

Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee (NAC)
2nd May 2016 at 7 p.m.
901 Kings Road (enter by the glass door on the left)
Draft Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair – Laura T.). 23 community members in attendance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of April 2016 Meeting Minutes
4. Guests

a. **Topaz Park Tennis Courts--City of Victoria Parks staff (Thomas Soulliere, Director, Parks, Recreation and Facilities)**

An opportunity to meet with City of Victoria staff regarding the proposed removal of the tennis courts at Topaz Park and their replacement. Thomas Soulliere acknowledged the City of Victoria missed the mark in proceeding with the demolition of the Topaz Park tennis courts without listening to feedback from the community first. They would like to look at short term and longer term opportunities tonight.

Background: In 2014 the tennis courts were closed and the rehabilitation was included in the capital plan for 2015. The courts are 40 years old and sit on a sand base. Over the years, tree roots have affected the courts. It was determined in 2015 that it would be difficult and expensive to remediate the courts. Rather than wait for the Parks Master Plan to get input from the neighbourhood, it was decided to proceed with temporary remediation to take advantage of the summer season. An email was sent to the neighbourhood advising of the decision. Work was stopped when a resident protested.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Why has the Parks Master Plan been delayed?
- Disappointed the courts were allowed to deteriorate. What is the condition of other courts?
- Is it possible to set aside the money identified in the 2015 capital plan for a future tennis court?
- What happened to the Topaz Park Management Plan that was supposed to be done?
- If the area is grassed there is concern it will attract people sheltering in parks overnight.
- If the court is removed, there must be a guarantee (in writing) that the community has a recreational asset of equal value that will be maintained in Topaz Park.
- When will this area of the park, where sheltering is present, be re-energized?
- How will the Parks Master Plan be tied in to the Local Area Plan?
- How does the community ensure that the community amenity contribution (for large developments) goes to the community?
- Is it possible to recoup some of the user fees at Topaz Park for community improvements (ie: new tennis courts).
- Please ensure the replacement surface is not amenable to use for sheltering.
- Topaz Park is mostly a regional asset. Are there other spaces that could accommodate a tennis court?
- What happened to the 200-name petition delivered to the City of Victoria by residents in September?
- Leave the tennis courts as they are until the Parks Master Plan is completed.

Replies from Thomas Soulliere to the above questions and comments

- The Parks Master Plan was delayed due to staff changes. A consultant has been recently hired and consultation and planning will begin shortly with the goal of having the Parks Master Plan completed by year end.
- All the parks management plans have been placed on hold until the Parks Master Plan is done.
- The maintenance and standards of care for the tennis courts were neglected. There was not a co-ordinated plan. Moving forward, every new project will have a business case. Standards of care for assets are being developed.
- A protocol is now in place for all petitions delivered to the CoV and all directors receive a copy.
- It is possible to mitigate the sheltering activities by bylaw enforcement.
- Work on the 2017 capital budget starts in July and new projects will be considered then.
- The original idea for the tennis courts was to remove them, then grass the area and leave it closed for a month before re-opening as an area for picnics, gatherings, etc.

After considerable discussion, it was determined that Thomas would decide whether the Park's department would prefer to leave the courts in their current state until the Parks Master Plan is completed, or whether they want to remove and replace them with another use this summer. If the latter course is the preferred option, Thomas committed to holding another meeting with the community to gather input on the nature of the short-term use of the area.

5. Community Check-In

An opportunity for everyone to share ideas and concerns about our neighbourhood.

- The banners in Quadra Village look lovely. Thanks to everyone who worked on the project.
- Help is needed with the Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee—people can volunteer for a specific task or project (like the banners) or become active members of the committee. The amount of work and projects the HQ-NAC undertakes is based on the support of its volunteers.
- When is the Yew Street crosswalk going ahead? (The crosswalk was discussed at the April meeting and is part of the July schedule for capital projects in the neighbourhood).

6. City Hall Update (City of Victoria staff liaison Gary Pemberton)

Follow-up on “residential parking only” signs.

