James Bay Neighbourhood Association

General Monthly Meeting
April 8, 2025
In-person meeting at JB Community Centre

1. **Trevor Moat in Chair**
   Land acknowledgement,
   Greetings and Announcements
   Welcome Councillor Matt Dell, our Council Liaison.

2. **Councillor Dell:**
   - Councillor Dell provided an update of current issues before Council. Council has approved an affordable housing project at Blanshard Court. It is the largest affordable housing project in the City's history.
   - Chard Development requested an additional two storeys to the restoration of the Duck Building on Board Street due to financial issues. Council approved and the project is now an 8 storey building.
   - Canada Day funds have been increased by Council and will again be held on the Legislative Grounds.
   - Council has approved the north site for the new Crystal Pool which is the preference of the majority of those who voted in the referendum. Detailed design work is being undertaken and construction should start in early 2027.
   - Expect traffic interruptions as paving starts on April 9 on Blanshard Street.
   - The Citizen's Assembly has recommended amalgamation of Saanich and Victoria.
   - The OCP has been approved in principle by Council. Staff continue to look at modernizing our zoning, permitting process bylaws as well as other bylaws related to development.

As there were many questions regarding the OCP, the Chair suggested that the Community Comments portion of the agenda be where OCP issues were raised.

3. Kathryn Pankowski, JBNA Garden Coordinator

The City of Victoria provides funds to the JBNA to hire Kathryn Pankowski as our neighbourhood garden coordinator. The range of projects overseen by Kathryn is astounding.

In her introduction, Kathry said she has 3 purposes as the Garden Coordinator for JBNA:

- Grow Gardens
- Grow Gardeners
- Grow Community.

Currently, with the contribution of a significant number of dedicated and active volunteers, Kathryn oversees 3 allotment gardens, 4 commons gardens, 10 fruit and nut trees.

There are two plant swaps a year, tours of various gardens, provision of seedlings and mulch from the City's Get Growing programs. The Wee Free Seed box was Kathryn's inspiration. Seeds are prepared for packaging by volunteers and are delivered to the seed box almost daily from March to November.

A dedicated advocate of sound environmental practices, habitat restoration and protection of our trees, Kathryn participated with a group of volunteers to map out Garry Oak and Arbutus trees in James Bay. The project resulted in a proposal for ecological connectors between the trees.

4. Calen Goulden, JBNA Community Coordinator:

With funding provided by the City, the City was able to hire Calen Goulden as the JBNA Community Coordinator. With Kathryn as a mentor, Calen quickly became fully engaged with the many volunteers who contribute to our neighbourhood. In good turnout with an enthusiastic game of James Bay trivia.

Calen assumed responsibility for the successful JBNA Recycling Project. He informed us that reading glasses will now be accepted. They will be processed and distributed to optical missions around the world. According to Calen's most recent report, the Recycling Project has diverted 21 bags of Styrofoam, 19 bags of soft plastics, 6 containers of broken electronics, and 2 bags of non-refundable containers.

The JBNA Recycling Project is held on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the corner of Simcoe and Oswego from 10:00 to noon.

Last year a couple of JBNA members enquired about the JBNA supporting a Coolkit project. Calen agreed and co-organized and co-facilitated a project for residents who were interested in participating to consider how they could make a difference in addressing climate change issues.

Three interactive sessions were held to discuss local climate action and how individuals can make a positive impact. Calen will continue to support the cohort in project with further development and implementation.

Calen announced the first JBNA Film Night scheduled for April 30 from 6:00–7:30 PM at New Horizons. The film, *War for the Woods*, is free but prior registration is required given the limited capacity at the venue.

5. Community Comments:

Community comments focused on issues directed at Councillor Dell to address. Concerns and issues regarding the new Official Community Plan (OCP) dominated the community comments. Meeting participants raised the following concerns:

- Flaws with the engagement process;
- The fact that the OCP envisions 6 storey buildings in James Bay, but limits heights in other neighbourhoods to 4 storeys;

- Council’s support, in spite of consistent opposition from residents, about the Quebec/Montreal/Kingston project;
- That the Quebec/Montreal/Kingston project does not comply with the existing or new OCP;
- Lack of support for heritage conservation in the OCP.

Councillor Dell noted the need to balance housing and neighbourhood characteristics, as well as pressure from the province. He provided an example of the need for housing with a story about how his son’s teacher was pleading for help finding an affordable rental in the city on Facebook. Councillor Dell said he empathized with her and other young people that can't afford to stay, yet are needed for their jobs.

Separately:

- A resident raised concerns with the proposed Douglas bus transit loop changes and the resulting noise and air quality;
- Another resident spoke on increased cruise ship traffic and emissions with the busiest season in history upon us.
- A former city planner who had worked elsewhere in the CRD discussed comparisons with simpler and more effective OCP documents he's seen in his career.
- A member invited members to participate in her Jane's Walk event