



MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 3:00 P.M.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre,
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

- Members:
- Councillor S. Armstrong, Chair
 - Councillor H. Eastmure
 - J. Bowen, At Large Member
 - S. Brodie, At Large Member
 - K. Coulthard, At Large Member
 - D. Cowling, At Large Member
 - D. Herman, At Large Member
 - C. Middleton, At Large Member
 - J. Millbank, At Large Member* (joined electronically 3:02 p.m.)
 - R. Taylor, At Large Member
- Absent:
- K. Lambert, At Large Member
- Staff:
- D. Lindsay, Chief Administrative Officer
 - B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works*
(joined electronically 3:00 p.m.; disconnected 4:30 p.m.)
 - E. Rochette, RCMP
 - T. Doyle, Fire Chief
 - G. Whiting, Deputy Fire Chief
 - D. LaBerge, Director, Public Safety
 - P. Rosen, Director, Engineering
 - E. Lloyd, Manager, Emergency Planning
 - J. Rose, Manager, Transportation
 - B. Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation
 - K. Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer
 - N. Sponaugle, Communications Advisor
 - K. Lundgren, Recording Secretary

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

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

(a) Agenda Item 6(a) 30 Km/h Speed Limits Near Elementary Schools:

- replace PowerPoint presentation slide titled “Recommendations” with an updated version
- replace introduction by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works with Poul Rosen, Director, Engineering

(b) Agenda Item 7(a) Committee Workplan Roundtable – add Public Safety Initiatives submitted by Doug Cowling, Kevin Lambert, and Collen Middleton.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Jennifer Millbank joined the meeting electronically at 3:02 p.m.

Collen Middleton wanted it noted for the record that at the 2024-APR-10 Public Safety Committee Meeting he was unaware that he had to verbally declare a conflict of interest to the Chair and be absent during the pedestrian safety in the south end discussion as the delegation was his wife Echo McNaughton. A motion was also made as a result of that discussion and he wanted it noted that it was not his intention to vote on the matter and believed that by not participating in the discussion and not raising his hand during the vote that he was abstaining from the vote.

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Public Safety Committee Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2024-APR-10, at 4:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

a. FireSmart

Geoff Whiting, Deputy Fire Chief – Operations, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

- Nanaimo has generally a low wildfire risk due to its climate, topography and vegetation, developed land and fast response to fires in the early stages
- Douglas Fir trees are much more resistant to fire than the Spruce and Pine found in other parts of the province
- Provided an overview of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Resiliency Investment Initiatives
- FireSmart principles include the “Home Ignition Zone” to protect homes from wildfires
- Fire weather reports are received from Mosaic weather station data
- The City has a mutual aid agreement with surrounding fire departments for support
- One of the biggest fires last year was maliciously lit on the Northfield block

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Linley Valley is a challenging area to access, and assistance from BC Wildfire would likely be requested
- Accidental fires in the downtown core and concern for businesses and residents
- Community Safety Officers are very active in areas such as Bowen Park in removing flammable material and speaking to people regarding fire risk
- The banning of butane lighters is a complex problem
- Ensuring the perimeter of businesses are clear of flammable debris
- Content messaging to go out through the City’s communication channels
- The 2022 Fire Master Plan added an increase to the number of firefighters
- Apartment buildings are much more resource intensive than other types of buildings
- From an emergency management perspective, the Port Alberni fire last year would be considered more of a corridor/infrastructure incident than a wildfire
- Vacant buildings can be inherently more dangerous than occupied buildings due to an earlier detection when there are people in the building
- The Fire Department and the City work closely to monitor vacant buildings and have the authority to have a vacant building secured

6. REPORTS:

a. 30 Km/h Speed Limits Near Elementary Schools

Introduced by Poul Rosen, Director, Engineering.

Presentation:

1. Barbara Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- High volume of complaints related to speed and pedestrian safety
- Speed limits within the City include a blanket 50 km/h speed and can be modified through bylaws
- 30km/h speed limits are used regularly in high-risk pedestrian areas
- School Zones have a specific application defined in the *Motor Vehicle Act* and School Zones are enforced only during school hours, where as other speed zones are enforced all the time
- Staff receive a large number of traffic calming requests

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Limitations to the crash data received from ICBC
- Being proactive versus reactive
- The City's web-based transportation complaint intake process is available on the website for the public to submit concerns or near misses
- A Traffic Signal Management System will identify congestion and make changes to traffic signals

Barbara Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation, continued the presentation.

- Traffic calming projects are resource intensive
- Vision Zero is an approach to eliminating all serious injuries and traffic fatalities
- There is a lack of adherence to posted speed limits and traffic users tend to choose speeds based on the design of the road
- The Complete Street Standards offer each road user (car, pedestrian and cyclist) their own space
- The Staff recommendation is to consider adding a project in 2025 to undertake a city-wide Speed Zone Study

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Speed Zone Study is estimated to take at least a year with a consultant and public engagement
- Concerns regarding the costs associated with hiring a consultant
- There are several staff vacancies in the Transportation Section and City resources are stretched thin
- The Speed Zone Study could be done internally; however, it would take much longer without the external support
- There are typically an increase in accidents when speed limits are lowered
- Some of the City's school zone signs are inconsistent with the *Motor Vehicle Act*, and therefore RCMP are unable to enforce them
- Slower speed limits signs can cause a false sense of security as well as problems related to gaps from inconsistent speeds
- Improving traffic safety through education and acknowledging that this is more difficult to achieve as it requires a cultural shift
- Driving is becoming much more aggressive in Nanaimo with the City's rapid growth
- ICBC and RCMP "think of me" School Zone Safety Campaign
- The City has the authority to include time parameters to speed limit regulations; however, it becomes more complicated to enforce
- The scope of the Speed Zone Study
- Option 2 in the Staff report is more immediate and low cost

It was moved and seconded that the Public Safety Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to continue work on elementary school speed limits, applying 30 km/h school zones where the *Motor Vehicle Act* requirements can be achieved, and applying 30 km/h regulatory speed limits where *Motor Vehicle Act* requirements cannot be achieved. The motion carried unanimously.

