



MINUTES - VICTORIA CITY COUNCIL

November 3, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

Council Chambers, City Hall, 1 Centennial Square

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People

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

STAFF PRESENT: J. Jenkyns - City Manager, C. Kingsley - City Clerk, C. Anderson - Deputy City Clerk, T. Zworski - City Solicitor, T. Soulliere - Director of Parks, Recreation & Facilities, K. Hoese - Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development, C. Mycroft - Manager of Executive Operations, J. Jensen – Director of People & Culture, D. Atkinson - Acting Fire Chief, S. Stoltz - Committee Secretary

B. PROCESSIONAL

C. ADDRESS BY THE CHIEFS

On the invitation of the Mayor-Elect, Marianne Alto, Chief Robert Thomas of the Esquimalt Nation gave an address for the Inaugural Meeting of the Victoria City Council.

D. O CANADA

E. OATH OF OFFICE

The Honourable Regional Administrative Judge Carmen Rogers administered the Oath of Office to Marianne Alto, Jeremy Caradonna, Chris Coleman, Matt Dell, Marg Gardiner, Stephen Hammond, Susan Kim, Krista Loughton, and Dave Thompson who each swore or affirmed the Oath of Office before the Judge as required under the provisions of the *Local Government Act*. In addition, Chris Coleman, Marg Gardiner and Stephen Hammond took the Oath of Allegiance.

F. INAUGURAL ADDRESS – Mayor Marianne Alto

Welcome friends, family, and all our relations: welcome to your City Hall. Thank you Beth and Lyla, and all of the ləkʷəŋən dancers, all of your family. Your dancing and your culture and your sharing always grounds and reminds us of the great cultures that have thrived on these lands for centuries. Thank you, Chief Thomas and Councillor Charlie, for your wise words acknowledging the lands and waters that surround us in beauty and comfort and inspiration. We take seriously the responsibility of which you remind us, but we are at this table for just moments in time's passage. But we have seven generations to consider as we make decisions that affect all those lands and waters. Thank you again Chief Thomas and Councillor Charlie for being here today; it's an honour to have

you here. You grace us with your presence as you are the chiefs and representative leaders of all the lands on which our City rests. Thank you for your patience, your generosity, and your willingness to continue our journeys together as we build futures of shared prosperity and resilience.

I would also like to thank and appreciate all of the Council members with whom I have had the privilege to serve these last twelve years. I know that each and every one of them came to the table in the interest of public service, and gave their best. Every new Council member that has arrived here today has come with big ideas about what we should do in the next four years. These are enormous, complex ideas, like how one city can respond to climate change, create active transportation choices, maintain and enhance the critical infrastructure on which we all depend. How one city can continue these journeys of reconciliation, and ensure that we all feel comfortable and safe in all of our neighbourhoods. How we can reduce the harms affecting those of us with less of everything. How we can steadily grow and diversify our economy, how we can influence other governments' actions in critical services such as healthcare, and how we can build housing – all types of housing – across the city for everyone.

Examining closely the individuals that Victorians have chosen to sit at this table for the next four years, I am filled with confidence, and excitement, and hope. Hope is not a plan, but no plan works without hope. I believe we have a diverse collective of incredibly talented people who will soon learn what is doable, what is possible, and how to make all those complex ideas that may seem impossible, achievable. And how all of our ideas need to complement the critically important core services City staff provide to every resident on which they rely every day.

In the years that I've been seated at this table, Victoria began its evolution from a big town to a city. City Council – many City Councils – has faced changing responsibilities and increased public expectations, and has realized the need for greater, closer alliances with regional and provincial partners. These Councils over the years responded to a myriad of crises, adapting to the unexpected, while deliberately and thoughtfully acting in conventional and also unconventional and quite extraordinary ways. Those Councils talked about the way that Victorians can now move around, and yes - bike lanes, and walkways, and car shares. We changed the size and number of spaces in which we live; many of us now live in smaller and smaller spaces, and in greater density. We grew the expectations that we have for public spaces to balance those living spaces, and so we look for more plazas, more green space, more parks, more recreation options – like that amazing skate park. We changed the way we socialize and work in person and online. We now have adaptations that we use routinely, that we make every day in the face of climate change, like our regulations of single use plastics. And we accelerated affordable housing, and made it simpler and easier to make homes for people.

These are just a few examples of how previous City Councils have changed the livability in our City. I believe that the majority of Victorians have been untroubled by the bulk of those actions, and may I suggest that some of them might even have been welcome. But, as I've said throughout the last 5 months and perhaps longer, I think sometimes the pace of those actions have challenged and perhaps, at times, overwhelmed Victorians. So it will come as no surprise to you, and I think not a little relief, that I believe that there will be time for this Council to take a breath. To let the good work now in place and underway operate. To allow some time for city staff and Council to observe those

operations, and make adjustments as needed to ensure everything is functioning in its highest and best way.

