

# ATTACHMENT G

## NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS MEETING

Thursday April 15 at 7:00 pm VIA Zoom

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Attendees: Brenda Grice, Cilaire Neighbourhood Association  
Pauline Vegt, Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association  
Horst Backé, Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association  
Lucienne Siedlecki, Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association  
Barbara, Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association  
Lawrence Winkler, Friends of Westwood Lake  
Sharon Kofoed, Friends of Westwood Lake  
June Bogle, Departure Bay Neighbourhood Association  
Jean Playton, Bradley Street Neighbourhood Association  
Nancy Mitchell, Newcastle Community Association  
Karen Kuwica, Newcastle Community Association  
Sydney Robertson, South End Community Association  
Mayta Ryn, Nanaimo Old City Association  
Brodie Tapp, Harewood Neighbourhood Association  
Tim McGrath, Harewood Neighbourhood Association  
Tereza Bajar, Neighbours of Nob Hill Society  
Barry Lyseng, Stephenson Point Neighbourhood Association  
Bill Manners, Dover Community Association  
Nelson Allen, College Parks Neighbourhood Association  
Douglas Naylor, Protection Island Neighbourhood Association

Staff: Chris Sholberg, Community/Heritage Planner  
Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager of Community Planning  
Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner  
Richard Harding, General Manager of Parks, Recreation and Culture

## 1. Introductions

## 2. PowerPoint

- Chris and Kirsty provided a short presentation outlining the two key recommendations that will be considered at the April 26, 2021 GPC Meeting.
- Introduction to the Neighbourhood Association Organizational Capacity Review survey results and neighbourhood analysis, and new criteria.
- Intro to potential Partners in Community (PIC) program and snapshot of the Partners in Parks (PIP) program over 40 years.

## 3. Discussion

### **General Discussion**

- In the past, sometimes more than one group have claimed to represent a neighbourhood.
- General discussion about the democratic process and neighbourhood representation.
- Discussion that Council needs to be asked why they do not listen to neighbourhood opinions on development applications and why they do not respond to feedback.
- Neighbourhood plans can take up to 2 years to complete and can be out of date by the time they are complete. Staff capacity limitations mean that they can not get completed. Consideration of focussing on a few strategic priorities instead of individual plans.
- Reimagine Nanaimo engagement will be coming back to neighbourhoods soon with scenario reviews and this is an opportunity to change the way the City does things and be more integrated.
- What roles do neighbourhoods play in governance?
- PIC program will take time to develop if Council gives direction to proceed. Drafts of the program would be brought back to the neighbourhoods for feedback in the future.
- Report and presentation to go to Council on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Chris will send link when available and all can register as delegations if they wish.
- Groups can also send feedback to be attached to the report.
- Chris will also send out the community engagement task force final report (2018) and instructions to be a delegation.

## **Specific Comments/Questions:**

**(Newcastle Community Association)**—what's in it for neighbourhoods? Will council give greater credence to neighbourhood association input? What review has been done for how other municipalities engage with neighbourhood groups? Likes the basic criteria, would like to see resources provided to support recognized neighbourhood associations. Wants development applications to require neighbourhood input—especially in council reports as a standard—not just the zoning requirement but all applications. Newcastle a lesson on the need for minimum organizational criteria. Also, with respect to community engagement task force, need yearly meeting between Council and Neighbourhood Association. Need to communicate directly more regularly.

**(Nanaimo Old City Association)** —likes the criteria as proposed. Thinks informal groups are ok too, and it's ok for associations to come and go. Desires a communication portal and as much info as possible for neighbourhood associations. There is a Neighbourhood Network Facebook page, but not everyone has Facebook. At first, the Old City neighborhood was not listened to regarding redevelopment of the old hospital site on Machleary Street. The neighbourhood voices need to be considered in Council reports related to development approval.

**(Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association)**—thinks criteria is important and likes what you have. Would like to see resources available to associations like a meeting space, zoom platform and printing (to cover or off set costs to neighbourhood groups). Finding a way to store information between neighbourhood associations might be very helpful. A portal on the city website?

**(Friends of Westwood Lake)**—questions why this new route? How will it be enforced? Have staff looked at what Vancouver does? They recognize everyone. Groups choose whether they want to be formal or not. Not everyone has neighbourhood plans and wants them. In the past, six month blitz plans were created but still not all were completed or followed. Feels these measures are a distraction. Supports looser measures.

**(Dover Community Association)** —what weight will council put on the opinions of neighbourhood associations? How much will Council give to a full neighbourhood organized response to an OCP amendment or other topic they were asked to respond to?

**(Neighbours of Nob Hill Society)** —likes the design guidelines for their area and feels they have not been followed. Frustrated that feedback about local development applications has not be addressed/listened to. After a while, the group asks why bother providing input if it's not seriously considered.

**(Harewood Neighbourhood Association)** —who monitors the groups and polices them? How do groups get invited to the neighbourhood network? How do neighbourhood associations interact with development applications/council? Concerns about Bruce and 5<sup>th</sup> not listened to/addressed. Avoid being like Business Improvement Areas (BIAS). Who determines study and association boundaries? Don't like what was decided for Harewood neighbourhood plan regarding plan boundary. Neighbourhood plans become staff's interpretation, and neighbourhood plan comments in Council reports are staff's interpretation—not the neighbourhood's. In favour of more structure for neighbourhood associations.

