



SENIORS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

UNOFFICIAL NOTES

June 21, 2013

A working session of the Seniors' Advisory Committee was held on Friday, June 21, 2013, at 9:30am, in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Main Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

PRESENT: Eddy Elmer (Recorder)
Sharon Fenton
Clemencia Gómez
Scott Graham
Dellie Lidyard
Colleen McGuinness, Vice-chair
Rowena Tate
Eva Wadolna

ABSENT: Thomas Brunker (Sick Leave)
Commissioner Melissa De Genova, Vancouver Park Board Liaison
Colin Lazzarini
Chris Morrissey, Chair (Leave of Absence)
Carol Oreck
Jill Weiss, Persons with Disabilities Committee Liaison
Trustee Sophia Woo, Vancouver School Board Liaison

ALSO PRESENT: Tasia Alexis, Persons with Disabilities Committee Liaison
Gillian Guilmant-Smith, Vancouver Public Library Liaison
Taryn Scollard, Staff Liaison, Engineering Services
Councillor Tony Tang*, Vancouver City Council

*Denotes an absence for a portion of the meeting

1. Introductions and Welcome

Members, liaisons, and guests introduced themselves. The Committee welcomed a new member, Scott Graham, who was appointed by Council on June 11. Taryn Scollard, head of the Streets Division in the Engineering Department, introduced herself as our new Staff Liaison. Pat Boomhower, our Meeting Co-ordinator, indicated that she is leaving the Clerk's Office for a position at the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Committee members thanked Pat for her service and wished her well in her new position.

2. Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Dellie Lidyard, SECONDED by Rowena Tate

THAT a leave of absence be approved for Chris Morrissey for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Dellie Lidyard, SECONDED by Eva Wadolna

THAT the following two items be added to the agenda as new business:

- a. Invitation to senior planners to provide overview of progress on community plans
- b. New Horizons for Seniors grant application (to be discussed during Communications and Outreach Subcommittee report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Rowena Tate, SECONDED by Clemencia Gómez

THAT the minutes of the May 17, 2013 meeting be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Business Arising from the Previous Meeting

a) Community-Based Care Motion

Sharon Fenton contacted Councillor Tang to follow up on the Committee's community-based care motion, passed on February 22. Councillor Tang requested contact information for specific officials, which Ms. Fenton will provide.

b) Metro Affordable Housing

No report

c) BC Services Card

Dellie Lidyard provided information about the new BC Services Card, which allows British Columbians to combine their BC CareCard with their driver's license. Concerns have been raised about how privacy will be protected under this new system, and some groups are recommending that citizens avoid combining their cards. For the first five years, citizens will

have the choice whether or not to combine their cards, after which time the province will automatically combine the cards. The Privacy Commissioner is currently monitoring the situation. Until security concerns are resolved, Ms. Lidyard recommends that older adults do not combine their BC CareCard with their driver's license.

6. Pearson Dogwood Redevelopment Plan

Graham Winterbottom, a planner with the City of Vancouver's Planning & Development Services group, provided an overview of the Pearson Dogwood site redevelopment plan. Brad Foster of the Fraser Health Authority's Lower Mainland Facilities Management division (acting on behalf of Vancouver Coastal Health) followed with more detailed presentation.

Mr. Foster indicated several reasons for this proposed redevelopment:

- a. to replace the deteriorating infrastructure of the George Pearson Centre and the Dogwood Lodge residential care facilities
- b. to add a range of affordable housing for people of all ages (20% of the approximately 3,000 proposed residential units will be allocated towards social housing; there will be 95 SAFER-eligible units for older adults)
- c. to create a vibrant, mixed-use community comprising affordable housing and healthcare, recreation, and transit facilities, all of which are integrated into the surrounding Cambie Corridor area (i.e., a non-institutional model followed by the Green House Project)
- d. to optimize the value of the Pearson-Dogwood lands and re-invest the proceeds into healthcare (i.e., primary goal is not profit)

The redevelopment will consider the needs of residents by focusing on four objectives:

- a. promote visibility and independence
- b. improve access to care
- c. provide appropriate levels of support
- d. build a healthy sense of community (as opposed to creating an institutional ghetto)

Jennifer Heppner from Design Dialog outlined five elements that informed the redevelopment plan: need to experience nature; diversity of open spaces (for meditation, recreation, celebration, socializing, etc.); accessibility; agricultural opportunities (e.g., urban farms, community gardens); and harmonizing different land uses to allow residents to shop, work, play, and relax within walking or wheelchair distance from home. These elements are intended to address the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of residents.

