Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE

May 12, 2015: 6:30 p.m.
Committee Room #2, City Hall (511 Royal Avenue)

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté	- Chair
Councillor Patrick Johnstone	- Member
Councillor Mary Trentadue	- Member
Jennifer Arbo	- Community Member
Chinu Das	- Community Member
Daniel Fontaine	- Community Member
Nadine Nakagawa	- Community Member
Nancy Shaw	- Community Member

VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:

Gabriella Scali	- Community Member

STAFF:

Jennifer Wilson	- Assistant Director, Parks Culture & Recreation
Blair Fryer	- Manager, Communications & Economic Development
John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Lynn Roxburgh	- Planner
Ashleigh Young	- Communications Coordinator
Alison Worsfold	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

4.3 Barriers to Public Engagement

4.4 Update on Principles from April 14, 2015 Public Engagement Task Force Meeting

2.0 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of April 14, 2015

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the minutes of the April 14, 2015 Public Engagement Task Force meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

Procedural Note: Item 4.4 was considered prior to item 3.1

4.4 Update on Principles from April 14, 2015 Public Engagement Task Force Meeting

Jennifer Wilson, **Assistant Director, Parks Culture & Recreation,** distributed and reviewed the on-table document regarding an update on the principles from the April 14, 2015 Public Engagement Task Force (PETF) meeting.

The Task Force noted that the document correctly reflected their comments and suggestions from the April 14, 2015 PETF meeting.

3.1 PlaceSpeak Neighbourhoods Overview

Ashleigh Young, Communications Coordinator, noted the following information:

- PlaceSpeak recently launched a pilot project, Neighbourhoods, in New Westminster;
- Neighbourhoods is a geo-social network for residents, which aims to help people become more engaged with their neighbourhood and community as a whole;
- PlaceSpeak provides a free online location-based community consultation platform;
- PlaceSpeak was utilized by the City in the past to aid in the development of the Master Transportation Plan; and,
- The Massey Victory Heights Residents' Association has expressed support for the pilot project.

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté, Chair, advised that the Task Force will remain updated as the pilot project moves forward.

3.2 Information Sharing on Public Engagement Best Practices

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté, Chair, noted that at the April 14, 2015 Public Engagement Task Force (PETF) meeting,Task Force members were requested to provide three examples of effective public engagement tools or strategies at the May 12, 2015 PETF meeting.

The Task Force provided the following examples of public engagement best practices in other municipalities:

- *Imagine Austin* - Austin, Texas. This plan, which was adopted in 2015, helps address pressing issues and guides future city transformation. Community Engagement included a webinar, speaker series, and walk 'n talks;
- *Twitter Town Hall at the White House* - Washington, DC, whereby the President answers a series of questions from citizens related to issues such as employment and the economy;
- President Obama's *Google Hangout*, whereby the President answers questions about the State of the Union from citizens;
- A neighbourhood located in the City of Calgary utilized a set of lego bricks to engage in a land use planning session. The session included children;
- *Three Things for Calgary* - Calgary, Alberta. Launched by Mayor Naheed Nenshi, the initiative entails that citizens pick three things they could engage in to make Calgary a better place, share the things with three friends, and encourage them to do their own three things;
- *Neighbour Day* is held annually in Australia to celebrate each community and unify neighbours;
- *Christmas in Colonial America* is an annual Christmas decorating contest for homes, held in Williamsburg, Virginia;
- *Urban Aboriginal Dialogue* - Edmonton, Alberta. As over 5% of the population in Edmonton is Aboriginal, Council held meetings with elders and corrected historical wrongs. Open houses and talking circles were organized, as well as outreach programs such as *Aboriginal City Life Teas*;
- *EnVision Edmonton* - Edmonton, Alberta. Council implemented a 30 year outlook to guide planning and operations for the city's future. Online surveys and public workshops were provided throughout the process, and paid childcare, honouriums, taxi and bus fares were offered to citizens;
- *City Hall to Go* - Boston, Massachusetts and Montreal, Quebec. Inspired by food trucks, a City Hall truck offering certain services would serve city residents at neighborhoods and events;
- The Department for Communities and Local Government and English Heritage ran a joint competition to find the most popular photographs of coastal heritage sites to promote the Coastal Communities Fund;

- *The Red Tape Challenge* - The United Kingdom. The challenge was introduced to provide businesses and individuals the opportunity to challenge certain regulations, boost business and economic growth, and save taxpayers money;
- In Chicago, Illinois, an alderman utilized his allotted $1 million budget to strike a debate between various community leaders; and,
- The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation website provides monthly indicators and up to date statistics regarding the health of the community, which is beneficial for both current and potential residents.

