



MINUTES

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, October 23, 2023, 1:01 P.M.
SHAW AUDITORIUM, VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTRE
80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC

- Members:
- Councillor P. Manly, Chair
 - Councillor S. Armstrong (vacated 4:20 p.m.)
 - Councillor T. Brown* (joined 1:01 p.m.)
 - Councillor H. Eastmure
 - Councillor B. Geselbracht
 - Councillor E. Hemmens
 - Councillor J. Perrino
 - Councillor I. Thorpe (vacated 4:00 p.m.)
- Absent:
- Mayor L. Krog
- Staff:
- D. Lindsay, Chief Administrative Officer
 - R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
 - B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
 - T. Doyle, Fire Chief
 - B. Corsan, Director, Corporate and Business Development
 - J. Holm, Director, Planning and Development
 - D. Laberge, Director, Bylaw Services
 - L. Mercer, Director, Finance
 - L. Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning
 - E. Lloyd, Manager, Emergency Program
 - A. Manhas, Economic Development Officer
 - C. Wood, Social Planner
 - S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
 - N. Sponaugle, Communications Advisor
 - J. Tonella, Steno, Legislative Services
 - A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

Councillor Brown joined the meeting electronically at 1:01 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

(a) Agenda Item 6(a)(1) Nanaimo 2023-24 Warming Centre Recommendations – Add PowerPoint presentation from John McCormick, Executive Director, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, titled “Warming Centre Recommendations”.

(b) Agenda Item 6(b)(1) Municipal Development Corporation Background Report – Add PowerPoint presentation from Allan Neilson, Neilson Strategies, titled “Municipal Development Corporations”.

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 following Minutes be adopted as circulated:

- Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2023-JUL-17, at 1:00 p.m.
- Minutes of the Special Governance and Priorities Committee held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC on Wednesday, 2023-JUL-26, at 8:59 a.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. AGENDA PLANNING:

(a) Upcoming Topics and Initiatives

Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services, spoke regarding topics and initiatives scheduled for upcoming Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meetings. Highlights included:

- The 2023-NOV-27 GPC meeting will include a Traffic Calming Update, Development Approvals Process Update and Property Management Strategy Update
- An E-Town Hall will be held 2023-DEC-04 to gain community feedback on the draft 2024-2028 Financial Plan
- The 2023-DEC-11 GPC meeting will tentatively include the City Plan Draft Monitoring Strategy Introduction and the City Plan Monitoring Committees

The Committee suggested including a presentation from Dr. Julian Somers at an upcoming GPC meeting, to provide guidelines on the City of Vancouver's response to addiction, homelessness and mental illness, and what successes have been achieved.

6. REPORTS:

(a) Healthy Nanaimo:

1. Nanaimo 2023-24 Warming Centres Recommendations

Introduced by Jeremy Holm, Director, Planning and Development.

Presentation:

1. John McCormick, Executive Director, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, and Andrew Thornton, Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Warming Centres and Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) shelters offer daytime warming space for community members; however, last year the EMCR shelter also provided overnight shelter
 - Nanaimo requires multiple locations due to its linear design
 - Potential locations for daytime warming shelters include local libraries, reactivating the locations used in 2022-23, Caledonia Park, and a location in the north end of the city
 - More warming centres means less neighbourhood impact per warming centre
 - Costs are primarily based on safety and the effectiveness of the warming centre

Committee discussion took place regarding concerns with relying on support from Community Safety Officers (CSOs), as well as adequate staffing levels, rather than hiring security guards for Warming Centres.

John McCormick, Executive Director, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, and Andrew Thornton, Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The cost to fund an appropriately staffed daytime Warming Centre is approximately \$260,000 per year
- To help mitigate costs, the following was recommended:
 - Develop multiple locations across the city to assist as many members of the community as possible
 - Align Warming Centre operating hours with those of agencies serving vulnerable populations
 - Allow paid time in Warming Centre schedules and budgets for cleaning and maintenance, as well as staff hours for centre maintenance and staff respite from emergency planning
- A Standards of Practice should be adopted by all community agencies to allow for collaboration and to reduce impacts on the community
- Currently no designated funding is available to cover the costs of a Warming Centre

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Community Planners are actively looking for locations for an EMCR, and are aware funding is an issue
- The Systems Planning Organization (SPO) can work with Warming Centre operators to ensure the facilities are running as effectively as possible

- The SPO held meetings over the summer with community agencies involved in housing as a group, as well as with individual agencies to clarify details of the work done last year
- The north end of the city has less available facilities for Warming Centres, creating a gap in services
- CSOs should not be relied on for security as it is not in their mandate
- Community agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain appropriate levels of staffing
- All community agencies should be involved when developing a Standards of Practice, not just larger agencies
- Last year the City used funding from the Union of BC Municipalities' Strength in Communities Fund, which is no longer available, and no funding has been identified for the 2023-24 year
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) will act as the Extreme Weather Response Coordinator, ensuring shelter capacities meet community needs, and will issue Extreme Weather Alerts when EMCR sites are needed. The role does not come with funding, and is more of an in-kind contribution
- Based on 2023 Point-in-Time Count data, the number of unhoused people in Nanaimo is up 20% from 2020, and 80% of those surveyed had no access to shelter on a daily basis
- Focus should be on providing more permanent housing, rather than temporary shelters each year

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Communities should be consulted prior to securing sites to avoid issues surfacing later, determining a site unsuitable
- The City is on track to secure locations for EMCR sites that operate during extreme weather events
- Solutions should also be considered for wet weather, to provide individuals with a place to dry off

(b) Prosperous Nanaimo:

1. Municipal Development Corporation Background Report

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Corporate and Business Development.