These five elements were incorporated into the three concepts proposed for the site:

- a. *“Core” concept*: involves central, vibrant public space in the middle of the site; new transit station in NE corner, with complex care component adjacent; easy access to site from road (easy to drop people off at transit station and get back on road); strong connection up to NW corner, which will feature a recreational field, running track, tennis courts, schools, etc.; connection to Langara Gardens, which is currently a gated community; YMCA a central piece of the development
- b. *“Continuum” concept*: involves grand, green promenade that weaves from Cambie Street and the transit station (which will be signature corner) to the NW corner of the site; facilities like YMCA and childcare are located along the path, as are the complex care facilities, which sit in park-like spaces;
- c. *“Cluster” concept*: density spread throughout site; open space distributed into pockets/nodes of interest; involves smaller, more intimate spaces are opposed to large spaces; YMCA built around transit station; most major nodes accessible within 5-minute walk

2.5 acres of park space are included in each concept.

Staff is currently reviewing public comments to determine the best concept.

Committee members posed questions about the definition of “affordable” housing; whether older adults can choose what type of housing to live in; whether the proposed housing is still be too institutional; and who will deliver the different levels of care.

Colleen McGuinness reiterated that this redevelopment is a great opportunity to think of innovative ways to support aging-in-place for older adults who are currently independent while providing appropriate options for those who are independent today but might not be in the future. She urged that the SAC be consulted as much as possible to ensure that the City makes the most of this valuable opportunity.

7. Point Grey Road - Cornwall Avenue Corridor Active Transportation Project

Brian Gold from the City of Vancouver Transportation Department provided a brief overview of the project, the intention of which is to create a safe, convenient, and comfortable connection for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities between Burrard Bridge, Jericho Beach Park, and Kitsilano Beach Park.

As part of this project, the City is proposing a two-way separated bicycle lane on the north side of Point Grey Road, along with a wider sidewalk. On-street parking on the north side of the road between Jericho Beach Park and Highbury Street would be removed, and perpendicular parking on the north side between Highbury and Alma streets would be changed to parallel parking.

The Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion with Mr. Gold and other Staff about the impact that this reduction in parking would have on older adults, especially those trying to access the Brock House Society building at 3875 Point Grey Road.

Brock House representative Sophie Djordjevic indicated that their land is owned by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and, as a result, they have only 28 parking spaces, with 5 reserved for handicapped drivers; therefore, their patrons often rely on the parking spaces along the north side of Point Grey Road.

Brock House patrons can use public transit instead, but the nearest bus stop is at Fourth Avenue and Wallace Street, which is quite far for patrons with mobility challenges. Patrons can use HandiDart, but wait times are long. Taxis and private chauffeur services are an option but are often prohibitively expensive.

There is a parking lot at the end of Point Grey Road, but the City has raised the parking rates, which are a hardship for some patrons. Mr. Gold indicated that since the lot is often empty, even on busy summer days, the Park Board is amenable to considering concessions for Brock House visitors.

Parking spots are available on the south side of Point Grey Road, but most are reserved for neighbourhood residents. Ms. Djordjevic indicated that many residents have parking available on their property and asked whether the on-street parking could be made available for Brock House patrons. Mr. Gold indicated that this was within the realm of possibility.

Mr. Gold, along with Transportation Director Jerry Dobrovolny and Active Transportation Director Dale Bracewell, pledged to continue working with all stakeholders to help Brock House find a solution to this problem.

