



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 5276, Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4

Spring 2011 Newsletter

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Please share a copy of the RNA Newsletter with a neighbour.

COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

by Geoff Young

Both the City of Victoria and the Capital Regional District are now going through the process of renewing our basic planning documents, the Official Community Plan and the Regional Sustainability Strategy, respectively. On the City and CRD websites you will find ample material on the plans. I encourage you to provide your input to both discussions (details on the City plan can be found at www.shapeyourfuturevictoria.ca).

One concern I have expressed about both plans is that the material provided is *too* ample – the plans are simply too long. They address so many issues and so many policy areas that the basic function of the plans, which is to guide land use planning, is being lost amidst lengthy discussions of policy issues that, while important, are not closely linked to land use planning. Some of the length of the plans is dictated by the legislation, which requires that a number of topics be addressed. My concern is simply that some of the needed focus on, and discussion of, land use planning is being lost as a result.

The City plan is different from past plans in that it is not built up from different neighbourhood plans. Instead, the basic policies for residential neighbourhoods are constant over the entire city. One of these policies (in the *Housing and Homelessness* section) calls for a gradual densification of housing throughout all neighbourhoods, in the form of

creation of small residential lots, "ground-oriented multi-unit housing, and "additional on-site residential units in the primary structure or in accessory buildings" (i.e. basement suites and carriage houses).

I know that some Rockland residents have expressed concerns to me about some of the types of densification that we have observed in the neighbourhood or that are proposed by the City, and I have suggested to my council colleagues that our residential policies should be more tailored to individual neighbourhoods than they are at present. So far, however, there has been no strong support for reviewing this aspect of the plan.

Some of the standards that could vary among areas might be:

- Minimum lot size for standard and small lot subdivisions
- Maximum building square footage or height
- Whether parking is permitted in the front yard of the house
- Whether carriage houses are permitted, their size and setbacks
- Whether roof decks are permitted
- Front, back and side yard setbacks.

If you feel there is a good reason for the City to differentiate more between neighbourhoods, then you should provide your input to the OCP process.

The new Regional District plan is at an earlier stage than the OCP, but is already generating controversy. Conflicts between zonings that are locally supported but that appear to some to violate the existing regional plan have occurred as a result of a major proposal in the Juan de Fuca area and a couple of proposals in Central Saanich. For many years regional plans have not generally provided strong direction, but there appears now to be a greater interest among citizens in shaping the region as a whole.

Please contact me at geoffyoung@shaw.ca with any comments or questions.

“City Hall doesn’t listen – what’s the point?”

If this is your suspicion, you need to know about the successes your Board of Directors and Land-Use Committee have had this year.

City Hall listened to our concerns about the “two-headed monsters” developers have been filling lots with on Despard Avenue and Joan Crescent. As a result, a new “Development Permit Area” has been created in Rockland. Now, if there is a plan for a semi-attached dwelling, it must go before a design panel which will look at how well the building will fit in with “established streetscape patterns,” and whether or not it will “respect the privacy of neighbouring homes,” etc.

City Hall has also decided not to redefine “daycare” to include care for any number of residents of any age.

In addition, City Hall reduced the height restriction from 11 to 7.5 metres above average grade and brought in a ban on rooftop decks.

So, our discussions, letters, phone calls, radio interviews, and articles have had some effect!

We even received a donation of \$100 this month! Thank you – there’s much more to accomplish.

2011 AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY CONVENTION IN VICTORIA

The 2011 American Iris Society Convention is being held at the Fairmont Empress Hotel from May 29 to June 3. 400 delegates from the U.S, Canada, New Zealand, France and Germany are coming to Victoria to view 1400 Iris planted at Hatley Castle, Glendale Gardens, Finnerty Gardens and Government House.

The display gardens are open to the public. In addition there will be a simulated Iris Flower show in the Palm Court of the Empress on Wednesday June 1 at 5:30 PM. The public are cordially invited to come and learn how Iris are judged by the experts.

