Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE

April 14, 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
Gabriella Scali	- Community Member
Nancy Shaw	- Community Member

VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:

Nadine Nakagawa	- Community Member

STAFF:

Jennifer Wilson	- Assistant Director, Parks Culture & Recreation
Renee Chadwick	- Manager, Queensborough Community Centre
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.

Mayor Jonathan Coté, Chair, welcomed members to the first Public Engagement Task Force (PETF) meeting, noting that the PETF was formed to enhance community public engagement, as well as to encourage greater civic participation by residents and businesses. Task Force members introduced themselves to each other, and outlined their areas of expertise at is relates to public engagement.

1.0 ANNUAL HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 Orientation

Alison Worsfold, Committee Clerk, reviewed the rules of conduct, social media policy, and permission forms with Task Force members.

Task Force members are to contact Ms. Worsfold regarding attendance at each meeting. If a member is unable to fulfill their duties, they are asked to notify the Legislative Services department so that the position can be refilled.

1.2 Committee Oaths

Alison Worsfold, Committee Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to Task Force members.

2.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Overview of the Public Engagement Task Force (PETF) Terms of Reference and Purpose

Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications & Economic Development, provided an overview of the PETF Terms of Reference.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Intended Outcomes of the Public Engagement Task Force (PETF)

Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications & Economic Development, provided an overview of the intended outcomes of the PETF.

4.2 Review of Task Force Activities, Timeline and Processes of the Public Engagement Task Force (PETF)

Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications & Economic Development, reviewed the activities, timeline and processes of the PETF.

Mayor Jonathan Coté, Chair, advised that future discussions are not limited to the prescribed timeline, which was established to maintain a focus for the PETF. Mayor Coté noted that, ultimately, the goal of the PETF is to achieve improved communication and information sharing, as well as to maintain a healthy and effective dialogue between the City and its residents.

4.3 Guiding Principles Discussion for the Public Engagement Task Force (PETF)

Jennifer Wilson, Assistant Director, Parks, Culture & Recreation, distributed and reviewed an on table document regarding PETF guiding principles, with the intent to foster discussion between Task Force members.

Upon reviewing the guiding principles, the Task Force endorsed taking a principle-based approach and suggested that the following areas also be considered:

- That the guiding principles be utilized as a tool of focus, as well as to provide accountability, transparency, clarity and performance measures for the PETF;
- That a process be designed that reflects the needs of residents, and overcomes language, cultural, and accessibility barriers;
- That the past practices and themes regarding the City's communication and engagement process be evaluated, so that historical focus points of concern for residents can be identified;
- That an iterative and proactive approach be taken so that individuals are fully engaged throughout all stages of civic processes and made aware of how public input plays a role in the decision making process;
- That 'better' or 'promising ' practices, rather than 'best' practices, be pursued to avoid missed opportunities;
- That the Task Force include creativity, as well as innovation in its deliberations;
- That an outcome and evaluation piece be included in the process;
- That, by the end of the process, trust is built throughout the community and residents' lives are enhanced;
- That relevancy could be a difficult objective to achieve, as it can change throughout time and differ with each project;
- That financial feasibility be recognized throughout the process; and
- That the document be amended to reflect findings throughout the course of the Task Force term.

4.4 Next Steps

Mayor Jonathan Coté, Chair, advised that the next step of the process includes reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of the City's current public engagement methods.

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force suggested the following:

- That previous open houses hosted by the City were scheduled at unsuitable times for many residents, resulting in a lost opportunity for valuable feedback;

- That community engagement be captured in creative ways, such as through the web, so that individuals who are unable to attend a physical meeting can still provide input on a matter;
- That when regularly engaging with individuals on social media, the 'community will police itself' to abolish any negative conversations from outsiders;
- That the processes for public hearings and other civic processes be easily understood, and that opportunities for residents to provide input be readily accessible; and,
- That the current public hearing process may be outdated, and that preliminary processes be amended to increase community engagement opportunities.

Mayor Coté requested that Task Force members provide examples of effective public engagement processes in other municipalities at the May 12, 2015 PETF meeting.

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

May 12, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in Committee Room #2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté
Chair

Alison Worsfold
Committee Clerk