Horn, Social Planner, when the next Nanaimo Homeless Coalition meeting will be held.

(d) Discussion Regarding a November Event

Community Engagement Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- session four could be an introduction to the new Council;
- a way to get off on a good foot with the new Council;
- session two format would not be suitable for such an event;
- topic could be “a new future”;
- rotate through tables where people can sit down and ask a question;
- ways to use technology like “PlaceSpeak” to engage people and encourage youth to become involved?
- timeframe may be too short to plan for technology;
- City website being up on a screen with a tutorial on how to navigate the site;
- changing the culture of community engagement through the organization and getting Council to attend sessions;
- teaching people where to direct their questions and what options there are for raising their questions or concerns to the City;
- make this session a two part session:
  - first part would be a classic town hall to introduce the new Council and hear from the public; and,
  - second part would involve breaking out to tables for discussions.
- inviting the various community associations introduce themselves to the new Council and provide their perspectives;
- credibility of some community associations;

The Community Engagement Task Force meeting recessed at 5:18 p.m.

The Community Engagement Task Force meeting reconvened at 5:21 p.m.

- what would the topic be, open topic like session two?
- community associations coming to talk to Council to explain what they feel the priorities should be in their areas;
- suggest that the community associations hold meetings beforehand to determine their priorities to present to Council;
- this message could reach a broader group by spreading to the individual neighbourhoods;

- topics could be the Official Community Plan or the Strategic Plan;
- organizing people by their neighbourhoods for initial discussions and then addressing any identified similarities in the second half of discussions;
- seating smaller groups together if their neighbourhoods are located close to each other;
- timeframe for organizing such an event;
- Councillors presenting their election platforms to the public for feedback before acting on it;
- advertising the session to everyone and not limiting invitations to the community associations;
- may need to have people register ahead of time;
- aiming to determine common issues between the various neighbourhoods;
- using an open spaces layout for second half of the session to discuss the items that were highlighted in the first half;
- reporting from each table during the session;
- a micro townhall style where Mayor and Councillors move around;
- Community Engagement Task Force members making a list of their top ideas to review at a future meeting;
- attendance from each area may not be distributed evenly;
- City being divided into various areas ahead of time; and,
- who will facilitate and moderate this session? Some suggestions of Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council members, and Nanaimo Young Professionals Associations members.

6. QUESTION PERIOD:

- Dorothy Houghton re: Councillors attendance at session three, structure of community associations, and the Community Engagement Task Force presenting their report to Council.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 6:00 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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CHAIR

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CORPORATE OFFICER

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

AUTHORED BY TRACY LOEWEN, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING  
SPECIALIST

**SUBJECT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with a review of the Community Engagement Task Force, goals and accomplishments.

### **Recommendation**

That the report "Public Engagement Pilot Program Update", dated 2018-SEP-24, be received for information.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Community Engagement Task Force, established in July 2017, has been working to fulfill the following Council motion:

"It was moved and seconded that Council direct Staff to prepare a report pertaining to starting and hosting informal community engagement and public conversation sessions, which must meet all procedural requirements, with the intent to further community engagement and public conversation by the accommodation of a regularly scheduled, open topic, facilitated dialog in a setting distinct from Council's formal business meetings with the following parameters:

- An ad hoc committee of Staff, Council and the public be struck to assist in the development of the format, schedule and launch of the initiative;
- First session to be held in January 2017;
- Sessions will be held on a three month schedule; and,
- After four sessions a follow up review will take place with the intent to evaluate the success, participation and accomplishments of the engagements."

In 2017, the Task Force hosted the first session and two more sessions have been held to date. Each session has featured a different format from the previous.

