

NCA Meeting - Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Newcastle Community Association  
Minutes of a regular meeting  
April 6, 2021

## **New Business**

Nanaimo City Councilor Sheryl Armstrong's Notice of Motion calling for a public Inquiry into the Judicial System

## **Memberships**

NCA continue to gather memberships and the Association is encouraging Newcastle residents to contact your representative if you wish to join. Membership in the Association is crucial to having our voices heard.

Currently 41 residents have joined the Association; several new residents moving into the area have been most receptive to the NCA's welcome.

## **Business Update**

A business owner in the neighbourhood is considering becoming the Business representative on the NCA, if successful the individual will attend the next meeting.

## **Development Liaison Update**

Nancy Mitchell reported:

Newcastle Place (250 Terminal Avenue): We expect that BC Housing will be submitting a rezoning application to the city with architectural renderings of the proposed building (s) this month, public meeting to come.

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REIMAGINE Nanaimo – Moving into the Options Stage of the Official Community Plan review. There will probably be lots of pressure to densify the city so our neighbourhood needs to give thought to clear urban design guidelines for redevelopment that fit with the character of our neighbourhood and that can be included in the plan.

1000 Stewart Avenue (Waterfront Suites) - standoff between the City and the property owner as to who is responsible for some storm water system work required under the present building. Probably will be some time before we see a public meeting on this project.

Cherry Blossom Lane/ Stewart Ave - storm sewer and culverts being worked on by the City (until July 2021).

Stewart Avenue Crosswalks - City Engineering department advised that the Ministry of Transport do not want flashers because the current pedestrian warrant does not meet the Provincial requirement.

(Update: April 8, 2021) This is what the Ministry is doing: *The Ministry is working on installing overhead lighted crosswalk signage at 4 locations on Stewart ave. Our electrical contractor has currently installed all of the Concrete bases at these locations. Unfortunately, we are having some delays in getting the steel poles and risers shipped from the supplier. We are hoping to have the materials delivered to finish the project within the next 6-8 weeks. Once completed the project will see larger overhead Black on white crosswalk signs above the existing crosswalks. The new signs will be backlit and provide extra lighting to the marked crosswalk below. These crossings are not being upgraded to special crosswalks that are pedestrian activated with flashing lights. They will be upgraded with larger and back lit signage, with extra lighting to enhance night visibility on the marked crossing. (See picture below)*



Concrete remediation work was done at Dawes and Stewart to make the crosswalk area wheelchair accessible.

Neighbourhood Associations are supposed to meet with to the Governance and Priorities Committee of Council on April 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss whether neighbourhood associations should meet some standard of credibility (e.g., have AGMS; elections; membership) and how they want to be engaged with the city.

## **CAC Update**

### **1) Newcastle Place**

- 3 residents were evicted, one for violence and two for drug dealing.
- 1 resident put on 'warning' (two warnings before eviction)
- 2 residents waiting to go into treatment in Vancouver

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- 1 resident moved into permanent housing

The Vancouver Island Crisis Care Society is now working on improving the health of their residents. A local Audiologist has volunteered to do hearing clinics and provide hearing aids, free to those with hearing impairment. The Audiologist will also donate \$50 to VICCS for each person tested.

Work has begun on setting up a similar clinic to do vision testing.

A Primary Care Team (Dr. Simms) is on-site every Thursday, and a nurse drops in 3-4 days/week.

Following a 30 - 60day detox program, individuals are moved back into supportive housing - the environment they came from prior to going into detox.

Palladin Security is working with the RCMP on a regular basis.

## **2) BC Housing**

St. Peter Shelter - closed in March; 15 people were displaced. The shelter was operating at 62% occupancy with a head count averaging 8 - 23 persons.

702 Nicol - community engagement continues; completion expected in early fall.

Townsite & Millstone - Unitarian Church - 20 people/night; 87% full, with hot breakfast and dinner provided daily.

Newcastle Place (250 Terminal Avenue) - design proposal has not yet been completed. The site is going to be rezoned with a public engagement expected in April according to Dale Lindsay (Services General Manager, City of Nanaimo)

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312 Mt. Benson - The resident manager is facing many challenges from the unhoused population near the building. Palladin will work with them to deal with ongoing serious security issues.

#### **4) CAC Community Representative**

Dick Bowen has resigned; looking to fill this position.

#### **Neighbourhood Update**

Marina's Taverna - work continues, restaurant expected to open soon with seating in the parking lot.

Terry Usher, NCA member reported that Security has warned him that there are a lot of new people in the neighbourhood displaying reckless, bizarre behaviour (aggressive, screaming, chanting) a whole new dynamic that has not been seen here before.

Fires continue every night on embankment.

Caledonia Park football field has approximately two dozen people staying down there; windows broken, and doors kicked in and it appears people are inside the hut. The motorhome drug dealer has setup there as well.

Midland Tools are experiencing escalating problems with people running into the store, grabbing merchandise, and leaving without paying.

Husky Gas Station - nothing new to report on reopening.

350 & 360 Vancouver Avenue - (across from Marine Vista) Property owner has sold the small house and the purchaser has committed to buy the other 3 properties (that were part of the listing), next year. The parcel is zoned R8.

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Stewart & Bryden – This heritage home has been sold and will be renovated for the new owner who will arrive in the summer.

Area near the rail tracks - A contractor for a resident found a mock crime scene with a decapitated, mutilated 'Barbie 'set up in an area roped off with police tape. The RCMP have opened a file on this very disturbing event and continue investigating.

President Karen Kuwica reported that Constable Gary O'Brien suggested she send a letter to Fire Chief Tim Doyle, RCMP (officer in charge), Dave LaBerge (Bylaws) and Mayor Krog to invite them to meet to develop an action plan on how to deal with escalating issues in the Newcastle neighbourhood. Help will be needed, and a plan of action needs to be developed to deal with the increase in traffic the warmer weather brings along with escalating issues. She pointed out that last summer was particularly bad, NCA members calls to the RCMP are not being responded to anymore and this is causing a lot of distress in the neighbourhood. Proactive measures need to be put in place.

A member of the NCA calls Bylaws every night to report fires on the embankment. It was suggested that if buy in by officials is not successful, the next step is to get the media involved.

### **Block Watch Update**

The new Block Watch signs for our neighbourhood are still not available.

There have been some car break-ins, please continue to ensure your vehicles are locked with nothing inside.

A high-speed hit and run on Stewart Avenue took out both of Fred MacDonald's vehicles; one was repaired, one was written off.

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Newcastle residents are reminded if you own a bike you need to register it in the RCMP bike program. If it is stolen and not registered, you will not have recourse to get it back; it becomes community property.

## **New Business**

### 1) Newcastle Safety Audit

Christy Wood, Nanaimo RCMP Community Policing Coordinator has advised that the Newcastle neighbourhood has been selected to be part of their Safety Audit project. The goal of the project is to work in partnership with neighbourhoods to find ways to reduce opportunities for crime and incorporate relevant crime prevention programming. Further updates at the next NCA meeting.

### 2) Nanaimo Councilor Sheryl Armstrong NOTICE OF MOTION

Nanaimo city councilor Sheryl Armstrong wants a discussion about stiffer penalties and electronic monitoring for repeat offenders with serious charges who are released into communities while awaiting trial. This Notice of Motion will be voted on by Council at their April 19th meeting.

**Residents of the Newcastle neighbourhood are urged to write to Mayor and Council or call them and let them know you want this motion supported.**

Meeting adjourned @ 8:20 pm

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