

JBNA Zoom Meeting

2025-11-12

Community Meeting Setup and Agenda

Trevor Moat, Chair, discussed technical aspects of running the Zoom meeting, including screen sharing privileges for presenters and managing the attendee list. They confirmed the agenda items, including presentations from 443 Government and the Belleville Terminal Redevelopment Project. The meeting was set to start recording and go live, with Trevor Moat introducing the meeting and acknowledging the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples.

Abstract Developments Government Street Project

Abstract Developments presented updated plans for their 6-story, 52-unit residential development at 443 Government Street. The project includes underground parking with 28 vehicle stalls and 64 bicycle stalls, and exceeds the city's minimum target for 2- and 3-bedroom homes with 41% designed for families. Key changes include relocating the parkade access to Government Street due to a mandatory Young Street right-of-way dedication, moving a pad mount transformer to Young Street, and adjusting the parkade size while maintaining the same number of parking stalls. The exterior has been refined with lighter brick materiality and a more prominent lobby entrance on Michigan Street.

The development team addressed concerns about building scale and heritage context, noting they had adjusted the exterior color to a lighter tone and included traditional brick detailing to better fit the neighborhood. The presenter outlined the rezoning application process, which included preliminary shadow studies and would require further city feedback before proceeding to Mayor and Council.

A community member raised questions about potential market resistance to smaller unit sizes, which was addressed by highlighting the project's larger unit sizes and local market research.

Another member suggested incorporating lighting similar to the Beacon development. One individual raised questions about parking spaces and unit values, expressing concerns about the impact on street parking and the project's gateway role to the neighborhood.

The presenter explained that pricing would be determined based on current market rates and square footage, though specific figures were not provided due to the early stages of the project. He noted that the developer would need to demonstrate a 15% profit potential to secure financing, and outlined the timeline for the project, which could take 1-2 years from today.

The discussion also covered the potential relocation or deconstruction of two duplex-style structures on the site, with presenters explaining that the developer preferred to relocate them if possible. The conversation shifted to questions about setback variances and plantable space requirements. Evolving zoning framework made it difficult to provide clear answers on these issues.

Other points included the retention of existing trees, the width of sidewalks, and concerns about the building's exterior design and livability of units. A community member raised questions about unit sizes and bedroom window requirements, while the Chair noted that the design included two staircases, which

may no longer be required by building codes. The team acknowledged the need for further clarification on some design elements and policy requirements.

Belleville Terminal Redevelopment Update

Hayden Kowel provided an update on the Belleville Terminal Redevelopment Project, noting that demolition work has begun and all wharf piles have been removed. He mentioned that the site now has construction walls with panels highlighting its cultural and historical significance, and discussed upcoming activities including improved site access, contaminated soil removal, and potential construction noise. Hayden also highlighted the province's engagement with the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, including the presence of cultural monitors on site and ongoing discussions about art and cultural recognition for the new terminal.

Trevor Paul emphasized the importance of community feedback and impact notifications

Councillor Dell

Councillor Dell provided an overview of the city's challenging budget process, focusing on tax increases and potential cuts to beloved programs. The conversation shifted to updates on the Crystal Pool reopening and a motion to consider designating James Bay as a heritage neighborhood, which will undergo a full review of heritage policies.

One member expressed concern about the lack of a firm deadline for staff to complete the review. Councillor Dell explained that the proposed March deadline was unrealistic given the extensive consultation process and other priorities for the planning team. The discussion also touched on budget considerations, with a member suggesting a review of human resources costs and staff reductions. Councillor Dell agreed to look into these matters and promised to follow up on this individual's questions about the OCP boundary changes in the Inner Harbour/Legislative District.

A community member raised concerns about Councillor Dell's vote on the Gerrick Tower development, suggesting it was influenced by a donation from Ed Gerrick. Councillor Dell denied any influence from the donation, explaining his decision was based on the project's pros and cons, including a free daycare, affordable housing fund, and park improvements. This member argued that Matt Dell should recuse himself due to potential bias, citing municipal ethics standards. Councillor Dell defended his decision-making process, emphasizing his commitment to representing his constituents.

Trevor Moat (Chair) discussed the Heritage Conservation Area motion, which Councillor Dell had initially opposed but later supported after further reflection and consultation.

It was requested to clarify heritage conservation areas and design guidelines in Fernwood and James Bay, with Councillor Dell explaining the nuances of different guidelines and confirming that both areas have specific heritage conservation designations.

Trevor Moat (Chair) raised concerns about boundary changes in the OCP that could allow taller buildings in various neighborhoods, questioning how councillors and residents were informed of these changes. The discussion also covered Victoria's progress on housing targets, with Councillor Dell noting they were ahead of their 5-year targets, and addressed a member's question about a private member's bill in the BC legislature that would allow developers to appeal municipal planning decisions to the province, which Councillor Dell expressed concerns about due to safety and liability issues.

A community member expressed concerns about the boundary change from Quebec Street to Kingston Street, comparing it to colonial practices that marginalized Indigenous communities. Councillor Dell

clarified that UBCM, rather than individual councils, typically advocates against such changes. The group also discussed a proposed development on Government Street, with a member raising questions about setback variances. Councillor Dell and Trevor noted that the zoning by-law is still in flux, which may explain some confusion among developers.

Finally, the meeting addressed the fentanyl crisis in Victoria, with Councillor Dell acknowledging the issue's severity and outlining ongoing efforts through the Community Safety and Well-being Plan.

A member raised concerns about pedestrian safety at a busy intersection, and Councillor Dell suggested that a formal letter from the neighborhood association to city staff might help prioritize improvements. Trevor encouraged Councillor Dell to submit an op-ed to correct misinformation about Victoria in a major publication.

Social Event And Closing

The board discussed the upcoming social event, giving a heads up to the community that it will be on December 4th (not a typical meeting date).