James Bay Neighbourhood Association: Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024
Time: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Location: Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

Attendees:

- **Board Members:** Trevor Moat (Chair), Linda Carlson, Bob Vander Steen, Tim Van Alstine (Absent), Trevor Woodland, Keira Jackson, Kirk Buhne
- **Special Guests:** Deputy Chief Jamie McRae (Victoria Police Department), Councilor Jeremy Caradona
- **JBNA Engagement Coordinator:** Alieda Blanford
- JBNA residents

Agenda:

1. **Greetings & Announcements**
2. **Deputy Chief of Victoria Police, Jamie McRae**
3. **Councillor Jeremy Caradona**
4. **Engagement Coordinator Alieda Blandford** introduction of JBNA survey.
5. **Community Comments**

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1. Greetings and Announcements

Trevor Moat, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. He provided registration details for participants and information on joining future ZOOM meetings.

- **Land Acknowledgement:** Acknowledged meeting on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, including the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

- **Recycling Announcement:** Trevor announced the next recycling depot event scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the James Bay School grounds located at the corner of Simcoe and Oswego Streets.
- **Places and Spaces Workshop:** Scheduled for June 8, 2024, at the James Bay Community School concerning the City's Official Community Plan update. A waitlist has been established due to reaching capacity, and participants were encouraged to register at Victoria OCP Engagement Site for more information and additional events.

2. Deputy Chief of Victoria Police, Jamie McRae

Deputy Chief Jamie McRae discussed several key points regarding community safety and policing:

- **Introduction and Background:** Deputy Chief McRae introduced himself, outlining his roles within the Victoria Police Department over his 26-year career, including his recent promotion to Deputy Chief of Operations.
- **Community Safety and Drug Policy Changes:** Discussed recent changes to drug policy, including the impact of decriminalization on community safety and policing strategies.
- **Public Safety Initiatives:** Encouraged community engagement with the police through upcoming events like "Coffee with a Cop."

Q&A Session with Deputy Chief McRae:

- A community member expressed concerns about safety and public order downtown, particularly around Shopper's Drug Mart and the impact on local businesses and residents.
    - McRae acknowledged the concerns and discussed ongoing strategies to address public safety, including collaborating with city services and potential adjustments to policing methods due to legislative changes.
- A local couple discussed ongoing issues with a known drug house on their street, requesting a more sustained and holistic police response.
    - Deputy Chief McRae assured them of follow-up actions and consideration for a combined response involving multiple city services.
- Another member asked about changes in community safety over the past 26 years and their causes.

    - McRae attributed changes to societal shifts and policy changes, particularly highlighting the challenges and unintended consequences of recent decriminalization.
- Kirk inquired about actions the community can take to support police efforts in improving public safety and the city's image to tourists.
    - McRae emphasized the importance of community advocacy and participation in safety initiatives.

3. Councillor Jeremy Caradona

Councillor Caradona provided updates on various local issues:

- **Irving Park Homelessness:** Discussed measures to address homelessness in Irving Park, including enforcement of bylaws and efforts to provide housing.
- **Ogden Point Beach Improvements:** Announced plans for improvements to Ogden Point Beach to enhance accessibility and safety. Also discussed were improvements to parks and beaches outside James Bay like Bamfield Park.
- **Official Community Plan (OCP):** Highlighted upcoming community engagement opportunities and the impact of provincial mandates on local planning efforts.

Q&A Session with Councillor Caradona:

- A community member voiced frustrations about the impact of cruise ship buses on local traffic and the perceived lack of action from the city council.
    - Caradona explained the jurisdictional limitations and ongoing efforts to negotiate with transport providers to mitigate impact.
- Residents expressed concerns about the 'One City' approach to the OCP and its impact on the density and character of James Bay. They feared that increased density could lead to the loss of heritage properties and the unique character of the neighborhood.
    - Caradona acknowledged the concerns and outlined the council's strategy to incorporate broad community input into the OCP.
- Concerns about beach safety and accessibility at Ogden Point were brought up, with suggestions for installing safety equipment like life rings or better access pathways to improve safety for swimmers and children.
    - Councillor Caradona took note of this.

4. Engagement Coordinator Alieda Blandford's Survey Introduction

Alieda introduced the JBNA survey, aimed at gathering community feedback on neighbourhood issues and association activities. She encouraged participation and discussed various efforts to disseminate the survey to ensure comprehensive community input.