## **PILOT PROGRAM SESSIONS**

### **Session #1 (November 23, 2017) – Augmented Open Space Technology, Vancouver Island Conference Centre**

Attendance – 60 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to hear from residents on the top most pressing issues they wanted to speak with members of Council about. Residents were asked ahead of time to provide topics and the top 10 were chosen to bring to the session for attendees to vote on. Of those 10 topics, the five with the most votes were chosen for moderated discussion. After 20 minutes of discussion, participants were encouraged to switch tables to open a new dialogue.

Feedback was mostly positive from participants. They particularly enjoyed the format, open dialogue and being able to choose topics. Participants also noted an improvement would be to increase the time allotted for discussions.

Cost for session: \$5,398.26– includes facility rental and refreshments (VICC), advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), supplies, facilitator honorarium (Pam Shaw and students from VIU Masters of Community Planning Program)

### **Session # 2 (April 26, 2018) – A Mini Town Hall, Beban Park Social Centre**

Attendance – 30 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to engage residents in a direct dialogue with members of city council about issues of concern to the community. The format was a micro-town hall and had a member of Council sitting at each table where community members could ask questions on a topic of their choosing. Each resident had 1 minute to ask a question, the member of Council had up to two minutes to answer and the whole table had five minute to discuss. Members of Council moved around to a new table every 30 minutes. One table was filmed and streamed live on Facebook.

Feedback from those attending was positive. Participants particularly liked the non-threatening atmosphere, the Q&A format and getting to know members of Council on a more personal level. A challenge that arose from the session was keeping discussions within the allotted time.

Cost for session: \$3,241.61 – includes facility rental (Beban Park), refreshments, supplies, advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), table facilitator honorariums

### **Session #3 (July 28, 2018) – Collaborative Action Process, Oliver Woods Community Centre**

Attendance – 60 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to find solutions to a chosen topic through collaboration. Prior to the session, the Task Force reached out to the public to gather topics of interest. The most submitted topic was homelessness. The session dived into the topic of homelessness and

featured a panel of members from the community speaking to their experience with homelessness which was then followed by attendees working through their reactions and then coming together to create action items to address this topic.

The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive with attendees feeling a sense of hope leaving the session. What they liked most was the format of beginning the session with panelists sharing their experiences and hearing diverse points of view in a respectful environment.

Cost for session: \$3,891.14 – includes facility rental (Oliver Woods), refreshments, advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), supplies, table facilitator honorariums

#### **Session #4 – TBD**

Planning is underway for the fourth session in the pilot program for a date yet to be determined.

**Submitted by:**

Tracy Loewen  
Communications and Marketing Specialist

**Concurrence by:**

Sheila Gurrie  
City Clerk



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE

### Report to Committee of the Whole, September 24, 2018

#### Purpose of Report

To review for City Council the three community engagement pilot projects held to date and make some recommendations for Council's consideration going forward.

#### Introduction:

The Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) consisting of residents, City staff and members of City Council was put together following a council motion in 2016 to create a public engagement pilot program to *"further community engagement and public conversation"* in a less formal setting than a Council or Committee of the Whole meeting.

To date, the CETF has held three pilot community engagement sessions. Pilot Project Session #1, in November 2017, was an open space technology discussion centered around *"Building Nanaimo for the Future: What are your priorities"* where five topics chosen by the community at large were debated and discussed in a round table format. Pilot Project Session #2, held in April 2018, and utilized a *"micro town hall"* format with participants bringing their own questions that they wished to specifically ask of members of City Council again in a round table set-up. Pilot Project Session #3, held in July 2018, demonstrated a collaborative type of community engagement where residents partnered with the city in developing an action plan to meet an issue of importance to them which, in this case, was *"Homelessness: how do we increase understanding and move towards action?"* This session was introduced by a series of panelists sharing their experiences about homelessness from a variety of perspectives.

#### Evaluation of the pilot session methodologies by attendees:

Participants in all three sessions overwhelmingly were satisfied both with the methodology of engagement and the outcome. At Session #1, attendees appreciated the opportunities provided to speak as well as the dialogue with other participants and they felt that their opinion mattered. For future pilots, those evaluating this session, wanted to see more in-depth discussion on fewer topics which aimed towards finding solutions to the challenges identified.