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force suggested the following:

- That establishing Telephone Town Hall meetings would benefit the City, as it is effective and can engage thousands of individuals at once;
- That the City adopt a policy to randomize the speakers list at Public Hearings;
- That a policy be adopted to eliminate late night Public Hearing meetings;
- That the City utilize technology, such as Skype and YouTube, to improve access to Council and Committee meetings;
- That tribunals comprising of educated individuals be appointed to interpret city policy and decision making processes;
- That the City's website be improved so that it is more user friendly, such as the City of Calgary's website;
- That the City establish a Block Party Day to encourage neighbourhoods to host block parties;
- That the City investigate the possibility of implementing a civic 311 information service and a reverse 311information service;
- That the City investigate a more effective way to produce and distribute the Annual Report;
- That the Mayor and Council continue to be present at community events;
- That the Communications department establish hashtags relevant to current issues, so that individuals can provide input via the web;
- That the City utilize analytics to better engage the community; and,
- That a process be implemented whereby individuals attending Council can engage in discussions via their smartphone.

Staff noted that the City has recently engaged underrepresented citizens with policy work, such as throughout the development of the Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, and the Seniors Engagement Toolkit. Moving forward, staff provided the following suggestions with respect to improving current public engagement tactics:

- That the online version of the Official Community Plan contain interactive maps and be more user friendly;

- That citizens be provided with a different persona, referred to as the 'alter ego,' at civic engagement sessions so that feedback is provided from various aspects;
- That the City utilize open data to circulate notifications and information to residents;
- That the City investigate the possibility of implementing a 'Citizen Budget' in order to engage residents in the budgeting process, such as in Edmonton, Alberta, and Langley;
- That Study Circles, as seen in Port Moody, be formed so that groups can gather to discuss relevant topics; and,
- That establishing a Citizen's Jury would provide the opportunity for citizens to learn about, deliberate, and develop solutions to public issues.

The Task Force suggested that the examples and suggestions be categorized into themes so that that they can be re-discussed at future PETF meetings.

Mayor Coté advised that the list can be amended and added to throughout the term of the PETF.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Initial Focus Areas and Priority-Setting

Jennifer Wilson, Assistant Director, Parks, Culture & Recreation, distributed and reviewed the on-table document entitled 'Initial Focus Areas and Priority-setting considerations.'

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force suggested the following:

- That improving both communication and public engagement tactics be a priority for the Public Engagement Task Force (PEFT);
- That the focus of the PETF remain on relevant civic issues and topics, which may be amended over time;
- That individuals who feel connected to their neighbours may be more inclined to engage in civic processes;
- That the different needs of each City department be recognized; and,
- That City departments engage in information sharing amongst each other so that best public engagement practices can be established.

4.2 Data Collection Template for Promising "Best Practices" – Communications and Outreach/Engagement

Jennifer Wilson, Assistant Director, Parks, Culture & Recreation, distributed and reviewed the on-table document entitled 'Template Musings – what will we collect and how will we organize data collection.'

In response to questions from the Task Force, staff suggested that all steps outlined in the document are critical to implementing a transformative public engagement system. Staff suggested that current processes for community engagement sessions, such as open houses and workshops, be investigated and that a toolkit be established to help guide and streamline the process.

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force suggested that each City department indicate their most utilized engagement tools, their challenges, as well as what they would amend to the process if possible. It was also suggested that the final outcome for the PETF be established prior to delegating staff time and resources towards the initiative.

4.3 Barriers to Public Engagement

The Task Force suggested that a list of barriers individuals could face with respect to public engagement be produced at a future Public Engagement Task Force Meeting, so that the barriers can be discussed and addressed as strategies move forward.

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

June 9, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in Committee Room #2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté
Chair

FOR

Alison Worsfold
Committee Clerk