5. Community Comments

Members of the community were invited to share their comments and concerns:

- A member expressed concerns about the potential for increased density and the loss of heritage in James Bay due to new zoning laws under the OCP. This individual also voiced apprehension about the impacts on community character and livability.
- Another community member asked about the format of the upcoming Places and Spaces workshop.
    - Linda provided details about the interactive and participatory nature of the workshop, emphasizing the importance of community engagement in shaping the OCP.
- A member expressed frustration about the perceived lack of direct engagement from the city with the neighbourhood associations regarding the OCP. She suggested the idea of forming a forum for residents to discuss and share their research and findings related to the OCP to better inform the community.
- A suggestion was made to invite MLA Grace Lore to discuss the provincial influence on Victoria's Official Community Plan. This was aimed at understanding provincial mandates and exploring more localized approaches for James Bay.
    - The JBNA expressed support for facilitating this engagement and has been considering inviting the MLA and MP to speak at a monthly meeting.
- Residents expressed a desire for more effective engagement and information sharing from the JBNA, especially concerning major city plans like the OCP. Suggestions were made for using the JBNA's resources to disseminate detailed, unbiased information about city planning and development activities to better inform and involve the community in decision-making processes.

The JBNA's response to community comments reflected a proactive approach to addressing the concerns raised, focusing on enhancing communication, engagement, and direct involvement of residents in advocacy and dialogue with city officials.

Closing Remarks:

The meeting was adjourned, with the next meeting scheduled for Jun 12, 2024.

Zoom Chat Log:

00:16:20 Priscilla Tumbach: I concur!!

00:21:37 Beth Dixon: May we have the link to the survey that is being discussed please/

00:23:38 JBNA - Keira: Here's the survey:

https://engage.victoria.ca/embeds/projects/42374/survey-tools/45694

and more info:
https://www.victoria.ca/city-government/boards-and-committees/community-safety-and-wellbeing-plan

00:24:00 Ocean Inglin: I would like to see police officers visibly walking the beat downtown etc

00:24:17 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "I would like to see …" with 👍

00:24:22 Graham Hawkins: Reacted to "I would like to see ..." with 👍

00:25:48 Beth Dixon: There has been an uptick in illicit drug usage in the Irving Park since the law was rescinded. May I inquire why this is not being addressed. Perhaps the folks from downtown Shoppers are learning about James Bay, Irving Park?

00:26:04 Linda Carlson: Replying to "I would like to see ..."

I agree. Do you remember the bicycle police that were all over downtown pre-covid?

00:26:54 Agnes Vollmeier: Reacted to "I would like to see …" with 👍

00:33:22 Becky Vander Steen: Reacted to "I would like to see ..." with 👍

00:40:49 JBNA - Keira: It's on our facebook!

00:41:41 Kevin Youck: Just a comment -- Seems like amalgamating Police, Fire and emergency services within the Greater Victoria area would be a positive step towards better public safety and a first step towards amalgamating all of the associated municipalities with the Greater Victoria Area.

00:42:04 JBNA - Keira: It's on our facebook!

https://www.facebook.com/jamesbayneighbourhoodassociation/

00:42:17 JBNA - Keira: Reacted to "Just a comment -- Se..." with 👍

00:43:06 Kirk Buhne: If people camp in the park now during the day and this cannot be enforced, how will the 24 hour camping ban be enforced?

00:43:59 Ingrid Holm: Reacted to "If people camp in th..." with 👍

00:44:48 Sherry Hyde: Reacted to "If people camp in th..." with 👍

00:46:30 Beth Dixon: Question please.....do I understand that we are looking to add stairs to the natural beach outside the Breakwater Bistro opposed to maximizing the beach at the bottom of Menzies and Dallas that already has stairs?

00:47:12 Soressa Gardner: First engagement is 10am to 2pm on June 8

00:47:13 Elizabeth Stone: scheduled June 8 from 10-2

00:47:29 Linda Carlson: first session is from starts at 10:00

00:50:31 Brad & Christine: thank you Jeremy for all the work on sorting out Irving Park

00:53:48 Coralee Bell: Perhaps they should consider using 15-passenger buses.

00:53:55 Darrel Woods: Don't need car accessible. Would appreciate a kayak/canoe launch at Irving Park. It is difficult to use the existing path which is narrow and busy with swimmers.

00:54:10 Beth Dixon: Yes Jeremy, thank you, we are excited to enjoy the Irving Park again. As requested by the Deputy Chief, we will continue to be vocal regarding by-law enforcement.

00:55:05 Kirk Buhne: Replying to "Don't need car acces..."

Irving Park? Which park do you mean?

00:55:15 Deb Hull: That's a good idea to invite the MLA.

00:55:51 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "That's a good idea t..." with 👍

00:55:58 Darrel Woods: Replying to "Don't need car acces..."

sorry Bamfield. Really hard to launch at Irving.