Dellie Lidyard spoke briefly about an alternative proposal for this stretch of Point Grey Road—the “Seaside Bicycle Route - Everyone Wins” concept. This concept “seeks to achieve a cost-effective balance between the need for a safe and attractive cycling connection and the necessity to maintain an efficient and well distributed arterial road network.” The Committee suggested that we discuss this proposal at the next meeting.

Colleen McGuinness expressed concern about the current state of the sidewalks along Point Grey Road. Mr. Dobrovolny acknowledged that the width and quality of sidewalks are an issue, as is lack of sufficient lighting and benches. Ms. McGuinness suggested we invite Mr. Gold to a future meeting so he can provide more information about these and other elements of the Point Grey Road - Cornwall Avenue Corridor Active Transportation Project.

Mr. Bracewell took the opportunity to solicit the Committee’s feedback on the Comox-Helmcken Greenway. In particular, he wanted to know whether the new sidewalks were wide enough for older adults; he indicated that this feedback would be important for future developments. Colleen McGuinness indicated she would invite him to a future meeting to discuss this. Eva Wadolna relayed concerns from the West End Seniors’ Network (WESN) that the newly-installed steel benches are uncomfortable for older adults; wooden benches would have been more appropriate.

Dellie Lidyard and Colleen McGuinness reminded Mr. Bracewell of the importance of working with the various business improvement associations to ensure that the needs of older adults are addressed in the City’s commercial areas. Mr. Bracewell suggested that a member of the SAC sit in on the city-wide BIA meetings held throughout the year. Taryn Scollard indicated that she would contact her BIA liaison in the Engineering Department to help ensure that the BIAs receive feedback from the SAC.

8. Committee Liaison Reports

None

9. Subcommittee Reports

a) *Communications and Outreach Subcommittee*

Eddy Elmer, Chair of the Subcommittee, reported on the SAC's outreach activities during BC Seniors' Week, from June 2-8, 2013:

- i. During the regular meeting of City Council on May 30, Committee members joined Mayor Gregor Robertson as he read the proclamation announcing the beginning of BC Seniors' Week (passed by SAC on May 17).
- ii. On June 4, several Committee members staffed our official table at the Health and Wellness Fair hosted by the Roundhouse Community Centre. SAC members liaised with members of the public and also joined Deputy Mayor George Affleck as he read the Seniors' Week proclamation on behalf of Mayor Robertson.
- iii. On June 5, members staffed a table at the Linking Seniors' Services event, held also at the Roundhouse Community Centre. Our members provided information about the SAC's role and liaised with various agencies serving older adults.

Although these two events were a success, the Committee discussed applying for a New Horizons for Seniors grant to help improve the profile of BC Seniors' Week. Scott Graham proposed holding a series of five community dialogues in different community centres. Eddy Elmer agreed to inquire whether the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation would be willing to be our partner in applying for a grant to host these dialogues.

The Committee was reminded about the West End Seniors' Network annual Strawberry Festival being held Saturday, June 22. Eddy Elmer, Eva Wadolna, and Dellie Lidyrd indicated that they would staff our information table at this event.

Given the success of the SAC's outreach activities this month, Mr. Elmer indicated that the Subcommittee would defer plans for an outreach meeting at the Champlain Heights Community Centre until the fall.

To aid in our outreach activities, Taryn Scollard graciously agreed to have a new batch of brochures and business cards printed for us.

Members were reminded that staff from the Social Planning Department will be presenting the City's first-ever Age-Friendly Action Plan to Council on June 11. Councillor Tang asked the Committee to write a letter to Council indicating our role in the development of the Action Plan and our thoughts about the staff report. Clemencia Gómez expressed concern that the Seniors' Dialogues, which formed the basis of much of the Action Plan, did not include sufficient input from ethnic minority groups. Vice-chair McGuinness indicated that

she would write to Council in support of the Action Plan while also addressing Ms. Gómez's concern.

