

MINUTES

SPECIAL GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
SHAW AUDITORIUM, VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTRE,
80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC
MONDAY, 2021-APR-12, AT 1:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor L. Krog, Chair
Councillor S. D. Armstrong (joined electronically)
Councillor D. Bonner
Councillor T. Brown
Councillor B. Geselbracht
Councillor E. Hemmens
Councillor Z. Maartman
Councillor I. W. Thorpe
Councillor J. Turley

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer (joined electronically)
R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
S. Legin, General Manager, Corporate Services
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
T Doyle, Fire Chief (joined electronically)
Supt. L. Fletcher, A/OIC, RCMP, Nanaimo Detachment
B. Corsan, Director, Community Development
D. LaBerge, Manager Bylaw Services
J. Rose, Manager, Transportation
A. Bandurka, Real Estate Clerk
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Agenda Item 7(a)(1)(2) – Downtown Active Transportation – Add PowerPoint presentation titled “Downtown Mobility Hub”.
- (b) Agenda Item 7(a)(1)(3) – Safety and Security – Add PowerPoint presentation titled “Social Issues (Safety and Security)”.
- (c) Agenda Item 8 – Procedural Motion – Add *Community Charter* Sections 90(1):
 - (d) the security of property of the municipality; and,
 - (f) law enforcement, if the Council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct of an investigation under or enforcement of an enactment.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2021-MAR-22, at 1:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. REIMAGINE NANAIMO:

a. REIMAGINE Nanaimo Update

Introduced by Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services.

Presentation:

1. Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning, provided Council with an update regarding REIMAGINE Nanaimo. Highlights included:
 - Five draft goals have been identified through public engagement
 1. Healthy – support well-being for all
 2. Connected – build a more sustainable community
 3. Enabled – promote a thriving economy
 4. Empowered – encourage social enrichment
 5. Ecological – protect and enhance our environment
 - 22 draft indicators were chosen under the five draft goals
 - Reviewed the top indicators for each of the five draft goals including:
 - Healthy – chronic/episodic homelessness, housing affordability, vacancy rates and mix of housing types in neighbourhoods
 - Connected – transportation by mode, access to daily needs, land use mix in nodes/corridors and public waterfront access
 - Empowered – traffic injury rate, inclusion and diversity, investment in arts, culture and heritage and participation in Parks and Recreation programs and services
 - Enabled – working age population, non-residential building permits and business growth
 - Ecological – greenhouse gas emissions, surface water quality, collected waste and water consumption
 - Each indicator will fall within an aspect of the doughnut model and will help us move toward a primary goal
 - The draft indicator set will help develop scenarios and options to meet the objectives and primary goals
 - Upcoming workshop, proposed for 2021-MAY-20, with the Committee, consultants and Staff to review the options developed and receive feedback before Phase 2 public engagement

- Anticipating challenges with population growth, economic development and climate change

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Where and how crime rate statistics fit in the doughnut model and REIMAGINE Nanaimo process
- Land use mix in nodes and corridors and how zoning limitations can be used to allow or disallow certain development in certain nodes
- Committee and Task Force input on the draft indicators and goals
- Business growth and traffic injury rates

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning, advised the Committee that Committees and Task Forces' would be consulted after the 2021-MAY-20 workshop. Business growth measures the total number of businesses and the number of people employed.

Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, advised the Committee that Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Zoning Bylaw could be used to restrict certain types of developments in areas.

Supt. Lisa Fletcher, A/OIC, RCMP, Nanaimo Detachment, advised the Committee that measuring traffic injury rates can assist in the growth strategies and show where improvements need to be made.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Measurements in inclusion and diversity
- Increase in employment may not reflect an increase in well-being of the community
- Revising the business licence application to acquire more specific information for data collection
- Using the City of Vancouver system to measure food security
- Interconnecting the goals and indicators of the doughnut model to show where plans can succeed in all aspects of the model

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning, continued her presentation. Highlights included:

- Inclusion and diversity are hard to measure as they do not contain hard facts or statistics and Staff are working on ideas to be able to measure these more accurately
- Consultants are currently reviewing the indicators and looking at ones that require less or more resources and will come back to the Committee with their findings

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Ensuring that we are listening to and making decisions based on community feedback

6. AGENDA PLANNING:

1. Governance and Priorities Committee Agenda Planning Matrix

Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services, advised that the 2021-APR-26 Agenda Planning document should include the Affordable Housing Strategy - Annual Implementation Update and Schedule D – Affordable Housing.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Communication regarding the 2021-APR-26 Meeting on Neighbourhood Associations sent to the various neighbourhood associations in Nanaimo and options for how they can participate
- Add Westwood Lake as a recreational facility regarding land use, multi-use trails, parking issues and others to the list of upcoming agenda items for a future Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting

Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, advised the Committee that regular contact with the neighbourhood associations is occurring and communication regarding the 2021-APR-26 GPC Meeting will take place with options for associations to form delegation groups and speak to the Committee.

