

Seniors Advisory Committee

December 18, 2009

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Seniors Advisory Committee was held on Friday Dec.16, 2009 at 9:30 AM in Committee room # 2 at City Hall. The notes were taken by Eva Wadolna, Committee member.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Colleen McGuinness – Chair (acting)
Eva Wadolna – Secretary (acting)
Grace Balbutin
Thomas Bruncker
Alice Choi
Sylvia Gurstein
Henry Lee
Dellie Lidyard
Patrick Simpson
Melinda Shultz (observer)

STAFF: Neal Carley – Assistant City Engineer
Invited speaker from Engineering Department: Jerry Dobrovolny
Also present Marnie Mc Gregor – Project Manager 2010 Host City Stakeholder Relations

ABSENT: Chris Morrissey (reported sick) and Virginia McDade
Approved LOA: Dena Dawson

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: not scheduled to attend

ALSO PRESENT:

Jill Weiss – Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
Gail Harmer – COSCO – Housing Committee

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of November 20, 2009 meeting were approved.
Moved by Eva Wadolna, seconded by Grace Balbutin

AGENDA – in the absence of the Interim Chair only general outline of the Agenda was presented by the Acting Chair.

CORRESPONDENCE FOLDER – no items

GUEST PRESENTATION by Jerry Dobrovolny - Engineering Dept.

It was a follow up to the presentations at the previous Seniors Advisory Committee meeting on November 20 in response to the motion passed by the Committee at the 23 October meeting dealing with transportation impediments for seniors related to VANOC policies and regulations.

Mr. Dobrovolny reiterated general VANOC policies on the subject presented in the S.A.C. motion. He also indicated City attempts to address the issues. The main points of the presentation:

- establishment of temporary loading zones in proximity to the medical buildings
- confirmed that HANDYDART will operate as usual assuming the strike will be resolved by that time
- capacity of regular buses will be increased by 30%
- there are going to be more signs and information about restrictions allowing for planning
- City recommends that people walk to their destinations
- Timing of traffic and parking restrictions is from mid January to mid March
- Responsibility for making arrangements to reach medical establishments during above times lies with sick seniors and their medical services providers
- The 311 City number will be enhanced to accommodate expected additional calls but seniors should not rely on this number to help them with issues related to access to services

After the presentation there was Q&A time when a number of Committee members were questioning lack of real life solutions or the solutions presented being inappropriate to the constituent group.

There was a suggestion that staff responding to calls on 311 should be available 24/7 and be prepared to help seniors find a solution to

access issues. The employees could have a map readily available with all locations with temporary loading places.

The response: City would look into it but they do not know all locations seniors may need to access.

One item that emerged from discussion dealt with the ongoing HANDYDART strike and it was decided that there was a need for a motion to be forwarded to the City Council.

Moved by Sylvia Gurstein
Seconded by Thomas Brunker

“ The Seniors Advisory Committee is formally appealing to City Council to urge all involved parties to resolve the labour issues affecting operations of HANDYDART.”

Carried unanimously

(Mr. Dobrovolny left the room at 10:20 AM)

GUEST PRESENTATION by Neil Carley – Assistant City Engineer

As a follow up to previous discussion on snow removal in the alleys intended to improve accessibility to buildings during VANOC restrictions on parking and stopping on main arteries. Mr. Carley indicated that City is going to monitor the situation and respond.

He also made copies of HOST CITY OLYMPIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN available to Committee members.

During discussion that followed the suggestion has been made to follow examples of other cities (Winnipeg, Richmond etc) and develop a voluntary arrangement to assist seniors and those in need (disabled) in extreme weather related emergencies.

All agreed that it would take time to set up the system and it is not feasible to expect it being operational for this winter.

WORK PLAN and CREATION of SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee confirmed its desire to support designation by W.H.O. of the City of Vancouver as Age Friendly City.

The discussion that followed focused on dominant interests of the membership: seniors housing, transportation issues, healthy aging and finding the best way of serving seniors through development of Virtual Villages similar to the Beacon Hill in Boston, Mass.

The issue of concern to many members of the Committee as to “who is senior” focused on age and since it differs depending on legal and social context (defined in gerontological research) it has been decided that each sub-committee would find their own operational definition and seek advice from the City legal department in their recommendations to the City Council.

Realizing the time and structural limitations of the Seniors Advisory Committee a decision has been made to limit number of committees to two and to create a Task Force to help determine the elements for the Canadian version of the Virtual Village concept making it applicable to the Vancouver situation.

Moved by Eva Wadolna
Seconded by Patrick Simpson

“ The Seniors Advisory Committee decided to create two sub-committees: Housing and Transportation, and a Task Force on Adaptation of Virtual Village concept to Vancouver circumstances.”

Motion passed unanimously.

The suggestion to create a joint Sub-committees, one on Housing and another on Transportation with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was received positively. However S.A.C. decided that first our own sub-committees have to establish more specific content (goals and objectives, plans and strategies and expected results). Once this has been accomplished the subject will

be submitted to the Committee as a whole for discussion and decision.

It was also decided that Eva Wadolna who volunteered to share her knowledge on the subject would make a presentation on the Virtual Village Beacon Hill concept to the Committee at the next meeting – January 15, 2010.

OTHER BUSINESS

Thomas Brunner brought up two issues:

- HST questionnaire in COSCO Newsletter – impact of new tax on seniors and an opportunity to voice concerns.
- Suggested exploring www.ombudsman.bc.ca particularly OMBUDSPERSON Office investigation into seniors' care.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 11:30 AM