Throughout the Convention the former Kipling's will be occupied by an Iris themed Artisan's Boutique and a MarketPlace of exclusive vendors. This venue is open to the public both through the hotel and from Government Street.

The Boutique/MarketPlace is open:

Mon. May 30 4PM to 8PM

Tues May 31 10AM to 5PM

Wed June 1 12 noon to 8 PM

Thurs June 2 12 noon to 8 PM

Fri June 3 8AM to 12 noon

IRIS TEA AND TOUR AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE JUNE 4

Of, perhaps greatest interest to Rockland Residents, on Saturday June 4, Government House and the Friends of Government House Gardens Society, is holding a Tea and Tour of the Iris Gardens and Costume Museum. The Tea will begin at 2:00 PM and will be limited to 40 people. Tickets are \$40 and may be purchased from Government House or by contacting Howard Smith at hsmith@island.net.



GRAFFITI UPDATE

by Lloyd Ollila

On April 16th the Rockland Graffiti committee hosted a meeting of the Graffiti Committee at the Victoria Truth Center. Don Hamilton and I, Lloyd Ollila, are co-chairmen of the graffiti group and invited the Victoria police to provide a speaker which they did. Some interesting facts – 1) Graffiti cost \$300,000.00 to the city and 1M overall including city property, private residences and businesses. 2) There are two types of graffiti, the hip hop kind (big letters and figures) and tags (name type signatures) with the taggers more of a nuisance, 3) Tagging is considered an addiction and is not limited to teens. In fact, one of the most prolific taggers in Victoria is in his 30s. Although some of these graffiti writers consider themselves artists, most of us residents consider them vandals and pesky nuisances. Their graffiti is distasteful and indicative of neighborhood blight. 4) The “fix the broken window” theory is the best defense against graffiti artists and our committee members check our telephone and hydro poles weekly to see which ones “have been insulted” and need a covering paint job.

We have divided the blocks in Rockland into maintenance areas and each volunteer has an area to cover. These conscientious people include an 89 year old lady, a retired admiral, an artist (she often paints hearts and vines on her poles hoping to deter taggers), a retired school teacher, university professors, an economist, and others – a very diverse, but determined group armed with paint and brushes (paint provided by BC Hydro). The result is that the Rockland neighborhood, adjacent to the downtown core looks much better and all committee members including myself feel we have accomplished something positive for our community.

Langford has prosecuted a graffiti vandal. They said they had over 50% reduction in graffiti in their area after this was done. It is something for Victoria to think about as catching some of the graffiti vandals and prosecuting them would set an example for others.

If you or your neighbors in Rockland are interested in joining our group and donating time painting poles in our worthy cause, you can contact the following people (Don Hamilton [250-383-5448](tel:250-383-5448) or Lloyd Ollila [250-598-1605](tel:250-598-1605)).



Examples of urban graffiti on the lane between Rockland Avenue and Richardson Street, one block east of Linden avenue. Helen and John Edwards photos.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE UPDATE

by Jerymy Brownridge

Dear Neighbours:

Spring has sprung at last, and Rockland is looking fantastic. Some of those that have been around a little longer than others have said that our gardens have never blossomed so late. However, as the sun begins to shine at last, our signature rhododendrons have never looked so good. Indeed most of our grounds' gardens are now flourishing, and with the careful help of our volunteers we are able to enjoy a wonderful new season at Government House. We welcome our neighbours to share in the splendour, and to come see some of the subtle differences. Those walking by may have already noticed the thriving tropicals along Rockland, for example, introduced later on last year.

We are pleased to be working with our volunteers to welcome delegates to the World Iris Convention that is being held here in Victoria in early June. We understand that visitors from around the world will visit Government House, largely to inspect the irises we have, but also to see the rest of property. It is a wonderful opportunity to show off the neighbourhood as well as what the rest of the city and province have to offer.

