



FINAL

Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society Members Meeting

March 16th 2016, 5:15pm 234 Menzies Street

MEMBERS PRESENT:

VEHS directors: Bernie Talbot, Ryan Burles, Jon Sector, Brian Henry, Hannah Horn

VEHS representatives on GVHA Board:

VEHS members: Peter MacMullen and Sarah Chandler (Fisherman's Wharf Community Association), Gary Leibel (Ralmax), Mark Braithwaite, Al Charania (GVHA), Josh Hickey, Marty Palkovsky, Tony Wright (Schnitzer Steel), Randy Wright (Harbour Air), Leslie Welsh, Don Prittie (Canoe Cove Marina), David Leverton (Maritime Museum), Mike Howe (ILWU), John Sanderson (Burnside Gorge Community Association), Mike Graham, Caroline Houston

GUESTS PRESENT: Mariah McCooey and Carol Unwin (Transport Canada), Jacques Sirois (Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary)

REGRETS: Pete Hartman, Susan Low, Shawn McBride, Paul Ridout, Stephen Baxter, Dee Govang

NOTE-TAKER: Jacqueline Suzanne

1. Welcome and Introductions– Hannah Horn

Meeting called to order at 5:20 pm

2. Approval of Consent Agenda

- Approval of the Agenda: Moved by Don Prittie. Second by Brian Henry. All in favour.
- Approval of minutes of November 18, 2015 Member Meeting:
 - Correction Under New Business: The new VEHS mission statement was moved and approved at the last member meeting. Leslie Welsh moved and was second by unknown member and carried.

Approval of the minutes as amended. Moved by Don Prittie, Second by Leslie Welsh. All in favour.



3. Presentation #1: Mariah McCooey, Victoria Harbour Master

Victoria Harbour Water Airport, Roles, Responsibilities and Background, Risk and Safety

Harbourmaster, Mariah McCooey introduced herself and presented on the management of Victoria Harbour. Transport Canada operations in the Harbour include Programs Branch, Civil Aviation, and Marine Safety. The Harbour airport was certified as a water airport in 2000. Comprehensive safety reviews and risk analyses over the last 15 years have verified the effectiveness of airport operations and risk management strategies. The Harbourmaster and air carrier operators received the BC Aviation Council Air Safety Award in 2012 for their “significant contribution to air safety in BC”.

Transport Canada continues to be proactive regarding safety in the Harbour. TC safety management and risk mitigation activities include education, a Port of Victoria traffic Scheme, and Pilot Training Video on Victoria Harbour Seaplane Procedures. A new traffic scheme will be published in 2017.

Safety Management System (SMS) (2012) is in compliance with the Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs). Transport Canada and civil aviation operators attend regular operations meetings to discuss safety and any issues. Transport Canada also participates in Safety Response Meetings with discussions of the Victoria Harbour Emergency Plan, natural disaster response, environmental situations and aviation safety.

Seaplane noise mitigation actions entail no take offs permitted prior to 0700 and using runway B to reduce noise. Noise complaints have decreased to almost nothing since 2009.

Concerns and questions can be directed to email: PortofVictoria@tc.gc.ca. TC’s doors always open and always welcome.

Discussion:

Q: Who responds to an emergency or environmental situation?

A: Coast Guard and Emergency Management BC (EMBC).

Q: What is the status of the five knot in paddling rule?

A: Letters have been written to TC seeking an exception of the five-knot speed for paddlers. Transport Canada will meet with the paddling club and other members to discuss alternatives. The first of three meetings will be in April 2016.

Q: Any issues you see arising?

A: It will be a busy summer. There are a number of new operators in the mix and TC will be stepping up education. Expects it will be business as usual.

Q: Are there rules about the use of drones in and around the harbour?

A: Need special permission from Transport Canada within 9km of the harbour. Operators need to maintain constant communication with NAV Canada at all times.



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4. Presentation #2: Jaques Sirios, Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary

Real Wildlife in the City in a working Harbour

The Victoria Harbour Bird Sanctuary was established in October of 1923 and is the oldest Migratory Bird Sanctuary on the Pacific Coast of Canada. It extends from Portage Inlet to Ten Mile Point including many estuaries.

In the last 30 years the harbour has seen at least a half billion dollar cleanup, restoring and re-wilding. Now the harbour is the cleanest it has been in a very long time and wildlife are returning, including a number of species at risk. Wildlife seen in and around Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours in recent years include Bald Eagles, Purple Marten, Transient Orcas, Elephant Seals, Humpback Whales, Sea Otters and many more.

The sanctuaries provide habitat for birds, mammals, fish, crustaceans and plants. We will need to start managing and protecting the wildlife in the working harbour where wildlife, planes and boats co-exist. Jacques mentioned Ogden Point as a perfect opportunity to plan for an urban renewal project where city living, healthy wildlife and a working harbour all share the same environment.

Discussion:

Q: What is your opinion on feeding the seals at Fisherman's Warf?

A: It is never a good idea to feed wildlife but those seals seem to give people a lot of joy and they learn about marine life. Most marinas attract herring that seals can feed on.

Q: Where are Brant returning?

A: They are migrants – some congregate in Greater Victoria in the spring e.g., at Cloverpoint and Island View Beach.

Q: What do you suggest as next steps and how can VEHS help?

A: Two suggestions: (1) canvas members to find out much money has been spent by private interests to clean up the harbours; and (2) promote planning around the harbours with the wildlife in mind.

Q: What do you mean by “planning our harbours with wildlife in mind”?

A: More wildlife and everyone working together.

Closing comments by Brian Henry:

Thank Jacques for the presentation. The environment is an asset. VEHS needs to address that when making decisions. Includes recognizing the eco-tourism advantages.



5. Old Business

Discussion of VEHS GVHA communications re Ogden Point plan

Discussion by members of the Ogden Point Master Plan and process. The VEHS Board submitted a letter to GVHA on February 15 2016 requesting greater consideration of marine commerce and industry as part of the planning process.

Comments:

- Concern about the language and tone of the letter to GVHA, not the message.
- Acknowledge the challenges faced by GVHA in planning for Ogden Point. GVHA needs to create revenues to maintain its assets.
- VEHS and GVHA are part of the same organization and want the same things at the end of the day. Want to work with GVHA as a member agency. Build on positive communication.
- Residential development at Ogden Point is not desirable. If a hotel is built, it can become residences, then the residents start demanding an end to marine industry on the site.
- Is an issue of communication. Why did GVHA not come to VEHS members when the process first started?
- Reality check – there is nothing on the table at this stage. The designs are preliminary/ conceptual for the purposes of rezoning.
- VEHS should define what success looks like for our members. Have a workshop to describe what we want to see considered, recognizing that GVHA will do what it needs to do to balance inputs from all interests.
- VEHS offers inputs from the perspective of the waterside and the land-sea interface.
- Where are the opportunities for marine industry and commerce on the site? How does the plan maintain opportunities for marine activities into the future? Some types of development, once built, cannot be removed or moved.
- Need to recognize that we are a port city.

Outcome: VEHS will hold a workshop on Wednesday April 20 to discuss what they would like to put forward as input to the Ogden Point Master Plan process. The intention is to take a positive and collaborative approach to working with GVHA to make VEHS interests known on the understanding that GVHA will need to balance that input against all the other considerations it is working with for the site.

Closing of meeting

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm

Next member meeting: April 20 2016 at 5:15 pm at Ogden Point Pier B