

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 27, 2013; 5:30 p.m.

Committee Room #2

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Chuck Puchmayr	Chair (departed at 6:30 pm)
Ms. Linda Cooper	Community Member (departed at 7:00 pm)
Ms. Chinu Das	Community Member
Ms. Eman Ismail-Elmasri	Community Member
Ms. Bayoush Mengesha	Community Member
Ms. Maria Elizabeth Soriano	Community Member

VOTING MEMBER REGRETS:

Ms. Connie Behl	Community Member
Ms. Maryam Salmani	Community Member
Vacant	New Westminster School District #40

GUESTS:

Ms. Oana Capota	Curator/Heritage Programmer - New Westminster Museum and Archives
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STAFF:

Mr. John Stark	Senior Social Planner, Development Services
Mr. Terry Dunlop	Recording Secretary

Call to order 5:30 pm

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

1.1 MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the agenda be adopted with the following addition:

- 2.2 Election of Co-Chair

CARRIED.

All members of the committee present voted in favour of the motion.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of February 27, 2013

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the meeting held February 27, 2013 be corrected by replacing the name shown in the list of attendees with the following:

- *Ms. Bayoush Mengesha*

and

THAT the minutes be adopted, as corrected.

CARRIED.

All members of the committee present voted in favour of the motion.

2.2 Election of Co-Chair

Following a call for nominations for the position of Co-Chair of the committee, the name of Ms. Chinu Das was put forward. There were no further nominations. Ms. Das accepted the nomination and was therefore duly elected Co-Chair, **by acclamation.**

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 New Westminster Museum and Archives Moving Forward

Ms. Oana Capota, Curator and Heritage Programmer for the New Westminster Museum and Archives (NWMA), reviewed a presentation highlighting the *Moving Forward* program as the department prepares for its 2014 move to the civic *Anvil Centre* currently under construction at Eighth Street and Columbia Streets, in the downtown historic area.

Ms. Capota first reviewed background information, referencing topics including the museum's operation, new directions for the museum, the focus on drawing in the community and sharing of experiences about New Westminster. Artists' renderings and floor plans were shown to illustrate the new premises. One permanent exhibit at the Anvil Centre will be complemented by various other changing exhibits and events. A reading room for the Archives will be located on the second floor and an entire section of the west side on the third floor will be shared with the Art Gallery and the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame. The space will also contain workshops for preparing exhibits, along with staging areas. Some of the museum's artefacts are quite large and will be better displayed than in their current location behind Irving House.

The NWMA wished to obtain community feedback and suggestions before finalizing plans for its new space and this presentation to the committee was therefore designed to obtain input from the wider and more diverse community. It was anticipated that the newer arrivals to the city would provide an insight into the heritage and culture of the many ethnicities now represented in New Westminster. To assist in this process, a Community Advisory Board is proposed

and one of the projects to be considered will be how to include more multicultural and interactive events, based around holidays and observances, music, etc. Accordingly, the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee would be the ideal vehicle to advise the NWMA on the best way to reach potential donors, translators and possible oral history project volunteers and docents. Examples of highly successful ethnic exhibits and programs in other jurisdictions were described and members were urged to provide their input and comment to guide and shape the planning process.

Chair Puchmayr departed the meeting at 6:30 pm and Co-Chair Chinu Das assumed the Chair.

Questions/comments

Committee members were unanimous in expressing thanks to the NWMA for early involvement and consultation at this stage in the planning process. Members commented that the proposed temporary gallery would be an ideal venue for newcomers to showcase their cultures. Other comments included:

- Ensure that First Nations contributions are highlighted in the permanent exhibit; annually celebrate National Aboriginal Day.
- Acknowledge the contributions of the various ethnic groups who were involved in founding the city.
- Provide a display case for use by rather than for the various ethnic and cultural groups; this would empower them to take ownership and responsibility for very effective exhibits. People need to feel involved and connected, especially refugee groups.
- Consult with faith organizations, many of which are repositories for detailed archives.
- A committee member will be involved with Metro Vancouver in the development of outreach tools for different ways to communicate with diverse communities.
- Ms. Capota welcomed committee members to meet with NWMA staff at the facility's office.
- An effective way to reach families is through the school system.
- Involve consulates/embassies for travelling exhibits.
- Empower and involve young people, high school students.
- Consider a commemorative exhibit to mark the upcoming centenary of World War One (either 2014 or 2018)

3.2 New Immigrant and Refugee Survey Results

Mr. Stark reviewed preliminary results of the survey, which was based on the 2007 Access New Westminster Immigrant Survey. The original survey noted that immigrants and refugees faced numerous challenges and had lower participation rates in elections, groups and organized activities, including sports.