At the same time, this Council – this brand new Council - will take a bit of time to learn from and about one another and from our expert staff. A little time to share, absorb, understand, and prepare for the complex, enormous job ahead of us. This work has already begun and will be the focus of the remaining weeks of this year; only weeks left in this year! We will of course address time-sensitive issues and prepare for the heavy work ahead; in particular, the coming work of budgeting and strategic planning. While being an elected leader requires ongoing learning, and always demands an open heart, open ears, and open mind, I'm confident that Victorians recognize the utility of taking this short time to do the initial work necessary to ensure Council's future deliberations are undertaken by Council members that have the foundational knowledge to make the best informed and most balanced decisions.

Looking ahead, there are already items that need our attention, and which can be considered as we move through our early learning. We will shortly be considering initial Council appointments to external bodies, including the Capital Regional District and neighbourhood liaison assignments. Adjustments to our agendas and to time and meeting management are among our first opportunities to stabilize internal and external public expectations and ensure that our decisions are made in the manner of best practice, with consideration of staff's capacity to provide and Council's ability to adequately review and consider the hefty volumes of important, relevant information we need to make those decisions.

Perhaps most important in building and supporting our individual and collective capacity to make solid well-informed decisions is setting a tone and standard for civil discourse in a calm, inclusive space in which passionate debate can safely, respectfully find bold solutions. As Mayor it is my obligation to set expectations and standards for, and demonstrate, that civil discourse. To model principles of general good governance, and to facilitate civil exchanges serving good governance as it operates in the best interest of residents. And to intervene in the absence or degradation of civil dialogue. I will invite my Council colleagues to contribute their best efforts to build the rapport needed for an eclectic collective like this to work well together for the good of the whole city. I will also remind our residents that the same expectations of civil social interaction apply when they are engaged in discourse with Council or City staff.

We are a table of individuals with unique aspirations, ideas and ways of working. We will find ways to take advantage of those individual skills and perspectives as we collaborate to serve the community to provide open, transparent, sensitive leadership, and to plan and build an inclusive future. To care about and act in the best interest of our residents' well being. To find the ways and realize all of those enormous, complex ideas we've brought to this table to benefit Victorians. We will be able to respond to climate change in ways that can be achievable neighbourhood by neighbourhood. We will expand and create diverse transportation choices because we must, because we can no longer afford to have each one of us in a single vehicle. We will maintain the infrastructure on which we all rely, because that is the City in which we live, and it is the future of the children we all wish to be here. We will continue our journeys of reconciliation with the collaboration of the chiefs and leadership of the two nations on which our city rests, because we must, and it's the right thing to do. We will ensure that people feel comfortable and safe in all of their neighbourhoods, because we have many ways now

to provide that safety. With conventional policing, which is so important, and civilian responses which can take the place when needed. We will work with other jurisdictions to reduce the harm to those with little, and make sure they know that they are our Victorian residents too. We will work with small business to diversify our economy and we will also remember that the industrial lands have a long and prosperous history in this city, and they must be part of our future. And we will influence other governments, because we must, because we cannot do it all, you can't afford to pay for it all, and so we will look to other governments to help us, because as we take on more, we will need their help for more. And what will we do? We will build housing, we will build housing, we will build housing.

It's time to embrace Victoria as a city. A city practically and realistically preparing for the future. This Council has many extraordinary opportunities ahead. Working with City staff in partnership, with our residents, with the support of other governments and allies, to imagine and realize the inclusive, accessible, tolerant, welcoming city we want our children and grandchildren to call home. Together, we can be the authors and engineers of an intentional transformation of this city that we love.

On a personal note, I would not be sitting in this chair without the unreserved support of my immediate family. My partner Allison, and my sons Pasha and Benjamin. And my extended family, to many of which are here to mention, I just can't even count how many of you are here and how much that means to me, but you all know who you are. My younger son Ben, who is here today, coached and counselled me all through the campaign. He kept me laughing, reminded me to sleep – which I didn't do very often – but he kept saying over and over again: "No worries, Mom. On October 15, two doors will open; you just don't know which one. But both will be adventures, and both will let you do more good work." And so Council, I look to you and to the public to say let us work together – let us open doors together – and do good work for Victoria. Thank you.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Councillor Thompson
Seconded By Councillor Kim

That the Inaugural Council Meeting be adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CITY CLERK

MAYOR