

ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

March 18, 2025
Grace Lutheran Church
1273 Fort Street, Victoria

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Introduction:

Art Hamilton welcomed everyone and introduced our current board members.

Patricia Kidd acknowledged with respect that the Rockland neighbourhood and the meeting for which we gather are located on the traditional and ancestral territory of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, known today as the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Kosapsom) Nations.

Introductions of Directors:

Art Hamilton, President and Treasurer
Asal Poinen, Social Director
Carollyne Yardley, Land Use Director
Dave Clark, Environment Director
Patricia Kidd, Communications Director
Sandra Jackman, Secretary
Jay Jennings, Traffic
Marnie Coulter, Emergency Preparedness and Safety
Kelly Seagram, Coordinator

Four special guests were introduced:

City of Victoria Councillor: Marg Gardiner
City of Victoria Staff Liaison: Gary Pemberton (absent)
Government House Director of Operations: Tania Bonfield
Guest Speaker: Doug Clarke - Emergency and Safety Preparedness

Approval of Minutes - 2024 AGM Meeting

Motioned by Dave Clarke, Minutes were approved as presented.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Presented by Doug Clarke

Doug is the Community Liaison for Emergency and Safety Preparedness, and is one of three staff members at the Victoria Fire Department that work in Emergency Management.

The mandate of Emergency and Safety Preparedness is to encourage people to work together and support each other. He is available to speak to groups of all sizes. To get prepared - know your risks, make a plan, get your kit together and get connected.

He suggested that we each exchange our name and the street we live on with another person at this meeting.

The emergency management team identifies hazards in our region, establishes mitigation plans, and creates responses for residents and local businesses.

Earthquakes

Earthquake Early Warning System - the City of Victoria funded this project, and costs were reimbursed by the federal government. Early warning sensors were installed along the shoreline throughout the CRD. They record the initial and subsequent waves - if 3 of them are over 5 on the scale, an alert is pushed to all cell phones in the area. We will get a maximum of 8 seconds notice in order to prepare.

During an earthquake - drop, cover and hold on. DO NOT stand in a doorway, run out of a building, or sit or lay beside a table.

A robust discussion followed and Doug responded to several questions about earthquakes.

Tsunamis

Doug informed us of the Capital Region Tsunami Information Portal website, where you can access the regional tsunami map, enter your address and see your risk level. There is no insurance coverage for tsunamis.

Rockland is not at risk of tsunamis. Most people in the city of Victoria are safe as the cliffs of Dallas road are higher than expected tsunami levels. Low lying areas such as the Chinese Cemetery and Victoria's harbour are at risk. Plans are underway to install signage on walkways and roadways along the water. If you experience an earthquake that knocks you to your feet, go to high ground immediately.

Shallow crust earthquakes are just as much of a risk to Victoria as the "big one".

Vic Alert is the city's free emergency notification system. It provides critical alerts and emergency information to anyone who has registered, which can be done on the city's website. Subscribers will receive alerts for events such as tsunamis, evacuation notices, fire, plane crash, gas leak, etc.

Recovery

Effective recovery begins with planning. Connect with your neighbours. Help will eventually come, but it will take time.

Check out the website victoriaready.ca, the city's emergency preparedness hub with resources, materials, workshops, and more.

Doug is focussing first on education, then on community containers. He would like neighbourhood associations to get involved. The schools maintain their own containers for their use.

Ham radio operators are needed. The firehall has two radio rooms, and has staff available to train interested parties.

VCAN COMMUNITY MAPPING PROJECT

Presented by Carollyne Yardley and Dave Clarke

This Garry Oak Mapping Project was funded by a My Great Neighbourhood Grant from the city of Victoria. The Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN) has involved each neighbourhood in creating an inventory of Garry oaks and other elements of biodiversity on private property. The city has already mapped trees on public property.

The urban area of the City of Victoria is the where the Garry oak ecosystem lies. Garry oaks are drought resistant and fire smart, but development causes issues for this ecosystem. VCAN is looking at creating avenues to preserve the habitat and density of this ecosystem as development increases.

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society is dedicated to the preservation, protection and restoration of Garry oak stands and their natural habitats.

Carollyne and Dave displayed a map of Rockland showing where all the Garry Oaks are. Approximately one tree falls down a year, but we are planting to offset.

To stay informed, check out the RNA website and sign up for our newsletter.

The city has grant funding available for projects to further our goals. If anyone has an idea, please bring it to the Rockland Neighbourhood Association to sponsor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

LAND USE

Presented by Carollyne Yardley and Phil Calvert

'Victoria 2050' is the City's Official Community Plan which sets the vision for how the city is going to develop in the coming years. The draft version is out now and the focus is on density. This has been a top down process completed in an accelerated timeline to accommodate predicted population growth. Any proposed housing development that fits within the plan will be reviewed by staff who have been delegated to make decisions. Proposals with significant variances would go to Council.

Single family and duplex zones are gone, upsized to multi family (4 plexes at a minimum), multi storeys. Building storeys can be even higher if they are rentals. There is an increased risk of renovations and "demovictions". The protections for heritage and tree preservation have been weakened.

Marg Gardener spoke about the following.

Official Community Plan

A year ago staff brought forward two approaches, and read a list of items that councillors have asked staff to report back on - increased density, reduced transit, less parking, etc. She advised that they are aiming for a 4% vacancy rate, which is higher than Victoria has ever had.

There remains concern about the location of social service facilities for the unhoused.

Property Taxes

An average increase of 7.78 percent across all properties is projected for 2025. The increase related to CRD, School District and other groups needs to be worked in. There has also been a motion to alter the tax shares, shifting some taxes from business and industry to residential. Note: CRD does not pay property tax for CRD housing or the main CRD office building on Fisgard.

Businesses downtown are in trouble. Well over one million square feet of provincial government office space has been given up.

Art Hamilton invited questions on the committee reports.

Committee reports on Land Use, Environment, Membership, Social, Communications, Traffic and Woodlands Gardens were included in the package sent out prior to the meeting. No questions arose.

MEMBER CONCERNS

There were no other neighbourhood concerns.

Election of Directors for 2025

Art Hamilton presented the nominees, existing directors:

Art Hamilton
Sandra Jackman
Dave Clark
Patricia Kidd
Carollyne Yardley
Asal Poinen
Marnie Coulter
Jay Jennings

See AGM report for bios. All candidates were elected by a show of hands.

Send questions to info@rockland.bc.ca
Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.