Eddy Elmer updated the Committee on the status of the proposed joint-committee meeting regarding the timely maintenance of street lights. Ms. Scollard indicated that she would be in touch with him to arrange a meeting.

Ms. Gómez expressed concern that the new rental fee for hosting events at Park Board facilities (\$128, up from \$28) is too high for some seniors' groups. Eddy Elmer indicated he would relay her concern to Dave Reiberger of the Park Board Film and Events office.

To minimize unnecessary emails sent to SAC liaisons, Eddy Elmer reminded members to use our Listserv email addresses for everyday correspondence.

b) Housing Subcommittee

No report

c) Transportation and Mobility Subcommittee

Rowena Tate, Chair, presented a report on the Subcommittee's activities (see Appendix "A").

Subcommittee member Eva Wadolna provided an update on the 2040 Transportation Plan and how it addresses the needs of older adults. Relevant issues she discussed included how the new bike share program will affect older adults (e.g., will bikes be visible to older adults? how will bicyclists interact with older adults on scooters?). She also mentioned the need for more crosswalk signal buttons; spaces for older adults to sit and rest; and improved traffic circle lighting. Finally, she indicated that many older adults who rely on their cars are unhappy with the permanent closure of the 800 block of Robson Street.

Dellie Lidyard reported that she had participated in a tour of the West End, hosted by the West End Business Improvement Association (WEBIA). She was told that the WEBIA is working with City staff from the West End Community Plan to improve lighting in the area.

Ms. Lidyard also indicated that she will report back to the committee about on the impact that new bicycle lanes are having on visually-impaired people trying to get in and out of taxis close to medical buildings.

Sharon Fenton asked Councillor Tang about the progress of the Subcommittee's motion regarding pedestrian safety on sidewalks (passed by the Committee on September 21, 2012). Councillor Tang indicated that he has been in contact with Transportation Director Jerry Dobrovolny to see if the safety issue could be resolved informally by Staff before presenting an official Council motion. Taryn Scollard indicated that she would ask her department to look into the issue as well and will report back to the Committee in July.

10. New Business

a) *Fees for Wheelchairs*

Sharon Fenton agreed to investigate the reported plan for Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to impose user fees on older long-term care patients requiring wheelchairs. The issue has been raised in the media and there is some concern that the Health Authority made a statement that the Committee members were not aware of.

b) *Councillor Stevenson's Motion Regarding Pets in Rental Units*

The Committee briefly discussed Councillor Stevenson's motion (passed by Council on June 11) that the Seniors' Advisory Committee, the BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association, and the Renters' Roundtable provide recommendations to Council on regulations that better enable tenants to keep pets in rental buildings.

While it was agreed that older adults often derive great comfort from having pets in their rental units, questions were raised about the potential damage pets may cause to rental properties and whether this might affect the number of landlords who are willing to provide rental accommodations in a city that is already facing a shortage of rental housing.

It was agreed that this is a very complex issue and that Rowena Tate, Clemencia Gómez and Colleen agreed to meet and discuss how to proceed.

c) *Invitation to Senior Planners to Provide Overview of Progress on Community Plans*

Eva Wadolna suggested that we send a letter to the senior planners in charge of each of the four community plans currently underway (West End, Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Marpole) and invite them to our next meeting to discuss how their respective community plans address the needs of older adults. She will draft a series of questions that the committee can ask during this meeting.

d) *City of Vancouver Digital Strategy*

The Committee asked Gillian Guilment-Smith, our Vancouver Public Library liaison, to look into the City of Vancouver's Digital Strategy and report back to the committee about how the strategy affects older adults. A full presentation to the committee was suggested.

e) *August Meeting*

Given the large number of important issues currently under consideration, the Committee agreed to hold a working session meeting on August 16, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Eddy Elmer, SECONDED by Eva Wadolna
THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Friday, July 19, 2013
TIME: 9:30am
PLACE: Business Centre Meeting Room
Second Floor
Vancouver City Hall

The Committee adjourned at 12:30 pm

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Appendix "A"