00:56:40 Graham Hawkins: Reacted to "That's a good idea t..." with 👍

00:59:15 Soressa Gardner: I would love to see MLA Grace Lore attend a JBNA meeting to discuss how the Provincial housing requirements are shaping the Council's OCP plans and how we can satisfy provincial requirements with something other than a "one city approach" that puts heritage areas and unique village centres at risk.

00:59:41 Kirk Buhne: Reacted to "I would love to see ..." with 👍

01:00:00 Darrel Woods: Reacted to "I would love to see ..." with 👍

01:00:01 Graham Hawkins: Reacted to "I would love to see ..." with 👍

01:00:17 Ingrid Holm: Reacted to "I would love to see ..." with 👍

01:01:09 Christina Mitchell: There is a kids PFD loan stn at Fisherman's Wharf that is not well used. The weather conditions on Dallas would be an issue.

01:01:15 Ingrid Holm: Replying to "I would love to see ..."

Soressa Gardner for high political office, please 🙂. Sincere wish.

01:01:24 Priscilla Tumbach: Reacted to "I would love to see …" with 👍

01:01:33 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "I would love to see …" with 👍

01:02:31 Alan Lawrence: That loan stn is looked after by RCMSR Station 35 at Ogen Point

01:03:14 Bob Vander Steen: see the JBNA website https://jbna.org/2024/05/ocp-the-city-bill-44/

01:04:30 Brad & Christine: My understanding is the transit hub was supposed to be moved to another area mid city?

01:05:39 Beth Dixon: Question please: how can we as a group voice concern re: JB be required to accept 6 to 10 storey buildings. This would drastically impact JB.

01:06:15 Kirk Buhne: Curiously the 200m from the Legislative Transit area is a historic district. Does the province override all other factors?

01:07:00 Stephen Ison: Reacted to "Question please: ho..." with 👍

01:07:07 Sherry Hyde: Reacted to "Question please: ho..." with 👍

01:07:09 Kevin Youck: Time for the City to push back on to the Province to move density towards where it makes sense -- James Bay is already too dense. Council cannot be complacent in this.

01:07:21 Graham Hawkins: Reacted to "Time for the City to..." with 👍

01:07:25 Ingrid Holm: Reacted to "Question please: ho..." with 👍

01:07:28 Ingrid Holm: Reacted to "Curiously the 200m f..." with 👍

01:07:56 Stephen Ison: Reacted to "Time for the City to..." with 👍

01:08:00 Ingrid Holm: Reacted to "Time for the City to..." with 👍

01:08:15 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "My understanding is …" with 👍

01:09:12 Soressa Gardner: Reacted to "Time for the City to..." with 👍

01:10:04 Alieda Blandford: Link to the JBNA survey:

https://7ll41f09f7y.typeform.com/to/wDOSaTeA

01:11:48 Priscilla Tumbach: What do you intend to do with the results?

01:15:17 Priscilla Tumbach: Reacted to "Time for the City to…" with 👍

01:17:43 Sherry Hyde: Where have all the garbage cans gone? There seems to be a lot more garbage on the streets because they are no can to deposit garbage.

01:17:57 Bob Vander Steen: see https://jbna.org/ocp-james-bay-input/

01:20:56 Bob Vander Steen: https://jbna.org/ocp/

01:21:43 Laurie Abel: I concur with Soressa. I say it's also educational.

01:22:22 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "I concur with Soress…" with 👍

01:22:48 Priscilla Tumbach: I think we are missing what Soressa is trying to say

01:23:49 Priscilla Tumbach: In order to make informed decisions we need to understand the facts

01:23:58 Kevin Youck: Reacted to "In order to make inf…" with 👍

01:24:12 Kevin Youck: I agree with Soressa, the JBNA can at the very least distribute information with the community.

01:25:17 Linda Carlson: Replying to "I agree with Soressa..."

When we receive information Kevin, we post it and put it on the website. Would you prefer that we forward emails to people?

01:25:41 Alan Lawrence: If we have to accept austerity measures from the province, build the first 10 story on the green space in front of the ledg.

01:27:07 Ben Ziegler: I really like the visuals, monthly 'Cruise Exec' posters, that Fair Sailing is putting out on X. (eg. https://x.com/Fair_Sailing/status/1786805578213232808) Good marketing is theatre. More, please.

01:27:42 Kevin Youck: I completely agree, there are unique characteristics to many neighbourhoods -- One City One Plan is a naive idea.

01:29:03 Kevin Youck: Replying to "I agree with Soressa…"

I think sharing information via email or at least monthly newsletter makes good sense --- I can't recall the last time I went to the JBNA website.