7. REPORTS:

a. COMMUNITY WELLNESS/LIVABILITY:

(a) Downtown

Introduced by Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services.

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, provided the Committee with an introduction to the Downtown presentations. Highlights included:

- Discussion topics include five key areas:
 1. Public Realm Improvements
 2. Downtown Mobility
 3. Social Issues (Safety and Security)
 4. Key Site Redevelopment
 5. 1 Port Drive
- Reviewed past, current and future public investments in the downtown area including additional mobility improvements, bike lanes, Telus rental project, Front Street improvements and the Gordon Street hotel
- Goals for today's meeting are to provide the Committee with an update on work completed and seek clarification on next steps
- Staff to return to the Committee in the summer of 2021 to showcase work underway and future investments

1. Public Realm Improvements and Beautification

Presentation:

1. Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - In October of 2019 a list of downtown projects was brought forward to Council with some projects being accelerated for completion in 2020
 - Completed quick wins include clean up of Robson Street, refresh of crosswalks, temporary art locations, Phase 1 of Maffeo Sutton Park and the patio program
 - Projects underway include improving the wayfinding signage, 3D Nanaimo Sign, Tideline Park clean up and Diana Krall Plaza redevelopment plan
 - Staff have proposed a list of short term improvements and request the Committee's feedback on which projects are a priority
 - Once feedback is tallied Staff will come back with a business case to bring the top picks forward in the next budget cycle
 - The Committee can also bring forward ideas and Staff will research these as well

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Colour of the 3D Nanaimo sign
- Consistent branding of Nanaimo and it's signage
- Additional rainbow crosswalks
- Cost of additional washrooms
- Addition of basketball courts or a skate park in the downtown area such as 1 Port Drive
- Hosting more public events downtown post-pandemic
- Closure of Commercial Street and lifting the street to meet the sidewalk so it is level
- Outdoor art shows, more colour using banners, flower boxes and artistic crosswalks
- Ensuring that all businesses in the downtown core are consulted if closure of Commercial Street is officially proposed
- Increasing the budget for public art

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, advised the Committee that a study could be conducted on the closure of Commercial Street and potential for installation of recreational facilities and events at 1 Port Drive.

Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, advised the Committee that the budget for public art is \$50,000/year and Staff will come back to the Committee in June of 2021 to discuss events post-pandemic.

The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting recessed at 2:38 p.m.
The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting reconvened at 2:52 p.m.

2. Downtown Active Transportation

Presentation:

1. Jamie Rose, Manager, Transportation, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - In 2019 Staff conducted a downtown mobility update which showed areas in need of improvements and accessibility options
 - Staff reached out to the community and received feedback on items of priority including the intersection at Wallace/Commercial and Albert Street
 - COVID-19 has affected the priorities and changed some projects to be accelerated or held back
 - Cycling upgrades to Front Street, Albert Street, Pearson Bridge (planned for 2025) and Wallace Street (planned for 2028)
 - Reviewed intersection upgrades under construction or in design including Front Street and Church Street and Terminal Avenue and Commercial Street
 - Front Street improvements have enhanced pedestrian mobility as well which allowed for a co-funding agreement with the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC)
 - The intersection of Bastion Street and Commercial Street improvements include a raised crosswalk and repurpose of road space to increase the sidewalk space

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Increasing parking in the area south of Esplanade
- Cycling connections from Townsite Road, Vancouver Island University and downtown waterfront
- Lighting improvements at Stewart Avenue

Jamie Rose, Manager, Transportation, continued his presentation. Highlight included:

- Staff have discussed parking along and after Esplanade Street with the Province and the Province will not allow parking in that area
- Improvement to Comox Road and the Pearson Bridge are scheduled for 2025
- Three locations were considered for the new transit exchange with priorities noted as central location, safety, accessibility and connectivity