Report of the Transportation and Mobility Subcommittee

a) Subcommittee Membership

We are pleased to welcome Dellie Lidyrd and Eva Wadolna have joined the subcommittee. Thomas Bruner has had to withdraw for health reasons. Brenda Berck, outside member, has also withdrawn, preferring to pursue her issues independently.

b) Cambie/Broadway #9 Bus Stops

The #9 bus stops on Broadway are almost a block away from Cambie Street, having been pre-empted by the #99 UBC express bus stop. This creates problems of accessibility for seniors and person with disabilities, especially when transferring to or from the Cambie SkyTrain station. When contacted by Carol Oreck, Jerry Dobrovlny (Director of Transportation) advised that the bus stops are located where they are because the 99 comes more often than the 9, is much longer and it's more difficult for the 9 to manoeuvre into the stops that are closer if the 99 is at the stop. He referred Carol to Elizabeth Ballard, Traffic Management Engineer, who agreed to approach Coast Mountain Bus Company, who are responsible for location of bus stops. Though sympathetic, she was not hopeful that they will change anything. Carol is pursuing a response from Ms. Ballard.

c) Taxi Drivers' Training Manual

Jill Weiss, Rowena Tate, and Colleen McGuinness reviewed the latest version of the taxi driver training manual, and made substantial edits, although on further reading yet more edits could improve it. It may be possible to have more input when the draft is circulated to other groups. Ms. Weiss, but not Ms. Tate, attended the June 19 meeting.

d) Cyclist and Pedestrian Safety

Brenda Berck agreed to report back on the outcome of her contact with the West End Coal Harbour Community Policing Centre on the issue of enforcing the City bylaw regarding compulsory use of bike bells. There is also the outstanding issue of pedestrian safety on the seawall near Cactus Club in the West End; Carol Oreck will follow up on her return in July.

e) *Custom Transit*

Jill Weiss, Dellie Lidyard, and Rowena Tate attended one of three TransLink Custom Transit Review workshops on May 25 that also included seniors and people with disabilities and their caregivers, as well as TransLink representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how TransLink can improve the transportation options and offer a more efficient service. A review of the findings of all 3 workshops will be made available sometime this summer, followed by feedback from stakeholders and public consultations.

f) *Point Grey-Cornwall Corridor Project Update*

Eva Wadolna and Dellie Lidyard attended workshops for stakeholders to review the two proposed design options to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians along this route. As Ms. Wadolna and Ms. Lidyard, along with Sharon Fenton (who also attended one of the workshops) and Rowena Tate (unable to attend, but has reviewed the plans on-line) have serious concerns about the viability of both options, David Rawsthorne, the project engineer, has been invited to attend the SAC meeting on June 21.

g) *Number 5 Bus Route*

The issue of the re-routing of the No. 5 bus to make the 800 block Robson pedestrian-only and its impact on seniors living in the West End was raised again this month by a West End senior who had tried to take it up with Neal Carley last year. The issue was referred to Brenda Berck, who had expressed interest in this earlier, but who has now decided to take it up independently. Rowena has advised Ms. Sukopova that the Subcommittee will investigate the situation and decide what action, if any, to take.

h) *Transportation 2040 Plan*

Eva Wadolna is the SAC representative to this initiative and will provide an update at the June 21 SAC meeting. Meanwhile, a City of Vancouver presentation—“[Report Back Transportation 2040 - Improving Local Transit](#)”—given at the May 29 meeting of the Standing Committee of Council on Planning, Transportation and Environment, is of interest.

i) *Proposed Future Topics*

The Subcommittee will discuss the following proposal from Eva Wadolna at the next Subcommittee meeting:

“**Pedestrians First**”. The City of Vancouver is making cyclists a priority but there are far more pedestrians than cyclists, particularly among the senior population, so a case needs to be made for making them the priority. There is also the problem of scooters versus pedestrians on sidewalks, particularly in light of more use of scooters by seniors as the population ages.