- Any resident can petition for residential parking and the transportation department will evaluate the request. 90% of the street must be canvassed with 80% approval from the residents. The designation is to protect heavily used neighbourhoods from being congested with all day parking. If congestion is heavy at night, residential parking designation will be of little use. Residents and visitors can continue to park on the street. Enforcement is strictly complaint driven. Tickets received by residents and their visitors are forgiven by making a phone call.
- The Biketoria report has been received. Council is working on amendments to be considered at the May 5th Committee of the Whole (CoTW) meeting
- Capital projects in Hillside-Quadra include:
 - Surface Rehabilitation and crosswalk upgrade on Finlayson Street from Yew Street to Quadra Street to be completed in July
 - Sewer replacement on Wark Street from Hillside Avenue to Market Street starting in late May to mid-June
 - Sanitary sewer line upgrade and replacement on Fifth Street from Topaz Avenue to Vista Heights and Fifth Street from Vista Heights to Hillside Avenue TBD

- **Topaz Field Closure**

Starting May 24, the soccer and baseball field at Topaz Park will close for renovations and will re-open October 1. The start date has been selected to ensure the park will remain open for the Highland Games. The field upgrades are being done to improve the quality of the field and will involve re-grading the surface, and increasing the turf area by converting the existing “skinned” infield on the baseball diamond to sand-based turf.

- My Great Neighbourhood Grants will soon be accepting applications.

Questions from the neighbourhood included:

- Is it possible, when capital projects are being considered, to incorporate some of the other improvements that need to be made? I.e: Fifth Street is part of the Biketoria network and is scheduled for sanitary sewer upgrades.
- Is it possible to get an inventory of the boulevard trees that were planted recently in the neighbourhood (2 -3 years ago) to ensure they are still all thriving?
- In regards to the Biketoria network, the intersection of Kings & Quadra shows a diverter? Is this true?
- Buses come up Fifth now when there’s an accident at Hillside and Quadra—how is that going to work if Fifth becomes the bike route?
- Do we need to wait until parking becomes an issue with the Root Cellar or can we ask for preventative measures?
- There are campers at SJ Willis. Who is responsible to enforce? Is it the City of Victoria? The school district? VicPD?

7. Report on Sheltering in Parks (Janis L.)

The Framework for a Municipal Response to Homelessness has been published. There is consideration of boosting the Outreach Project to \$85,000 to provide outreach workers to work with those sheltering in parks.

8. Great Neighbourhood Grants (Rowena) –will be discussed at the next meeting

Further discussion concerning this new City of Victoria grant program. Bring your ideas for projects that would help us shape our community. An opportunity to brainstorm with others in the Neighbourhood Action Committee

9. City of Victoria Crosswalk Prioritization Process (Rowena)

The engineering department now has a process to evaluate and prioritize crosswalk requests. The requested push-button light at Hillside and Graham is high on this list. It is also on the Biketoria network. Councillor Isitt has introduced a motion to get this crosswalk added to phase one improvements to the network (along with 2 others at Haultain & Cook and Blanshard & Kings)

10. Status of Land Use Proposals in Hillside Quadra (Jenny F.)

- 2835-2865 Quadra Street a proposal to build 24 rental apartments. Ongoing.
- 3031 Jackson Street. A proposal to build 10 town homes on a large property (the size of four city lots) that currently has one house. A CALUC meeting was held April 25th and a letter will be sent to the CoV. Residents can also send their own letters.
- Residents can access the Development Tracker on the CoV website to follow the status of developments.

11. Report on CALUC chairs meeting with City of Victoria (Jenny F.)

- The CALUC chairs meetings with CoV staff are ongoing. General principles, rather than a standard process, are being developed. Staff is also meeting with developers.
- The form mailed to residents is being improved.

12. Nominations for the Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee Executive for 2016-2017

Jennifer Ferris has agreed to solicit nominations.

13. Neighbourhood Updates (community news, business news) – 10 minutes

- a. Neighbourhood Small Grants, intake for 2016
- b. Next NAC meeting: June 6 2016 at 7:00 p.m., 901 Kings Rd.
- c. NAC table at Quadra Village Day
- d. Cedar Hill Park Walk, Saturday May 14th 1-4pm
- e. Other neighborhood news

14. Report from Downtown Blanshard Advisory Committee (DBAC)

15. Meeting Close

Reminder: support the Downtown Blanshard Advisory Committee by becoming a member.
To join our email list and receive neighbourhood updates contact nag@quadravillagecc.com.
Contact the Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee at nag@quadravillagecc.com.