At Session #2, participants appreciated the non-threatening atmosphere, the Q&A format; and the low-pressure intimate conversations. Most importantly, was the opportunity for face to face interaction with Councillors in an informal setting. This allowed participants to feel more comfortable engaging with elected officials; to see them as "real" people who were friendly and passionate about their work and had a high commitment to the city of Nanaimo. One resident had never before met a Councillor in person. Those persons who acted as table facilitators also felt that it was a "really meaningful event" and a "well worthwhile exercise" that they were happy to be a part of.

At Session #3, participants appreciated the short presentations made by the panelists; hearing diverse points of view and range of insights; and the sense of shared purpose and compassion shown by all attendees. For future pilot program community engagement events, respondents stated that it was a good model and they were pleased with the process particularly the panel presentations although they would have liked to have seen more attendees who were living the homeless experience. Those completing the evaluation appreciated the attendance by members of City Council, noting that "it's powerful to have City Government present at meetings dealing with important community issues" and "I was empowered to know that I was not alone in how I feel about people on the streets."

In all the sessions, the majority of those who completed the evaluation form went away feeling that they had influence in identifying which topics were important to them; that their participation was welcome and respected; and that the experience itself was of value.

### **Results from the pilot sessions to date:**

The pilot sessions provide not only useful insights into community engagement methodologies but also in presenting recommendations about specific issues which are important to the residents of Nanaimo.

In Pilot Session #1, for example, the goal was to obtain feedback on issues of concern to residents and the promise was to listen and acknowledge their concerns. While a complete set of notes from the discussion is on the City's website, the following conclusions from the session provide useful insight for consideration when Council deliberates on its strategic priorities:<sup>1</sup>

1. Downtown Nanaimo is important to this community and support should be provided to stimulate development;
2. The need to enhance biking/ walking/ transit in Nanaimo through connectivity and improving safety on community streets is seen as a priority;
3. Nanaimo needs to assess the need for a one-stop recycling facility;
4. An affordable housing strategy is a must;
5. We need to ensure that new development, including south downtown waterfront reflects community values; and
6. We need to provide a more concerted and direct effort to support economic development.

One of the round tables at this session was specifically devoted to community engagement resulting in a lively and focused discussion on how to improve current practices. Some of these important points were able to be taken into consideration by the CETF in pilot projects #2 and #3 and will be considered for pilot project #4.

- Strengthening of neighbourhood associations to encourage citizen representation
  - Existing institutions that are not being fully utilized
  - Need to make sure that associations are credible, i.e. have annual meetings and elections
- More meaningful, authentic communication.
  - Try new technology to get ongoing feedback from the residents
  - Too many requests from the city for engagement; needs to be prioritized
  - Need consultation at the implementation as well as vision level
- Have a culture where asking questions makes you feel heard and respected at all levels
  - Emails being sent without responses
  - Speaking before Council often comes too late in the process to have any meaningful impact
  - Speaking to Council itself needs to lead to more opportunity for engagement
  - Allow questions by observers at committee levels

In Pilot Session #2, while a specific count of the nature and type of questions was not made, many of the issues raised revolved around housing for the homeless; development of 1 Port Drive; relations with Snuneymuxw; and the 2018-2019 budget with a few questions relating to better walking, cycling and transit and proposed and approved parking variances.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/your-government/boards-and-committees/nov-23-discussion-notes-transcribed.pdf>  
<https://www.nanaimo.ca/get-involved/community-engagement/community-engagement-archive/public-engagement-pilot-archive>

Pilot Session #3 was devoted entirely to an understanding of the issue of homelessness. Out of the discussion, seven themes emerged for action:<sup>2</sup>

1. Building an inclusive community;
2. Overcoming fear;
3. Addressing gaps in health care;
4. Changing how we look at housing and homing solutions;
5. Targeting supports for youth;
6. Addressing the economic impacts of homelessness; and
7. Improving processes for public engagement and accountability of all players.