- The proposed transit location is the Terminal Avenue and Commercial Street location
- Further engagement is required for parking downtown and Staff would like to have a fulsome discussion regarding parking with the Committee or Council
- Public feedback gathered shows that parking is not expensive and there is sufficient supply
- Staff will look into better communication methods to show where the public parking is located in the downtown area

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Security lockers and bike locks to enhance safety and storage downtown for cyclists and pedestrians
- Ability to connect to an app through the parking meters to show where available parking is located
- Lack of parking especially during major downtown events and the data collected that shows there is sufficient parking downtown

3. Safety and Security

Presentation:

1. Dave LaBerge, Manager, Bylaw Services, provided Council with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Review of situations, resources and gaps in safety and security with recommendations coming from the Safety and Security Working Group to a future GPC Meeting
 - There are more homeless in the downtown area which is creating challenges in cleanliness and public use of the area
 - RCMP bike patrol and Bylaw Enforcement Officers (BEO's) operate during daytime hours so there is little security at nighttime to deter crime and improve safety
 - Health based responses are needed for disorder calls which creates a gap in services as RCMP are not supposed to deal with calls not crime related
 - There are 6 full-time BEO's designated to the downtown area and they spend most of their time dealing with cleanliness issues
 - Community Connect Program has three security officers and the Victoria Neighbourhood Association has self funded security
 - City funded security areas include the Old City Quarter, Pauline Haarer Elementary School, City Hall and the downtown parkades
 - Service providers can make a huge impact on safety and security in downtown by providing day spaces

- Gaps in service include parking facilities, Diana Krall Plaza, park wardens/caretakers and coordinated response to homelessness, addiction and mental health
- People coming downtown to events, to dine and socialize can naturally mitigate some safety and security concerns
- Preliminary recommendations include:
 - Permanent full-time sanitation staff
 - Volunteer warden or park ambassadors to encourage use of downtown parks and plazas
 - Investment in security and access control features such as parkade gates and updated security cameras
 - Implement a Graffiti Response Team
 - Strategy or checklist to mitigate outdoor fires and educate on alternative heat sources
 - Support and adequately fund RCMP and create opportunity for new positions
 - Shopping cart policies including abandonment storage and recovery costs; City Staff collected 527 carts in public spaces in 2020
 - Implement a community connect program for all resources to work together and mitigate issues before they arise
 - Join the Community Municipal Network in Crime Prevention program

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, advised the Committee regarding budget implications. Highlights included:

- Recommendations will be coming forward to Council with budget implications at a future meeting
- Additional security to entire downtown area with three permanent night patrollers
- Business cases for the preliminary recommendations will come to Council or the Committee for the 2022 budget discussions
- Staff will return to a future GPC for a more in-depth discussion regarding safety and security

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Dealing with the symptoms of homelessness and addressing petty crime and vandalism
- Best use of \$1.5 million over the next three years for private security or a better use of these funds
- Impacts on the business community and residents
- Lack of resources for linking homeless people to get help and housing
- Amount of funding and security costs 10 years ago compared to present day

Dave LaBerge, Manager, Bylaw Services, advised the Committee that 10 years ago there were two full-time, daytime security patrols and more than two on the streets overnight.

Lisa Fletcher, A/OIC, RCMP, Nanaimo Detachment, advised the Committee that RCMP are responding to an average of 400 mental health calls per month, lack of resources make it very challenging to find people the help they need and there are significant public safety concerns.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- BEO's handling mental health type situations and cleanliness
- Resources to help lessen the workload on the RCMP and BEO's
- Use funding for security to hire more BEO's
- Creating a task force for six months to assist in safety and security issues and make recommendations to Council
- Stronger advocating to the province for resources for mental health and addiction support
- Immediate solutions to help businesses and the community feel safe as less and less people are going downtown
- Short term and long-term care solutions as some may need permanent, complex care housing

8. PROCEDURAL MOTION TO PROCEED IN CAMERA:

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be closed to the public in order to deal with agenda items under the *Community Charter*:

- (e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the Council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality;
- (d) the security of property of the municipality;
- (f) law enforcement, if the Council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct of an investigation under or enforcement of an enactment.
- (k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the Council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public;

Community Charter Section 90(2):

- (b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting moved “In Camera” at 4:13 p.m.
The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting moved out of “In Camera” at 5:26 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:26 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER