



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

**October 4, 2016 5:30 p.m.
City Hall, Committee Room 2**

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Chair
Jason Campbell	- Community Member
Michael Folka	- Community Member (arrived at 5:32 p.m.)
John Hooker	- Community Member
Nadine Nakagawa	- Community Member
Jeremy Perry	- Community Member
Pamela Ralston	- Community Member
Deanna Tan	- Fraser Health Representative (Alternate)

REGRETS:

Norah Andrew	- Community Member
Brynn Bourke	- Community Member
Tammy Dewar	- Community Member
Jason Lesage	- Community Member
Peter Rautenbach	- Community Member
Lisa Zetes-Zanattas	- Fraser Health Representative

GUESTS:

Wendy Johnson	- New Westminster Hospice Society
Vivian Wong	- New Westminster Hospice Society
Brock Nicholson	- New Westminster Hospice Society
Kay Johnson	- New Westminster Hospice Society

STAFF:

John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Mark Allison	- Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Sustainability
Lynn Roxburgh	- Planner
Lauren Blake	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Item 3.3 – Idea Centre
- Item 5.2 – Gender Neutral Washrooms in City Facilities

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of May 3, 2016

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the May 3, 2016 Community and Social Issues Committee minutes be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 New West Hospice Society

Wendy Johnson, Vivian Wong, Brock Nicholson and Kay Johnson, New Westminister Hospice Society (NWHS), provided the following information regarding the New Westminister Hospice Society:

- The NWHS was formed in August 2016;
- The NWHS provides knowledge, information and services to the community;
- One of the goals of the NWHS is to become the first Compassionate City in Canada; and,
- The NWHS will host a community conversation on October 15, 2016 at Century House.

In response to questions from the Committee, the NWHS provided the following information:

- There are currently 11 hospice societies in Fraser Health, and the majority of the hospice societies are attached to a physical hospice;
- It is not an immediate goal of the NWHS to develop a hospice;
- The NWHS will work to develop strong relationships with family doctors to reach isolated individuals; and,
- The NWHS was positively received at the Seniors Festival.

The Committee noted that New Westminster would be an ideal location to create a hospice society, as there is a strong sense of community and existing agencies that could provide assistance.

3.2 Official Community Plan Update

Lynn Roxburgh, Planner, provided an on-table PowerPoint presentation regarding the Official Community Plan update.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Roxburgh advised that the City has developed a metric requiring 2.2 hectares of park space per 1,000 residents. Creative solutions will be required to achieving this metric due to the lack of land in New Westminster.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following feedback:

- There could be more creativity for infill housing;
- Infill housing could be better distributed around the city;
- There could be more diversity for housing types;
- The requirements to implement a townhouse development could be lowered to encourage that type of development in the city;
- As lower income residents may have additional barriers in accessing amenities, it was suggested that neighbourhoods that have increased density and lower income residents could receive increased amenities;
- Residential streets could be designed like park spaces, such as by making streets more pedestrian friendly and less vehicle friendly, eliminating sidewalks, and adding planters and benches; and,
- Roads could be closed to vehicles at designated times and opened to the public as play spaces.

3.3 Idea Centre

Procedural note: Item 3.3 was addressed prior to Items 3.1 and 3.2.

Mark Allison, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Sustainability, provided an on-table PowerPoint presentation regarding the Idea Centre.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Allison provided the following information:

- The current mental health building will be demolished and replaced with an upgraded facility where a parking lot currently exists;

- It is anticipated that Phase 1, which includes the new mental health facility, will be completed by 2020;
- A timeline for Phases 2 and 3, which would include an acute care facility and renovations to Royal Columbian Hospital, will be proposed at a later date; and,
- The City is currently advocating for earlier SkyTrain times to accommodate the hospital's shift work, and it has been suggested that the City could jointly advocate with Fraser Health and Coastal Health.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Renovictions Action Plan and Tenant Rights Sessions

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, advised that a report regarding the Renovictions Action Plan was forwarded to Council on May 2, 2016. A motion regarding renovictions was brought forward at the Union of British Columbian Municipalities; however, the motion was tabled. Mr. Stark noted that there have been two workshops regarding tenant rights scheduled for October 25, 2016 at the New Westminster Public Library and November 17, 2016 at Century House.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Stark provided the following information:

- The City pays extra attention to rental buildings that have ownership changes;
- There can be access issues with respect to a door knocking campaign;
- A direct mail campaign was completed for the Official Community Plan consultation process and did not result in a high number of renters attending workshops; and,
- Through utility bills, the City has a list of secondary suites in the city.

With respect to providing tenant rights information to renters, the Committee provided the following suggestions:

- Posters for information sessions could be placed in grocery stores, coffee shops and churches;
- Information could be mailed annually with utility bills or through direct mail as needed; and,
- An oversized postcard with interesting graphics and information in a few different languages may be more noticeable than an ordinary letter from the City.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 New Westminster Rent Bank

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, advised that the City is investigating a rent bank program that would provide loans to low income renters facing eviction. In addition, Mr. Stark reported the following information:

- Judy Darcy, MLA, acquired a \$25,000 endowment from various financial institutions to support the project;
- The City will be exploring the possibility of covering administration costs for a three year pilot program;
- It has been suggested that funding could be provided from the Housing Reserve Fund;
- Individuals seeking loans from the rent bank could be referred to a financial institution for products that may also provide assistance;
- The Homelessness Coalition has expressed an interest in partnering with the rent bank program;
- The program would require a replenishment fund; and,
- There could be an overall cost savings to different levels of government by keeping residents housed.

Mr. Stark advised that a report regarding the rent bank proposal would be brought forward to Council.

The Committee suggested that a rent bank program could reduce the reliance on pay day lenders. It was also noted that a rent bank can be a positive preventative measure against homelessness and rent banks have been effective in other provinces.

5.2 Gender Neutral Washrooms in City Facilities

Nadine Nakagawa, Community Member, advised that gender identity is protected by the Federal and Provincial levels of government. Ms. Nakagawa suggested that the City could be proactive in demonstrating inclusivity by implementing gender neutral washrooms in City facilities.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee noted that while accessible washrooms are gender neutral, there can be issues with associating gender identity with a disability. It was also noted that accessible washrooms are purposefully designed for specific requirements.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the City examine the implementation of gender neutral washrooms in City facilities.

CARRIED.

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

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

November 1, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in Committee Room 2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting concluded at 7:30 p.m.

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy
Chair

Lauren Blake
Committee Clerk