

Prior Year Meeting Minutes:

ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

February 8, 2023

Grace Lutheran Church
1273 Fort Street, Victoria

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Introduction:

Patricia Kidd welcomed everyone to the AGM and advised that we have a quorum. She then gave acknowledgment to the land of the lək̓ʷəŋən People, known today as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations whose relationships with the land continue to this day.

introduced 4 special guests:

Marg Gardiner (council liaison)
Gary Pemberton (city staff liaison)
Cst Mark Jenkins (police rep)
Helen Edwards (guest speaker)

Patricia introduced acting President Art Hamilton, who in turn introduced the **2022 Board of Directors**

and stated the year they joined the board:

Art Hamilton, President and Membership and Treasurer, 2017
Asal Poinen, 2021
Bob June, Land Use, 2008 (leaving board)
Carollyne Yardley, 2021
Chantal Meagher, 2018
Dave Clark, Environment, 2000
David McWalter, Land Use, 2015 (leaving board)
Patricia Kidd, Communications, 2020
Sandra Jackman, Secretary, 2019
Susan Evans, 2021 (leaving board)

Art Hamilton introduced **new board members:**

Amy Kwiatkowski
Anthony Danda
Marnie Coulter
Jay Jennings

Approval of Minutes - 2022 AGM Meeting

Motioned by Dave Clark, Seconded by Patty Grant. No discussion. Minutes were approved as presented.

Constable Mark Jenkins presentation on community policing:

Current role: community resource officer, working in community service division. Now, only 2 community service officers for all Victoria from Burnside-Gorge to Gonzales.

Initially, role was to make presentations, work with block watch, etc. Three years ago, role changed. When unhoused people were brought into supportive housing, purchased hotels, etc. in order to get people to safety in response to the pandemic. Recently met with Premier Eby, who asked whether what was done was right. Jenkins response: hindsight is great - we did what we thought we needed to do at the time, based on the information we had at the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, it hasn't gone well. Now solely responsible for relationships with supportive housing and shelters and working with street community, and all the parks. He works with issues of homelessness from both sides and has opportunities to brief municipal and provincial leaders.

Has lived here his whole life - more development now than ever before, and that is leading to a more vibrant community. But what comes with that are big city problems.

People are concerned about coming into the city. Don't avoid going downtown, but when going out, here is some advice:

1) have your head 'on a swivel' — do NOT focus on your phone. Do NOT have headphones on — need to be aware of your surroundings.

2) If you see someone behaving badly, cross the street. 99% of the time, it is a person having an episode. Call the police - that person is in crisis and needs help. They are generally unaware of their surroundings, and you're probably helping them by calling police. There is now a mental health unit working with teams of nurses.

3) Trust your 'spidey sense' when out. If your instinct tells you something is off, trust that sense.

4) Where possible, don't go out alone. Go out with someone else.

Q: Is the homeless population getting larger? Are people coming here from elsewhere?

A: Yes, there are definitely people coming here. A lot coming from Vancouver East side - very volatile. Don't know, though, how many stay. Big influx in the winter because of the mild weather. With recession, inflation, housing crisis, etc, we're seeing more people who were formerly housed, and are now in tents. Seeing more seniors living in tents. Indigenous community is vastly overrepresented in the unhoused community.

Q: Are we going to be seeing more outreach groups going out?

A: We would love to have more outreach groups coming out - funded by various organizations. I would love to see more police outreach (not from a policing perspective), but there are still massive funding issues. My unit is supposed to be 6 people, but now only 2. We have 2 crisis response teams (plainclothes police with nurses) for mental health calls. 90% of my calls are mental health calls.

Q: What is the plan for Stadacona Park?

A: Now, it is a camping park because of toilet facilities. It is supposed to be a 7am to 7pm park, but that isn't happening.

Q: If you see someone on the ground, should you go check for pulse?

A: Everyone's comfort levels are different. But I suggest that you be very cautious. If someone has recently used, they could react very strongly. There is a large proportion of the street community that carry weapons or have needles on them.

Also, to note: Call 250-995-7654 - non emergency number. OR can file complaint online (e.g: car broken into, or even just see one that has been broken into) - it will generate a file, and allow police to track incidents.

Q: Is there a long-term plan for reintegrating unhoused into society? What is the final goal?

A: Part of my behind-the-scenes work is concerned with this. There is an audit of BC housing. Premier Eby is now asking 'what isn't working'? The province is consulting with chiefs of police. We are missing so many supports. The opioid crisis is 'rocking our world' - I deal with 6-10 overdoses per week. How do we stabilize someone to return to the community if we can deal with the opioid crisis? Lack of treatment beds. So much trauma out there (sexual abuse, inter-generational trauma), and drugs are their 'safe place' - if you're going to take away their drugs, you've got to give them a 'way out'.

Q: How is the Tiny Town project working for the neighbourhood?

A: There is a YouTube documentary about Tiny Town. It is very well designed and has had very little impact on the community. Stats show that crime in the area has gone down.

Q: Listening to this, it seems hopeless. Why is there no vetting of people going into supportive housing?

A: There is now a move to have police involved in the vetting before moving into supportive housing in order to avoid people who are preying on vulnerable population being allowed into supportive housing. We're after people with drugs and firearms who are capitalizing on the system. I believe we will see some change on this front.

Cst. Jenkins ended with an invitation to reach out to him with concerns or questions.

Special guest: Helen Edwards: The Heritage Detective spoke about various historic houses in Rockland - in particular many along Pemberton Road. Her most recent book will be available for purchase later in February.

Patricia Kidd invited questions on any of the committee reports.

No Questions on any Committee Reports, other than Land Use:

Q What will be the impact of Missing Middle?

A (Bob June): Very little. May see some townhouse developments on corners where able to get several lots amalgamated. The numbers don't add up: cost of tearing down old house, and building large house plex very high, especially with high land costs in Rockland. Incidentally, 30% of internal migration within Canada is to BC, so we will continue to see housing pressure here.

AGM attendees thanked Bob June for his work over the past years.

Motion to accept reports: Jay Jennings, Seconded by Dave Clark. Reports approved as presented.

Questions from the floor/issues that members wish RNA to address:

Q: Concern expressed about trees that are being cut down - both on city property and private property.

A: There was, at one time a heritage registry for trees. It was voluntary registration of significant trees in the neighbourhood. Most are captured in a book. The Tree Protection Bylaw has a schedule that could list the trees. In Saanich, they ported these trees into their tree bylaw, but Victoria hasn't done that. The president of the Gary Oak Preservation Society will be speaking to the RNA March 14th.

Committee Reports

Committee Reports on Land Use, Environment, Membership, Social, Communications and Woodlands Gardens were sent out prior to the meeting. Attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions. No questions arose.

Election of Directors for 2023

Patricia presented the nominees, all of whom are existing directors:

Art Hamilton

Sandra Jackman

Dave Clark

Chantal Meagher

Patricia Kidd

Carollyne Yardley

Asal Poinen

Amy Kwiatkowski

Anthony Danda

Marnie Coulter

Jay Jennings

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

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Dave Clark. Seconded Chantal Meagher.

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m