

JAMES BAY NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

November 9th, 2022, 7:00 pm, JBNA Discussion Forum

Agenda:

- 1) Welcome, Announcements and Updates**
- 2) Marg Gardiner Comments**
- 3) JBNA Going Forward:**
 - a) Board Transition Period: Now to April AGM - Wayne**
 - b) Local Area Plan (LAP) – Trevor and Tim**
 - c) Gardening Advocate Project Update – Kathryn Pankowski**
 - d) CoV Neighbourhood Coordinator Pilot Project – Wayne**
 - i) IT Capacity Project Update – Bob**
 - ii) James Bay Advocate Project Update – Wayne**
 - iii) Recycling Project Update – Wayne**
 - iv) JB Celebration Coordinator Contribution - Wayne**
 - e) Building JBNA Capacity – JBNA Board**
- 4) Five Corners Development Discussion - Soressa Gardner**

Following is the ZOOM Meeting linkage detail:

JBNA Discussion Forum

Scheduled: November 9th, 2022 at 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM, PST

Register in advance for this meeting: <https://bit.ly/3Fv4GcL>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

JBNA Discussion Forum

November 09, 2022, 7:00 pm

Minutes

41 in attendance 1t 7:05pm

Agenda:

1) Welcome, Announcements and Updates

2) Marg Gardiner Comments

Marg provided an update on her new position at Council. No announcements have yet been made regarding assignment of councilors to neighbourhoods. For email contact, mgardiner@victoria.ca is my City address, or you can reach me through my website.

Tim Van Alstine – Offered words of appreciation for Marg's years of service and dedication to JBNA.

3) JBNA Going Forward:

a) Board Transition Period: Now to April AGM – Wayne

Board elections will be held in April 2023

Tim - - President

Bob – Vice President

Wayne – Treasurer

Trevor – Director at Large

We are welcoming applications for another board position. We are sorting out who will handle responses to JBNA.org. We do have capacity limitations. The Director's Report is one. We do not anticipate submitting a monthly Director's Report, but we will continue to try to keep up with regular information as received.

The next Board will decide when and whether we re-start meetings in person.

Bob VanderSteen provided an update on membership. Voting members can stand for Board election. To become a voting member, you must attend three out of five consecutive meetings, and send a message to JBNA indicating that you have attended the three meetings. After that, the requirement is to attend two meetings per year.

b) Local Area Plan (LAP) – Trevor and Tim

Local Area Plan: Tim has been in touch with Andrea Hudson, staff member at City in charge of the LAP process. The City is in flux right now. They are working on OCP amendments and are not sure where LAP fits into that. It seems clear it will not restart this year, and might be delayed to 2024. We might try to hire a coordinator with funding

to assist with that process. If you are interested, we would like to hear from you. At this point, it is unclear how council will prioritize the LAP.

Mariann Burka: I want to express real concern for the lack of priority of the LAP. During the election, a number of JBNA residents met with candidate to discuss matters of density, and City's habit of ignoring our concerns. Their response was that the LAP was too out-dated and was not current. Their guidance was that we need to prioritize that, and that concerns me. We have no document to lean on when egregious developments come before us. What can we do to accelerate that? We need to show that the association is fully representative of the community, and not drafted by two or three people.

Tim VA: We did a lot of work already with a professional planner, and we have that available still. The City is gone off on a bit of a tangent in the recent past. We have enough density already – we need to move to a more professional level of engagement – formal mailings, a coordinator, and the like.

Soressa Gardner: How do we show that the whole community has been consulted? How can we prove that? Does the City have guidelines?

WS: We have a lot of expertise here in JBNA – it's a matter of resourcing.

Mariann Burka: Can we collect our thoughts and form a plan of action on the LPA? I think we need to write to the City and ask them to provide funding and accelerate the process. I think it should be LAP that informs the OCP, not the other way around, which seems to be how it is now.

TVA: I am starting to assemble these things so we can move forward.

Pat McGuire: We worked on that in the 1990's. We held a number of meetings with 60-80 people, and we held sessions on envisioning and feedback. Nothing stops us from starting on this – we should just go ahead with it. Other districts are – it seems we are behind.