In honour of the convention, The Friends of Government House Gardens Society is holding a fundraiser tea and tour on Saturday, 4 June. These teas were tremendously successful last year, and we are sure they will be again this year. We also have a much larger costume museum that

will be included as part of the tea and tour. There are still tickets left, so please feel free to contact our main office switch board at 250 387 2080 for further information.

As in years past, His Honour will be hosting the "Concert on the Lawn" music series in July. We invite you to join with us on 7, 14, and 21 July at our band shell on the east part of the property. We will have two groups on each of the first two nights, and then the finale will be one live band on the 21st. Again we will have a concession run by the Friends of Government House Gardens Society, and serving up a nice variety of healthy and traditional BBQ favourites. Please watch posters and the website for final details.

We are also pleased to host another Rockland Neighbourhood Association summer mixer on 8 July. My first one was last year, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. We know this year will be equally enjoyable. Please contact your board for final details regarding this event; I believe Catherine Spencer and Bob June are the contacts.

We hope you have a wonderful summer.

Best wishes,

Jerymy Brownridge
Director, Operations & Management Services
Government House

Save Rockland's Baby Birds

Please give the baby birds in our neighbourhood a chance to survive by keeping your cats indoors, especially in the springtime, especially in the mornings.

In Canada, domestic cats kill 1 billion birds every year.

CITY OF VICTORIA WINS HALLMARK SOCIETY AWARD

by Helen Edwards

At the Hallmark Society Awards Night on May 3, 2011, the City of Victoria won an Award of Merit for the restoration and repurposing of the historic Bandstand in Beacon Hill Park.

Designed by Leonard Buttres Trimen and built by G. Mallette, the bandstand appears to have been the first structure built in the park, installed before the Stone Bridge. The 1888 structure is an ornate Victorian-era wooden building with Carpenter ornamentation. The bandstand was the original centre of cultural and entertainment activities in the park. In 1900, it was located to his current position and, in 1927, was converted into an aviary. The aviary operated until 1989 when it closed. It had little maintenance after that point.

The site was recommended for restoration and adaptation for a historical interpretive kiosk in 2008. The resultant Heritage Impact Study focused on the significant history and architecture of the site, as well as its contextual relationship within the Park. Proposed interventions were assessed with the Heritage Impact Study and recommendations were made for the rehabilitation of the Bandstand.

The bandstand has been painted in colours that are true to the period of its construction: Pendrell Verdigris (green), Pendrell Red and Mount Pleasant Bluff (brown). Nine interpretive display panels explaining the history and features of Beacon Hill Park are permanently displayed on the bandstand.



Photo courtesy: City of Victoria

The team responsible for the restoration project included: City staff Doug DeMarzo, Parks Senior Planner; Bill Carere, Building Project Administrator and Steve Barber, Heritage Planner. Donald Luxton and Associates Ltd. served as heritage consultants. Additional work was completed by Farmer Construction and the City of Victoria Paint Shop. Care was taken to delay construction in the area where late-nesting herons were found; the herons had returned to the Park after an absence of three years and are a favourite with children and adults alike.

The rehabilitation of the Bandstand preserves the historic structure but allows for a contemporary, yet compatible, use.

For a listing of other award winners, check out <http://hallmarksociety.ca>

RNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2011-2012

President: Janet Simpson
Vice President: Bob June
Secretary: David Clark
Treasurer: John Caldwell
Directors: Bill Brooks
John Edwards
David Hambleton
Jane Wheatley

RNA Email Server List

Would you like to hear more about events in Rockland? Please join the neighbours list through the RNA website at www.rockland.bc.ca.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Rockland Neighbourhood Association Newsletter is published four times a year. It is distributed electronically to all members. Submissions from members on issues of interest are always accepted and photos are particularly welcome.

Deadlines for the upcoming issues are:

Summer 2011 - July 15, 2011
Autumn 2011 - October 15, 2011
Winter 2012 - January 15, 2012
Spring 2012 - April 15, 2012

All submissions should be sent to Communication Chair John Edwards - jcsedwards@gmail.com.