



MINUTES - VICTORIA CITY COUNCIL

February 13, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

Council Chambers, City Hall, 1 Centennial Square

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

PRESENT: Mayor Alto in the Chair, Councillor Caradonna, Councillor Coleman, Councillor Dell, Councillor Kim, Councillor Loughton, Councillor Thompson

PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY: Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond

STAFF PRESENT: J. Jenkyns - City Manager, C. Kingsley - City Clerk, C. Mycroft - Manager of Intergovernmental & Media Relations, B. Roder - Deputy City Clerk, A. Heimburger - Senior Legislative Coordinator

A. MUSIC

Council received a performance by singer/songwriter, Anthony Schenk, from the Victoria Conservatory of Music.

B. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Council acknowledged that the City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees First Nation and Xwsepsum First Nation communities, encouraging residents to find a moment in their day to reflect on their appreciation and gratitude to the Nations for their generations of stewardship to the lands and waters. Council thanked the Nations for allowing us to live, work and play on their lands.

C. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved and Seconded:

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

E. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Moved and Seconded:

That the following speakers be permitted to address Council.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

E.1 Janie Rollins, The Committee to End Homelessness: Low Income Rental Housing (in-person)

Outlined concerns regarding availability of low-income rental housing, suggesting that the City prioritize affordable rental housing over other housing types. She further noted the negative impact of the media's negative portrayal of unhoused persons, the issue of vacant housing due to owner concerns over tenant rights and encouraged the City to advocate for assistance to landlords to remove problematic tenants at no cost.

E.2 Diana Smardon, The Committee to End Homelessness: Affordable Housing Now (in-person)

The Chair noted that this speaker was not present to address Council.

E.3 Bernie Pauly: Displacement Policies and Unintended Consequences (in-person)

Outlined the impacts of daily displacement policies on the unhoused community, specifically noting the increased risk of exposure and the correlation between daily displacement and increased overdose and suicide rates. He also discussed the contradiction between displacement policies and the City's declaration of housing as a human right.

E.4 Kim Duffus and Kerri Keeler, Victoria Community Health Centre: Council Support for Victoria Community Health Centre (in-person)

Outlined the operations and services provided by the Victoria Community Health Centre, including, health education services, virtual medical appointments, wellness sessions, and medical care provided by nurse practitioners. They requested that Council consider financial or in-kind support for the Centre to support Victoria residents without access to medical care.

E.5 Jada Stark: Homelessness (in-person)

The Chair noted that this speaker was not present to address Council.

E.6 Susanne Rautio: Public Participation in Public hearings (phone)

The Chair noted that this speaker was not present to address Council.

E.7 Abigail Turner: Stop the Sweeps (in-person)

Outlined the impacts to unhoused persons in the City associated with the prohibition of camping in parks and fencing of Pandora Avenue, and encouraged Council to consult and collaborate with the unhoused community to inform decision-making.

E.8 Brent Furdyk: Welcome to My Nightmare: A Dark, Twisted Journey Into the City of Victoria's Principal Residence Short-Term Rental Licence Application Process (in-person)

Provided an overview of the City's short term rental business licencing process, outlining concerns with the lack of clarity regarding required information, contradiction between the policy and practice, transparency of the process, and costs to administer.

E.9 Marylou Coyle: When is a Hotel Not a Hotel (in-person)

Introduced the Victoria Regent Hotel and the history of its ownership structure and discussed the double standard from the Ministry of Housing regarding principal residence exemptions for strata hotels but not for individuals.

Council recessed at 7:10 p.m. and reconvened at 7:16 p.m.

E.10 Earleen Roumagoux: The Mighty Sequoia in Spirit Square (in-person)

Outlined the history of the Sequoia tree in Centennial Square, noting its significance and expressing disappointment in a lack of transparency in decision-making regarding removal of the tree.

E.11 Richard Volet: Centennial Square (in-person)

Outlined the history of events and uses of Centennial Square, encouraging Council to revitalize the space through changing how it is used instead of through changing its structure, and raised concerns regarding the project cost and destruction of the existing fountain.

E.12 Sinan Demirel: Sheltering in Parks (in-person)

Outlined concerns regarding the closure of showering facilities in Oaklands Park and requested that hot showers be made available to those sheltering, citing a lack of hot water as among the most detrimental challenge experienced by unhoused residents of the park. He also discussed support for a compliance versus enforcement approach by the City's Bylaw Enforcement Officers.

E.13 Moira Walker: Retaining the Sequoia Tree in Centennial Square (in-person)

Outlined the history of the Sequoia tree in Centennial Square, noting the buffering, shading, cooling, and aesthetic benefits of the tree remaining in the Square.

E.14 Simon Keith, Simon Keith Foundation: Heart of Gold Gala (in-person)

Outlined the history of the Simon Keith Foundation and provided an overview of the upcoming Simon Keith Foundation Gala, requesting any in-kind donations or financial contributions to support the event and raise money for families.

E.15 Debra Sheets: Rezoning the Janion as a Hotel (in-person)

Outlined concerns regarding the livability of the Janion building, stating that the units are purpose-built to suit short-term rental use and requesting a Janion Building heritage exemption to the City's Short-Term Rental Regulation Bylaw.

G. CLOSED MEETING, IF REQUIRED

There was no closed meeting.

F. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were no Notices of Motions.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Moved and Seconded:

That the Council meeting be adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

DRAFT