**(Stephenson Point Neighbourhood Association)** —Transportation is top 3 priority areas and are they buying in to collaborative process at the City. Why is no one from transportation in attendance? How will transportation be addressed going forward under new program? What is meant by “meeting on a regular basis” in proposed criteria? Can we ensure that there is at least one stream in the PIC Program that is simple, strategic, cost effective and quick?

**(Cilaire Neighbourhood Association)** —PIC Program-Wellness + Safety Stream. How does this relate to transportation? Is there overlap?

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## Neighbourhood Association Organizational Capacity Questionnaire Response Summary Highlights

- Organizational Capacity;
- Most Positive Change Over Last Ten Years Per Neighbourhood;
- Top priorities for Change Per Neighbourhood Moving Forward;
- What Role Should a Neighbourhood Association Play;
- Under What Organizational Criteria Should a Neighbourhood Association Be Recognized.

reimagine NANAIMO

Participants: 24  
Chat  
Share Screen  
Raise Hand  
Reactions

Video call participants: Lisa Shopalovich, Donna Allen, Brooke, Maya, Barry Livingston

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## Revised Recognition Criteria for Neighbourhood Associations

Proposed Criteria:

- Have an elected executive that meets on a regular basis;
- Have a membership structure (not necessarily fee paying);
- Hold an annual general meeting (AGM);
- Keep minutes for executive and general membership meetings;
- Engage with its neighbourhood for input prior to responding to City development referrals such as rezoning, OCP amendment, and development permits;
- Provide periodic updates to members related to the activities of the group.

reimagine NANAIMO

Participants: 24  
Chat  
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Raise Hand  
Reactions

Video call participants: Sydney Robertson, Sharon Kolstad, Barbara Riehan, Heidi Backus, Heidi Backus

## **Supplementary Input Provided by Newcastle Community Association after the 2021-April-15 Meeting:**

NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: Comments on the Presentation by staff, April 15, 2021.

### **1. Criteria proposal**

The Newcastle Community Association supports the following basic criteria for neighbourhood associations to adhere to.

- Membership based (fee or no fee)
- Annual General Meeting
- Election of executive
- Regular updates to members

We believe that these criteria would strengthen neighbourhood associations and encourage more citizen representation in the engagement process.

We do not support requiring neighbourhood associations to be registered as non-profit societies.

### **2. Partners in Community Program**

The Newcastle Community Association (NCA) welcomes any initiative on the part of the City of Nanaimo to assist in enhancing and making improvements to neighbourhoods. Staff and City Council benefit from being continuously aware of the issues and challenges being faced within each neighbourhood and we strongly recommend that the workshop initiative undertaken by the Community Engagement Task Force in 2018 to empower neighbourhoods be instituted as annual event to ensure that programs and projects are actually meeting community needs.

For example, NCA has been waiting for more than a year for the City to install Block Watch Signs in the neighbourhood that were paid for by the community.

In the development of this program, we would want to know:

- The amount of funding available to this program on an annual basis;
- Will neighbourhood associations be able to access other city grants for different projects at the same time;
- The criteria to be applied to applications and how these are weighted; and
- How projects requesting funding would be evaluated and by whom.

### **3. Expectations that neighbourhood associations have of City Council**

NCA is in favour of an additional slide being added to staff's presentation outlining the expectations that neighbourhood associations have of City Council. From our perspective, these expectations include making changes to the current development approval process.

Involving Associations early and often in a project's development process provides Developers with early insight into the dynamics and gives valuable insights into the needs of the neighbourhood. When proposals are "workshopped" at the staff level for months before they are made public without similar consultation with neighbourhoods an opportunity is lost which can cause avoidable delays and expenses.

Our goal is for "neighbourhood workshopping" outcomes to formulate part of the Staff report to council requiring that all development related reports going to City Council have a section containing comments from the neighbourhood association. It is not sufficient for staff to merely refer to a neighbourhood plan (if there is one) and indicate that the "project meets the requirements of the plan". In many instances, the city and the community do not always agree on the interpretation of the guidelines in a neighbourhood plan and council should hear from both parties. Many neighbourhood plans did not consider the kinds of issues many Nanaimo neighbourhoods are currently facing rendering them on some topics outdated in their current form. Thus, reinforcing the critical value of real time consultation with the neighbourhood early on in the development process.

The current flaws in the Development Permit Application process which encourages a developer to push ahead with a project without, as a statutory requirement, having to meet with the neighbourhood to obtain its perspective on the requirements of its neighbourhood plan. It's not a great process when a developer spends two years putting a proposal together and going through all the hoops at the city and then Council turns it down in the face of opposition by the neighbourhood. That creates inflated risk for the Developer.

We, meaning staff and the neighbourhood, should be working together so that we can be supportive and in favour of a development. We do not enjoy having to go to City Council to speak against a proposal.

In the redevelopment at 250 Terminal, NCA in all our meetings has tried to be clear as to the kind of framework against which the community would be assessing the province's plans for that site. We have shared these requirements with the city and BC Housing so that we could work together and be supportive of a development which meets the needs of all concerned. We now sense, however, that final and critical discussions on 250 Terminal are currently taking place without the association being included. This was NOT what we were assured of when we entered into the process in good faith.

Finally, the Newcastle Brechin Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in 2011 requires (page 135) that the plan be "monitored by the City with the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan reviewed annually with the neighbourhood association." We are still waiting for our annual review.