Presentation:

1. Allan Neilson, Neilson Strategies, Michael Geller, The Geller Group, and Dave Witty provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- At the 2023-MAY-15 Regular Council Meeting, Council requested a presentation regarding Municipal Development Corporations (MDC) be presented at a future GPC meeting
- MDCs focus primarily on land development, and are municipality-owned
- The City is authorized under the *Community Charter* to establish an MDC, which is established and incorporated under the *Business Corporations Act*
- MDCs are effective at attracting investment to areas in need of revitalization, and are governed by a Board of Directors composed of industry experts

Committee discussion took place regarding remuneration for board members, and that it is more often a way to give back to the community in a volunteer capacity.

Allan Neilson, Neilson Strategies, Michael Geller, The Geller Group, and Dave Witty continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The Board would be accountable to the City, as a shareholder, for the MDC's performance, and would also oversee its own staff
- To establish an MDC in BC, a problem is first identified, options are considered, a structure is developed for the MDC, and approval is required from the Inspector of Municipalities

- Start-up and operating costs need to be considered, as shareholders often need to provide assistance in operating costs for the first 3-5 years
- A clear mandate needs to be established outlining the role of the MDC
- MDCs are independent of Council and tend to hire highly experienced individuals who may require remuneration for their services
- MDCs are not intended to be in competition with private development companies, but rather to collaborate
- MDCs need to have qualified individuals involved with different areas of expertise, and a Terms of Reference to set out the corporation's role

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- MDCs offer opportunities to negotiate land deals that municipal staff don't have
- Hesitation around developing MDCs comes from Council giving up control, and allowing an outside entity to have complete control over City-owned land
- Creation of an MDC would need to be accompanied by a clear mandate for why it's being formed
- MDCs can help leverage opportunities to utilize City assets to their full potential through outside partnerships
- The Committee requested to continue discussions regarding MDCs at a future GPC meeting

It was moved and seconded that Agenda Item 6(b)(3) Public Safety Committee Terms of Reference be reordered to follow Agenda Item 6(b)(1) Municipal Development Corporation Background Report and that subsequent agenda items be reordered accordingly. The motion carried unanimously.

The Governance and Priorities Committee recessed the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

The Governance and Priorities Committee reconvened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Councillor Thorpe vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 4:00 p.m.

2. Public Safety Committee Terms of Reference

Introduced by Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services.

- It was suggested that the Public Safety Committee, if adopted, run for the length of the current Council's term
- Tim Doyle, Fire Chief, Lisa Fletcher, Officer in Charge, Nanaimo RCMP, and Dave Laberge, Director, Bylaw Services, were consulted prior to creation of the mandate
- Proposed membership would consist of nine voting members made up of two members of Council and seven members of the public
- Member eligibility would be based on availability, experience and expertise, and have no conflict of interest with Council or the Committee
- Public safety is identified as a priority under the "A Healthy Nanaimo" goal of the City Plan
- Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges are one of six focus areas of Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Framework
- Although not specifically named, the advocacy portion of the Terms of Reference would note that the Committee would assist Council and the City of Nanaimo with advocating to higher levels of government regarding matters of drug toxicity

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council adopt the Terms of Reference for a Public Safety Committee (as attached to the report dated 2023-OCT-23, titled "Public Safety Committee Terms of Reference") and direct Staff to commence with advertising for membership. The motion carried.

Opposed: *Councillor Brown*

It was moved and seconded that Agenda Item 6(b)(3) Review of City Incentives and Tax Exemption be deferred to the 2023-NOV-27 Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

1. Nanaimo 2023-24 Warming Centres Recommendations (continued)

Jeremy Holm, Director, Planning and Development, continued discussion regarding Warming Centres. Highlights included:

- In 2017, the Province initiated funding for the Emergency Weather Response (EWR) program through BC Housing; however, the warming shelter was difficult to navigate for community members, and difficult to find staff due to its

sporadic operating schedule. In response, Council members at that time voted to contribute additional funds to keep the warming centre open on days not funded by EWR funding

- Over time the warming centre site was taken over by BC Housing and has become a permanent shelter space
- The 2022-23 winter season was the first year the City accessed Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) funding to provide space for overnight shelter
- Last year, Risebridge and St Paul's Anglican Church opened daytime warming shelters; however, not many other buildings were willing to operate a warming shelter

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- It was suggested that Council, the MLA, the MP and service providers work together to discuss issues in the community, and put forward a plan to the provincial and federal governments

Councillor Armstrong vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 4:20 p.m.

- Staff are looking for locations and operators who will respond to the EMCR funding when a call for requests is put out
- Responsibility falls on the provincial government to provide shelter spaces
- A pre-season meeting was held on 2023-OCT-05 with service providers in order to explore current resources. Vancouver Island Regional Library requested to be identified as a warming centre, as well as Canadian Mental Health Association, but only during regular operating hours

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council release a statement stating the City's need and Council's desire to advocate for funding and let service providers know of the need for warming centres. The motion carried unanimously.

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Governance and Priorities Committee received one question from the public regarding agenda items.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:55 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER