



# FINAL

## Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society Members Meeting

June 17<sup>th</sup> 2015, 5:15pm at James Bay New Horizons 234 Menzies Street

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### MEMBERS PRESENT:

VEHS directors: Hannah Horn, Susan Low, Stephen Baxter

Other members: Don Prittie, John Sanderson, Gary Leibel, Mark Braithwaite, Les Welsh

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Marc Cittone, City of Victoria of the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan, Mark Mawhinney and Heidi Barlow Lee from Dragon Boating and Fairway Paddling Club, Rick Gonder

**REGRETS:** Ryan Burles, Paul Ridout, Chief Paul Bruce, Jon Secter, Derek Sanderson, Brian Henry

**NOTE-TAKER:** Jacqueline Suzanne

### 1. Welcome and Introductions – Hannah Horn

Meeting called to order at 5:15 pm

### 2. Approval of Consent Agenda

- Moved Susan Low approved, Seconded Don Prittie.
- All in favour, carried.
- Approval of minutes of the May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting. Moved Don Prittie, Seconded Susan Low. All in Favour, carried.

### 3. Presentation #1: Marc Cittone, City of Victoria, Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan

#### Burnside Gorge Community Conservation

Marc Cittone presented information on the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan process. This Local Area Plan will provide strategic direction for land use and development, including the areas of Rock Bay District, Upper Harbour, and Gorge waterway, looking forward 30 years into the future.

The objective for the planning process is to provide more detailed direction on management of residential and industrial lands. Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood is a developed community with trails, streetscapes, businesses and parks with a population growth rate of 1% per year. Issues include the working harbour, public access to the Harbour and Gorge waterway, shoreline ecosystems.



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In Phase 1 of the process the City engaged with the local community to gain input on key directions, issues and values. In the fall, the City will proceed with Phase 2: to create, test, and refine options including design workshops. Phase 3 will be to review and present the draft plan.

*Discussion:*

- The plan should support the working harbour - comment on the need to build residential density away from the working harbour and existing industrial use and marine commercial. Concern about having residential and industrial together on the water – residents complain about industrial activities, even if these were pre-existing at the time of residential development. Examples include Songhees and Shoal Point.
- Alternate opinion expressed that residential and industrial can coincide together. However, residential development has to be managed carefully.
- City of Victoria needs to define what it is and who we are. Victoria is a low rise city. Need a clear definition of areas that are industrial and those that are residential for the whole Burnside Gorge corridor.
- Input on the need to consider the way the harbour functions ecologically. Mixed views on a pathway through the area.

Q: Has the CRD considered a plan for the sewage treatment system in the area?

A: Not at this time, even though Rock Bay could be a potential site in the future. Hopefully in the fall there will be more of concrete discussion on this issue.

Q: Is there still an opportunity for input to the planning process?

A: The first phase of consultation is complete. There will be further opportunities for input during Phase 2 in the fall, including input into zoning to support business/ marine commerce.

#### 4. Presentation #2: Mark Mawhinney, Dragon Boating in Victoria

##### **Dragon Boating in Victoria and Fairway Paddling Club**

Mark Mawhinney, chair of the Dragon Boat Festival and Heidi Barlow-Low, event manager, presented information on Dragon Boating in Victoria and the Fairway Paddling Club. The Dragon Boating Festival came to Victoria during the Commonwealth Games in 1994 as an exhibition sport. Fairway Market donated funds to enable the sport to become established and a commitment from the community and sponsors, has kept the Dragon Festival flourishing year after year into its 21<sup>st</sup> year.



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With sponsorship and festival success, the Dragon Boat Festival Society now owns 40 boats. The Dragon Boat Festival has partnered with the BC Cancer Foundation and money raised goes to fight cancer. The Lights of Courage Campaign starts off the festival. Also, individual Dragon Boat Teams can raise money for charities of their choice.

The Fairway Paddling Club was created 2 years ago at the Selkirk Waterfront. The club provides rentals and training programs for adults, children, seniors and athletes. Interest in paddling sports is increasing and is promoting healthy activities on the water. There is a rapid sustainable growth of paddlers and rentals annually, as well as camps, training and events for children.

*Discussion:*

Q: What involvement does St Michael's University have?

A: The group Go Rowing Canada was bought by St Michael's University and the paddling programs were bought by the Fairway Gorge Paddling Club operated from the Selkirk waterfront.

Q: How does the marine traffic scheme work in the Gorge?

A: Victoria is the busiest harbour location of any dragon boat race. Are in discussions with Transport Canada about how to work with speed limits for paddle sports in a safe way. These discussions are still in progress.

## 5. Chair's Report

The beginning of summer is a busy time of year hence a small meeting this evening. After tonight, the VEHS meetings will take a break until September. There have been issues to be addressed. Jackie will be the new secretariat and will be helping with keeping files and information in order and website maintenance over the summer break.



**6. Treasurer’s Report**

Hannah reported on behalf of Treasurer, Ryan Burles. The current balance is \$ 2982.00 and the high interest account is \$12,496 going into the new year. Some of the money will go into redesign and updating of the website.

**7. Committee Reports**

**a. Membership Committee**

Gary Leibel reported on behalf of Membership Committee Chair Brian Henry. Current Membership is 33 members. Are looking to engage new members in the fall.

**b. Communications Committee**

Kathleen has met with web designer to get the website going.

**c. Issues Response Committee**

Don Prittie reported on behalf of Issues Response Chair Jon Secter

- A letter was sent to xxx in support of the Maritime Museum being supported to locate in the Steamship Terminal or at some other location in the Inner Harbour. In addition, the Board posted a Letter to the Editor in the Times Colonist in support of the Maritime Museum. Other Vancouver Island towns are interested in the artefacts held by the Maritime Museum. Susan will bring idea of the having the museum in the Township of Esquimalt. There is a 4 acre potential development site and the museum would fit in well in Esquimalt.
- VEHS commented on the second round of the GVHA strategic plan. This second draft plan was much improved over the first draft and incorporated many of the VEHS suggestions.
- A letter was sent to the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations in support of the City of Victoria application for a license of occupation for the waterway above the Selkirk Trestle.

*Discussion:* Concern about the impact on boat dwellers who would otherwise be homeless. Currently, VEHS is supporting the City in its intention to have the existing boats removed from the site. However, a follow up letter to the City should be considered that recognizes homelessness in and around Bamfield Park and the need for services to allow people to live in dignity even if they are without homes, in boats or in tents.



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- The Province has come forward with \$17 million Bellville Terminal in Phase 1: under deck infrastructure and essential upgrades. The City of Victoria will provide funding for Phase 2 improvements to the Bellville St walkway. Phase 3 will be the terminal buildings.

## 8: Other Business

Hannah presented draft VEHS Strategic Priorities for 2015 – 2016. The purpose of these strategic priorities is to focus VEHS activities for the upcoming year. These include promoting a sense of place, harbour heritage, recognition of, and increased focus on, the Township of Esquimalt, and liaison with local First Nations. These are in addition to our regular business of promotion of harbour events, ongoing liaisons with organizations and municipalities, and response to issues as these arise.

### *Discussion:*

- Need to create an action plan to focus on activities over and above VEHS regular business. Will bring this forward to the Issues Response Committee.

Q: What is the latest plan for divestiture of the harbour airport?

A: GVHA and City of Victoria were asked for their potential interest. VEHS has stated that it does not support the City having regulatory control of the airport. At this time no party has shown a committed interest in managing the harbour airport. VEHS is keeping tabs on this issue as several VEHS members have an interest in the outcome.

Update and discussion of the process underway to hire a new Harbourmaster now that David Featherby is retired. Mr. Featherby's replacement should be in place by the fall

## 9. Member meeting schedule

Member meetings will be every 2 months on the third Wednesday of the month with two months off in July and August. Meetings will be held in September, November and January. The AGM meeting will be held in February 2016.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday September 16 2015. The guest speaker will be GVHA CEO Ian Robertson.

## 10. New Business

- Hannah met with John Sanderson, Kitty Lloyd and Melissa Huston of the Gorge Waterway Initiative. Melissa will keep VEHS up-to-date on issues and events and to provide an ongoing liaison between GWI and VEHS.
- Due to concerns about misinformation being presented about the harbour airport, VEHS met with air operators and Transport Canada to clarify facts and discuss a strategy for communicating correct information. The group came up with the idea of having a fact sheet that would include factual information regarding air quality and safety in the harbour.

### *Discussion:*

- A fact sheet is good idea as a starting point. There is opportunity to expand to other topics of concern in the harbour e.g., cruise industry in Victoria.
- Should have a fact checker – Transport Canada will clarify facts but maybe pass by a lawyer.
- Suggestion to work with a PR person on messaging.
- Recommend keeping fact sheets separate by topic (harbour airport and cruise industry) – are separate issues.
- In the short term will only be for internal use by VEHS members. In the longer term, may be an effective tool for media relations.

## 9. Announcements

Gorge Swimfest August 9  
Dragon Boat Festival August 12 – 14;  
Boat Festival September (Labour Day Weekend)

### **Closing of meeting**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm

**Next member meeting:** Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:15 pm.