One specific action recommended under theme #7 was indicative of the tenor of the conversation during the entire session. It asked for City leadership and key stakeholders to take out a full-page advertisement in the newspaper which:

- acknowledges that homelessness is a big issue in our community;
- commits to having regular conversations about this issue with the community, establishing a set of shared values, and communicating an action plan about homelessness.
- Shares stories of how individuals became homeless as a means of re-humanizing those who are living this experience so that we can collectively begin to see ourselves in the issue.

#### **Looking forward to Pilot Project Session #4**

The CETF mandate was to undertake four pilot projects of which three have now been completed. The CETF has been giving some preliminary consideration to the format of the fourth session which is scheduled to take place in November 2018. Two of our engagement objectives for this session are to:

- Define and discuss community issues and needs at a neighbourhood level; and
- Involve youth of Nanaimo more actively in the process.

At the first Pilot Project Session, a recommendation from those discussing community engagement was the need to strengthen neighbourhood associations to encourage citizen representation in the engagement process. Organizing a session geographically around neighbourhoods would provide an opportunity for a diverse group of residents of each neighbourhood to identify the issues that are of concern to them and perhaps are common across neighbourhoods. This would also provide incoming City Council members with an opportunity to more fully understand needs at a neighbourhood level before embarking on its next strategic plan.

The CETF is also conscious that the majority of participants at our sessions have been more than fifty years old and, as a result, we are missing an active component of our population. To encourage their participation, the CETF is giving thought to having the session moderated by a member of the Young Professionals of Nanaimo and to seek table moderators from the City of Nanaimo's Youth Advisory Committee.

#### **Conclusion to date:**

The CETF strongly believes that through these pilot projects, new avenues have opened up within the city for community engagement. Some city departments have followed up with engagements of their own using, for example, the open space technology developed in Session #1. The use of micro town halls in Session #2 proved to be a very successful method of direct citizen to politician interaction and could be used in any number of situations and perhaps several times a year. Session #3 proved that we could have a compassionate

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/default-document-library/july-28-2018-feedback.pdf>  
<https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/default-document-library/cetf-session-3-report-july-28-2018.pdf>

conversation in our community around a very complex, contentious and combative issue and that residents of Nanaimo are eager and willing to be an integral part of solutions for people without homes.

What the CETF has determined as most important in all of these pilot projects is that the goal of the specific community engagement must be fully understood before embarking on the methodology of consultation. Many other communities have come to this conclusion and have embraced, for example, the spectrum of public participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation as a basis for determining the level of community engagement required in a specific situation and subsequently the method of engagement.<sup>3</sup>

The CETF also believes that to be really successful community engagement needs to be an integral component of the culture of an organization and come early enough in the process to have meaningful and authentic impact. As expressed in the discussion on community engagement at Session #1, a welcoming culture is one where “asking questions makes you feel heard and respected at all levels.” The CETF believes that it could have a role to play in assisting City Council and staff in defining and implementing Nanaimo’s community engagement culture.

### **Recommendations:**

The CETF was established under the mandate of City Council and is obviously subject to the pleasure of Council. Accordingly, we offer these recommendations for your consideration:

1. That the CETF continue with planning and implementation of Pilot Project #4 to be held in November 2018 with one of the outcomes to be recommendations for improving community engagement processes; and
2. That the CETF submit a report to council early in 2019 recommending ways and means of implementing a culture of engagement within the City of Nanaimo

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<sup>3</sup> [https://iap2canada.ca/Resources/Documents/0702-Foundations-Spectrum-MW-rev2%20\(1\).pdf](https://iap2canada.ca/Resources/Documents/0702-Foundations-Spectrum-MW-rev2%20(1).pdf)