Don Gibson: It is important to keep this conversation going. Can we prepare a 2—page backgrounder to give everyone some context? Fairfield might be a good template for LAP format and content. We were in line in James Bay, but were pushed back more than once to Ogden Point re-development, and a second time due to Council matters. It is a significant failure that we don't have a current (with 25 years) community plan. We need the background, to understand what the City response has been. I don't think anything will get done in the absence of context from the City and past work JBNA has done.

Kathryn Pankowski: The new City Council will be developing its Strategic Plan in the next few months. This might be a good time to write to new council members and urge them to include the LAPs in the new Strategic Plan.

c) Gardening Advocate Project Update – Kathryn Pankowski

Kathryn Pankowski – Neighbourhood Gardening Report. Over the last 6 years the programme has grown, covering three areas: First, accessible and cheap garden supplies; Second, running and attending gardens in various places; Third, education. We have about 25 regular volunteers, and a number of occasional volunteers. We have a Wee Free Seed Box, six volunteers who clean and pack seeds, now operating for two years with 5,000 packs of seed distributed. We are part of the City's Get Growing project, delivering mulch twice a year through the community, and we run the City's plant distribution programme. We have ten people working on that. We also run a plant swap twice a year, with 15 volunteers. We run a number of gardens, both commons and allotment. We have ten neighbourhood food trees, the Fishermans' Wharf Herb Garden, we run the garden by Discovery Coffee and Menzies and Michigan, and now support a garden near the JB Community Project. We partner with Huntington Manner on their garden too. We have a monthly Beacon column and host tours. We give tours to visiting delegations. We are looking to develop more berry patches, and have many other ideas. As we increase development, we need to increase greenspace and bio-diversity.

TVA: Asking Kathryn to lead the gardening initiative was one of the Board's best decisions. We have been given access to the old concession stand in MacDonald Park to store equipment.

d) CoV Neighbourhood Coordinator Pilot Project – Wayne

Neighbourhood Coordinate Pilot Project

WS: About half the neighbourhood associations have formal community centres, and have a coordinator. Those that don't have argued we need this position. The City last year made a pilot programme and we were successful obtaining a \$20k grant for this work. We have multiple needs, so we split our grant into several parts. The first is IT Support to assist and take over from Bob eventually. We also need to get an animator/advocate volunteer coordinator for community development.

i) IT Capacity Project Update – Bob

BVS: The JBNA website and related activities are today managed by me, no backup. I have created a document with all activities and how to do them. I called a consultant, sent them the document for review, and were happy with what they saw. The idea was that they would be on call to manage the website until a volunteer was found to take over.

ii) James Bay Advocate Project Update – Wayne

iii) Recycling Project Update – Wayne

iv) JB Celebration Coordinator Contribution – Wayne

WS: We also wanted to support new initiatives. One was the need for regular recycling services in James Bay. We hired an advocate to start the project, We now have a recycling service happening the third Saturday of each month. It has been successful. It works on a donation basis. Another project was the summer picnic community celebration. This was successful because of strong volunteer engagement, with New Horizons as sponsor. We need to find someone to take over the advocate role, as the recycling project transitions into a paid operation.

Kimberly Stratford – City of Victoria. Please note that the money allocated cannot be used for the LAP process, it is strictly for contracting community services. Once Council is working on the Strategic Plan, Planning Department will know if that pot of money will be still available.

Mariann Burka: Could that money be used for an aspect of the LAP that involves community engagement?

KS: No – this is a separate allocation.

Linda Carlson: I gather we should be sending you our ideas for what a coordinator could lead in our community for a modest stipend.

WS: Yes – and I look forward to hearing your ideas! I want to emphasize that we need more Board capacity – we welcome volunteers to come forward.

e) Building JBNA Capacity – JBNA Board

Discussed earlier and noted in minutes above.

4) Five Corners Development Discussion - Soressa Gardner

Don Gibson: Regarding the Menzies proposal – wasn't that rushed due to funding timing? Wasn't this also an amenity tied to the Quebec project?

TM: It was. The developer has requested another meeting with the JBNA Development Review Committee. If changes proposed are significant, we will request another community hearing.