The Public Safety Committee recessed the meeting at 4:29 p.m.

The Public Safety Committee reconvened the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Committee Workplan Roundtable

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer, informed the Committee of the process for the roundtable discussion.

Roundtable discussion took place and each member presented their top priority/initiatives. Highlights included:

- Long term monitoring and increased transparency for projects' impacts on neighborhoods, specifically the impact of low-barrier housing
- Increased use of CCTV
- The safety of officers on the street working with unhoused individuals
- Addiction issues and the Committee's role in advocacy
- Safety liaison in the school system
- The disproportionate number of unsheltered and unhoused individuals in Nanaimo compared to other municipalities
- The use of a collective voice to pressure provincial and federal governments to treat the opioid overdose public health and safety emergency as an emergency and address the root causes
- Reclaiming public spaces such as libraries and parks
- Graffiti removal and clean-up initiatives (ie: Bastion Street Bridge area)
- Tools and grant programs the City can offer to help businesses in the area with repairing vandalism and putting the City's best foot forward in terms of positive pedestrian tourism

Roundtable discussion took place and each member presented their second priority/initiatives. Highlights included:

- Increasing public access to green space considering many green spaces are fenced off and inaccessible
- Improving the perception of danger in Nanaimo. Providing indoor spaces for unhoused individuals to be safe and for residents to feel safe
- Improving safety of transit stops and the need for proper bus stop pull outs
- Creative ways and best practices to improve Nanaimo's image
- Advocacy for implementing a restorative justice program in Nanaimo
- The City should be demanding the Province to reimburse the municipal tax dollars spent supplementing provincial responsibilities
- Concerns regarding small businesses closing and moving from the downtown and south end due to crime and social disorder
- The Downtown Safety Action Plan grant program for vandalism relief recently includes provisions for security measures. The province has

a similar annual program that would apply to businesses throughout the community

- The City has been investing in cybersecurity training and authentication
- Acknowledging that the unhoused population is part of the community and the public
- The Point-In-Time count is well known to be an undercount, and there seems to be insufficient effort in understanding how the unhoused population has changed over time

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer, noted that based on the discussion, the following themes, priorities and initiatives were identified:

Themes	Priorities and Initiatives
Transportation Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit stop locations and improvements
Crime Prevention (City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Officer's in school system • Increased use of CCTV • Stopping current business from moving or closing due to crime and social disorder, especially from the South end, Downtown area. • Graffiti removal and community clean-up initiatives (community-wide) (including private land – ie: Bastion Street Bridge area)
Homelessness, Addiction & Community Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Monitoring for the impacts on community impacts and safety, which would include when collecting a baseline or baseline monitoring. IE – interviewing local residents and businesses before and after supportive housing projects open in their areas. • Housing First initiatives and other best practices to address and reduce homelessness • Indoor spaces for unhoused (minimize impacts in public spaces)
Health & Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more parks, green spaces, larger riparian zones around lakes and streams, and better access to beaches, green spaces and swimming locations (ie – remove fencing) • Entice people to use public spaces - Libraries and parks etc. (ie: block

	<p>parties, clean ups, funding for these types of community initiatives)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety improvements for first responders
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put pressure on the Provincial and Federal Governments to treat the Opioid Overdose Public Health and Safety Emergency as the emergency that it is and address the root causes (ineffective public health, education, and judicial system to prevent and deter the manufacture and sale of illicit substances, and the lack of comprehensive addiction treatment, recovery-oriented care, and social reintegration) • Demand that the province reimburse the city for municipal tax dollars spent supplementing provincial responsibilities, and the predictable negative consequences of provincial public health and safety policies (e.g. fencing around green spaces, fire department calls for emergency response medical aid due to drug overdose, vandalism abatement, community safety officers, clean teams on provincial land, encampment removal, etc.). • Advocate for a restorative justice program • Better reporting on how Council is advocating and what they are advocating for
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Nanaimo's image, incorporating best practices

The Committee reviewed the finalized themes, initiatives and priorities in chart form, and by consensus, supported them as the Committee's top priorities.

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer advised that the next step would be for Staff to review the priorities as presented to ensure that they fall within the City's jurisdiction and are achievable within the Committee's term, and then return to the next Committee meeting with them incorporated into a more finalized workplan for the Committee's consideration.

It was moved and seconded that the Public Safety Committee refer the themes priorities and initiatives to Staff for review and to incorporate them into a formalized draft workplan for the Committee's consideration. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Potential Special Meeting Dates

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer, informed the Committee that the following dates were available to hold a Special Public Safety Committee Meeting:

- July 31, 2024
- September 4, 2024

Committee discussion took place regarding quorum for the potential special meeting dates and the urgency of the Committee's work.

It was moved and seconded that a Special Public Safety Committee Meeting be held on September 4, 2024. The motion carried.

Opposed: *Collen Middleton, Jennifer Millbank and Ruth Taylor*

It was moved and seconded that a Special Public Safety Committee Meeting be held on July 31, 2024.

The motion was defeated.

Opposed: *Councillor Armstrong, James Bowen, Scott Brodie, Kim Coulthard, Doug Cowling and Destany Herman*

8. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received two questions from the public regarding agenda items.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:50 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER