

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Chuck Puchmayr	Chair
Ms. Connie Behl	Community Member
Ms. Eman Ismail-Elmasri	Community Member
Ms. Bayoush Mengesha	Community Member
Ms. Maria Elizabeth Soriano	Community Member

VOTING MEMBER REGRETS:

Ms. Chinu Das	Community Member
Ms. Maryam Salmani	Community Member
Vacant	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
Inspector Doug Walcott	New Westminster Police Department
Mr. Terry Dunlop	Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

The Chair advised of the resignation of Ms. Linda Cooper, Community Member, due to a work conflict.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

1.1 MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the agenda be adopted.

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 March 27, 2013

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the meeting held March 27, 2013 be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) Park Site Visioning Session – John Stark

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, reviewed an agenda package document highlighting input from two “visioning sessions” held with the CBA and the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC), held on March 22 and April 19, 2013 respectively. Mr. Stark noted that although different in several respects, both organizations believe that replicas, possibly to scale in “skeleton” or frame form, of the original Chinese “Old Man’s Home” should be built on site. If adjacent sites were redeveloped, it might be possible that increased density bonusing might help fund the proposed park site.

Other significant points raised by both organizations were:

- Tell the story of the “Old Man’s Home” and Chinese settlement and contributions in New Westminster;
- Locate some of the [Chinese] artefacts on site;
- Translate minutes of the CBA for display as part of the back or rear of the façade;
- Include a winding watercourse with a reflective pool or pond(s);
- Seek imported materials from Chinese Sister/Friendship Cities;
- Ensure appropriate and respectful development of adjacent properties;
- Develop site to incorporate important public safety considerations;
- Respect aspects of Chinese “feng shui” governing the relationship of the site to its surroundings;
- Due to the topography and steep slope of the site, consider inclusion of a possible “performance area” that could be viewed from the higher elevations;
- Develop a vegetable or informal garden space, featuring Chinese plants, that would honour the original settlers, to whom a formal Chinese garden [a refuge of emperors and ruling classes] would have seemed unattainable or foreign;
- Name the site “Yi Fao Park” which translates to the second port city after Victoria;

- Tell the story of both the “Old Man’s Home” and “Chinatown West” using audio stations, smartphone technology, banners and signage;
- Incorporate use of the site in future Multicultural and Hyack festivals;
- If the framed structure is built, ensure weatherproofing and cover (similar to the facility in Westminster Pier Park) to enhance year-round use;
- Honour the reconciliation process and include reference of the City’s formal apology to the Chinese community;
- Include a permanent right-of-way between Agnes and Carnarvon Streets to encourage greater access and use of the site;
- Consult with local descendants of Chinese settlers to accurately convey their story.

Mr. Stark reminded members of the questions posed for consideration at the previous meeting:

- 1) “What are your ideas for telling the story of the Chinese “Old Man’s Home” and of Chinese settlement in and contributions to New Westminster?”
- 2) “What types of interpretation should be considered (e.g., interpretive signage, listening posts, etc.) Are there historical places where such interpretation has been effective? If yes, can you name them?”

Comments from members and guests are recorded in point form below:

- The vegetable garden with Chinese plants is an excellent idea that would more accurately reflect the original uses of land by the settlers [museum and archives photographs of original settlers circulated for context].
- Support the concept of a replica frame of an original bunk house, possibly enveloped in a grove of bamboo and sweet pea plants; create a diorama of historical events featuring gold miners, salmon fishermen and cannery labourers; construct a green space, including a pagoda, fountain and marble blocks of historic facts – 1881 – 1 in 10 residents was Chinese; 64% of the salmon fleet was Chinese; 65% of the labour force was Chinese (North Coast of BC – 94% of out-of-town cannery labour was Chinese)
- Like the idea of a skeleton/frame structure and agree it should be rainproofed to provide shelter during inclement weather and use of natural planting is preferable and connects more with the original settlers than a formal Chinese garden
- Support the concept of a diorama and the simplicity of a less formal garden; there should be 24-hour access and safety concerns would need to be addressed during the public consultation process
- Discussion of development of neighbouring sites and their relationship to the proposed park; the Police Department would welcome inclusion of important public safety concerns by applying CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles [administered by Veronika Metchie, Crime



Free Multi-Housing Coordinator]. Future relocation of the existing dog off-leash area is being addressed by Parks, Culture & Recreation staff and the aim would be to coordinate the public consultation process with development of the Chinese Reconciliation Garden site.

In summarising committee members' responses, the Chair concurred with the concepts of a weatherproofed skeleton/frame structure and a garden more reflective of the realities of the original settlers; however, a more formal section of the garden feature might also illustrate a lifestyle that some be aspired to. The inclusion of CPTED principles would be a vital consideration, particularly if there is 24-hour access and a cross-park pedestrian walkway. Finally, while recognising that New Westminster was the first Canadian jurisdiction to issue a formal apology to the Chinese community, it will be essential to ensure there is a raw and open narrative about past injustices and indignities they faced, particularly discriminatory legislation against immigrants.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Multicultural Festival Update – Chair

The Chair advised that there are still some vacancies for vendors. It was anticipated there would be an excellent turnout for the May 18, 2013 event.

4.2 Immigrant and Refugee Survey Update – John Stark

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, Development Services advised that 168 completed responses have been received and more were expected from some of the settlement agencies.

Mr. Stark reiterated the point that 83% of the respondents indicated they would recommend locating in New Westminster to their family or friends. The crucial issues of racism and discrimination in both housing and employment still need to be addressed. Staff expects to report to Council on findings of the survey by the fall.

4.3 Welcoming Community Program (WCP) Update – Eman Elmasri and John Stark

The committee reviewed a backgrounder contained in the agenda package titled *Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster* (WIN). Funding under the Welcoming Community Program has been provided for the next year, after which, administration will transition back to the federal level.

Staff and volunteers have developed a workplan that will be updated and explained in more depth at the next meeting.



The Chair also stressed the need to ensure the *Safe Harbour Program* remains active and accessible (including translation links on the website).

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Personal Safety Update

For information, Inspector Doug Walcott, NWPD, shared details of a lower mainland scam that targets mostly South Asian women in the community. There were some recent incidents in the city that involved approach and distraction of individuals who were relieved of their jewellery (often necklaces and earrings). A recent media release provides more details; however, committee members were urged to communicate safety warnings to their families and friends.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

No reports were presented.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the following correspondence items be received:

- *Vision Summaries for Bill Chu and Eman Elmasri*
- *Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster (WIN) Backgrounder*

CARRIED.

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

8.0 NEXT MEETING

8.1 5:30 p.m., May 22, 2013, Committee Room #2, City Hall

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee concluded at 6:25 p.m.

COUNCILLOR CHUCK PUCHMAYR
CHAIR

TERRY DUNLOP
RECORDING SECRETARY