Eddy: Geric Construction wants to talk to me about the Quebec project. I would like to sit in on the Menzies discussion.

TVA: We have never accepted the notion of linking projects together. We have a full DRC group of three already.

WS: We would welcome you reaching out to us to offer assistance.

Soressa Gardner: I live on Medana Street, all character houses on the block behind the proposed 131-139 Menzies development. Ours is one of the few streets that is intact in terms of heritage. Only about 10% of heritage houses are left in James Bay. One of our neighbours is seeking to make the street a Heritage Conservation Area. The Five Corners was and should be the centrepiece of James Bay. The Bent Mast, the florist shop building, and two of the houses proposed for demolition have historic value. We see the loss of 45 low-cost housing units at Village Green along with many protected trees in favour of market housing.

We think there could be a better way to imagine the five corners. A long-term architectural plan for the Thrifty's corner and the wood-sided building which might be nearing end of life is warranted. We need a Local Area Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, last updated in 1994. There were good letters to the T-C on October 27-28. We need to make council aware that density needs to be shared with other communities. Density alone is not affordability. James Bay is also the most densely populated part of Victoria. We have more development proposals in James Bay than most other neighbourhoods.

There are many architectural challenges at the five corners. We engaged with UBC group of professors and students regarding ideation. Perhaps they could help is put together some guidance for the neighbourhood vision.

KP: In terms of heritage preservation – does anyone know what happened to the 100 buildings it wanted to place on the heritage registry? It included a number of buildings in James Bay. Does anyone know what happened to that? Could we revive it?

Linda Carlson: I participated with the City and Victoria Heritage Foundation in three meetings, one in James Bay, and we met with owners of candidate properties for registration. All of the residents asked declined the offer to join the registry. Some chose Designation. Registration allows council to put a 90-day moratorium on a demolition permit, and provides modest level of protection. There was not much enthusiasm.

WS: Soressa, will you keep JBNA apprised of your progress?

SG: Yes.

TVA: The Medana residents have done great work. This could be a good basis for a design charette.

Eddy: People should also be aware what's going on with the Quebec Street Geric development. I have offered many design ideas, lower height, tiered buildings with planters on each level. I collected about 80 signatures to salvage the heritage building on Kingston, and re-use it for daycare centre, meeting space, and shop space for new residents. They are at 15 storeys now, and still have huge ask on density relaxation. The site is important – many events around here and great location. The site deserves an iconic building design.

Irving Park Discussion:

Marg Gardiner: There were concerns over drugs and an aggressive dog. At Holland Park there was a bike chop shop observed. The City seemed lax on enforcement, so I forwarded those complaints to Council. I encourage everyone to report these complaints to police, council, bylaw officers. This might be the only camping error in the centre of an urban village in Victoria. If there are any threats, it's important to report those to police.

BVS: I have sent complaints a few times – twice they told me they were too busy to deal with it; once they told me they managed to get people to move along.

TVA: This is right beside a seniors' centre and a daycare. It's gone on too long. This is the wrong place for people to be living in tents. This is a major pathway and recreation area for seniors and children. I do not want to have to inspect the ground for needles before my grandson plays there.

Pat McGuire: What is the level of violence and bad behaviour that takes place in Irving Park?

MG: There have been several incidents.

WS: There is a difference between simple camping and criminal and dangerous behaviour. We need to document the criminal elements. Many of these people are victims of other predators. We need to work to find solutions.

Village Green Development:

Mariann Burka: Village Green represents a classic example of how not to do density development in a community. This was a unanimous decision despite overwhelming community opposition, for a gamut of reasons, yet council approved it. Number of grassroots residents have tried to demonstrate to Council that we are not indifferent to tenant displacement, to demolition of low-cost housing, or to the loss of the 17 bylaw-protected trees, and a whole row of flowering plum on city property.

During the election we met with candidates around development levels in James Bay, that we are getting more than our fair share, and that we need more equitable distribution. We continue to follow up with letters, and distributed notices regarding developments. We would welcome assistance as we try to get our message across regarding egregious developments like Village Green.

Meeting Ended – 9:05pm