The 2012 survey was intended to highlight improved services and supports for new immigrants and refugees; it also informs of efforts to create a more welcoming and inclusive community. The objective was to receive 250+ completed surveys by April 30, 2013 by taking advantage of multiple means of communication. To date, 112 surveys have been received, 73 of which have been entered for analysis. Mr. Stark reviewed statistical components of the completed surveys analysed to date, noting that so far, the vast majority of respondents indicated they spoke a language other than English at home. Graphs were also presented to spotlight issues such as competency in English, knowledge of the host country, reasons for moving to New Westminster and settlement challenges. Housing and employment were identified as major challenges for the new arrivals, specifically the shortages of rental and social housing, plus discrimination in employment applications.

The survey also revealed awareness and use of local government facilities ranging from the highest level for the Public Library and Canada Games Pool to the lowest – awareness of the Police Victim Assistance program. About half the respondents were aware of the Newcomers' Guide and most used it regularly. Respondents asked that it be kept current and distributed more widely, possibly with more translations and posting on the Internet. Another graph illustrated a high level of satisfaction with immigrant and refugee services in New Westminster. Mr. Stark suggested that since 2006, there had been significant improvements in services, particularly as they relate to ESL (English as a Second Language) training and information. Most respondents felt a sense of being welcome and belonging in the city and 94 percent indicated they would recommend New Westminster to family members or friends considering a move to the city.

Ms. Linda Cooper departed at 7:00 pm

Questions/comments

In response to questions regarding translation of the 2012 survey into other languages, Mr. Stark noted there were some difficulties using only the existing volunteers; however, there were ongoing efforts to match respondents with others who might assist. There was a conscious effort to not deviate too far from the original survey. It was also possible that focus groups might follow up on the completed survey results.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Multicultural Festival Update

Ms. Eman Ismail-Elmasri, reported on behalf of Maddi McKitrick, Program and Events Coordinator, that the entertainment schedule was now full but vacancies for food vendors remained. Committee members were reminded that the event will take place on May 18 and participants should therefore make any further arrangements without delay.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan Descriptions of Success

Mr. Stark reported that descriptions of success have been prepared based on consultation with the community, including a visioning session and survey. These descriptions are being shared with Advisory Committees to Council for review and feedback. Regarding the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee, members were asked to review those descriptions related to both 'Individual and Community Wellbeing' and 'Arts, Culture and Heritage.' Mr. Stark stated that he would e-mail a link to complete a survey in order to provide feedback.

5.2 New Park to Commemorate Chinese History and Contributions

On-table document regarding the Chinese Benevolent Association site at 824 Agnes Street. Mr. Stark advised that Council recently passed a motion to develop a park to commemorate Chinese history and contributions at this site (which is currently being used as a temporary off leash dog area). Development of the site forms a centrepiece of the Chinese reconciliation process. Members were encouraged to visit the site and provide input on possible uses (e.g., a traditional garden with water features). There was suggestion of a storyboard to illustrate the history of the Chinese community in that location. Mr. Stark noted that it was planned to engage a landscape architect in early-2014, although there could be an accelerated process if there is an amenity contribution arising from possible development of adjacent sites.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

No reports were presented.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

The following items were received for information:

7.1 ICSP Descriptions of Success for Individual and Community Wellbeing

7.2 Neighbourhood Small Grant Program

7.3 Queensborough Community Plan for Review and Feedback

8.0 NEXT MEETING

8.1 5:30 p.m., April 24, 2013, Committee Room #2, City Hall

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee concluded at 7:25 p.m.

COUNCILLOR CHUCK PUCHMAYR
CHAIR

TERRY DUNLOP
RECORDING SECRETGARY