

**Ellice Street Emergency Shelter
Minutes of Neighbourhood Working Committee
Meeting #1**

March 26, 2008

In Attendance:

Bruce Dyck	Chew Excavating Ltd.	BD
Brad Cunnin	Brad Cunnin Land Surveying	BC
Stewart Storey	Greenlight Construction	SS
Gerry Brouwer	Parkside Motors Ltd.	GB
Christine St. Peter	Single Parent Resource Centre	CSP
Kathy Stinson	Victoria Cool Aid Society	KS
Deane Strongitharm	CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.	DS
Jarret Matanowitsch	CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.	JM
Darrel Jensen	Jensen Group Architects	DJ
Patrick Jost	Jensen Group Architects	PJ

1.0	Agenda
1.1	Introductions
1.1.1	The committee did a round the table introduction, where all members outlined there connection to the neighbourhood and the project.
	New Business
1.2	Committee Objectives
1.2.1	<p>DS reviewed the objectives of the committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide input and feedback related to the design of the proposed shelter facility at the Ellice Street site. 2. To inform Victoria Cool Aid Society about the characteristics of the neighbourhood. 3. To provide input and advice to assist Cool Aid in the development of operational and safety plans for the facility. 4. To be a connection to the neighbourhood regarding the development of plans for the shelter. 5. To provide input into the development of a protocol agreement (Good Neighbour Agreement) between the Society, City and neighbourhood, to foster neighbourhood safety and security, and the quiet enjoyment of neighbours and businesses.

1.3	Project Background
1.3.1	DS provided an overview of the shelter planning process. Outlined that the project requires an amendment to the City of Victoria OCP and Zoning Bylaw, and that the project will follow the City's regular process for such amendments.
1.3.2	DS summarized the handout materials, discussing such issues as the need for a new shelter, who uses a shelter, and the general elements of the proposal.
1.3.3	KS discussed the suitability of the Ellice St. site for a shelter.
	<p>KS provided an overview of the shelter programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed BC Housing Shelter Program, and how a shelter facility is part of the housing continuum on the path to being housed. • The Ellice Shelter is part of the many initiatives that will be occurring over the next several years to address homelessness. • It is important that the building is large enough to accommodate all of the social services that are planned on-site. • The building will have extreme weather shelter capabilities, where the common areas will serve as sleeping areas. • The plan is to include an outdoor courtyard on the site, so people have an outdoor gathering space, without congregating on the public street. • The services at the shelter are primarily for shelter residents, however there will be a drop-in service at the facility.
1.3.4	<p>Question (BD) - How did we arrive at the planned number of shelter beds?</p> <p>Response (KS) - The planned 80 shelter beds and 25 transitional housing units was based on research. The intention is that the building will be designed so the shelter units can be converted to transitional housing units should the demand for shelter space decline.</p>
1.3.5	<p>Question (GB) - Are there other facilities being built in the City and in other communities across the Province?</p> <p>Response (KS) - The Ellice St. Shelter is part of the BC Housing Shelter Program. There are other projects planned in Victoria and in other communities.</p>
1.3.6	<p>Question (GB) - Who qualifies to go into the Streetlink Shelter? What if a person is intoxicated or threatening and is refused entrance to the Shelter, how does Cool Aid deal with this?</p> <p>Response (KS) - Cool Aid has a protocol for dealing with difficult clients and getting them off the street. KS outlined this protocol, and highlighted that Cool Aid would not turn someone away without taking the proper steps, including calling other shelters or if necessary, the police.</p>
1.3.7	<p>There was a general concern among the neighbourhood committee members of people who are turned away from the shelter or are loitering around the facility.</p> <p>DS pointed out these concerns could form part of a Good Neighbour Agreement.</p>

1.3.8	CSP noted that the Single Parent Resource Centre has an existing bad situation, where people come into their facility to do drugs in the bathroom. The Resource Centre holds night classes, which are attended by mostly women. The proposed shelter increases the safety concern.
1.3.9	Question (SS) - Could a hotline be setup where neighbours can phone to report crimes and such, as police are often tied up with other issues. Response (KS) - Cool Aid is certainly open to discussing improved security in the neighbourhood.
1.4	Site Characteristics and Design Concepts
1.4.1	DJ provided the committee with an overview of the Shelter Concept Drawings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design principals • Designing for different uses (shelter, transitional housing, facility staff and servicing) • Discussion of existing site and surrounding uses • Building will be designed to LEED Gold Standards • Provided a full overview of the five storey building.
1.4.2	Question/Comment (GB) - Wants to achieve a shared access with the Shelter Facility and his facility (Parkside Motors) on the west side of the shelter site. He has a parking lot in the rear of his property that is presently not accessible, except through bay doors in the building. By flipping the plan a shared access could be achieved. Response (DJ) It is desirable from a design standpoint to have the Courtyard in the southwest corner of the building, to achieve maximum sunlight for shelter users. However, options will be explored further. GB noted that the entire park is under sunlight. BC proposed putting the courtyard on the second floor of the building. DJ responded that by placing the courtyard in its present location, it achieves maximum sunlight and provides for clear visibility from the street - security. DJ outlined how access to the courtyard is achieved. Shelter users can only access the courtyard from inside the shelter.
1.4.3	Question (BD) Could transitional housing units be converted to shelter beds, so that the number of shelter beds increases? Response (DS) Although this is entirely possible, all funding and programs are working in the opposite direction, towards people being housed in supportive housing and away from shelters.
1.4.4	Questions (GB) - where would extreme weather shelter beds be located? Response (KS) - Extreme weather beds are planned in the common areas of the facility.

1.4.5	<p>Question (BD) Parking is a major concern in the neighbourhood. The streets are full of parked cars. How will parking be dealt with?</p> <p>Question (BC) Is there underground parking planned?</p> <p>Question (GB) Is there a bylaw to regulate the number of parking spaces for the facility? How many parking spaces are required under the bylaw?</p> <p>Response (KS) Outlined that the existing Street Link facility has no parking, and that staff use alternative transportation. Highlighted that there is parking planned for the new facility, and that Cool Aid will respond to the parking questions in more detail when plans are further developed. DS indicated that parking needs will be substantially less than what is required through the zoning bylaw regulations.</p>
1.4.6	<p>Question (BC) - Is it really necessary for the building to be LEED? This is a major expense.</p> <p>Response (DS) - Designing to LEED standards is mandated by the province.</p>
1.4.7	<p>Question/Comment (BC) Drug dealers and others who hang out on the street will congregate or migrate from downtown to the shelter location. There is concern about people who are not using the shelter, but selling drugs or committing other crimes in the neighbourhood.</p>
1.4.8	<p>Question (SS) - Is there a way to notify people in the downtown if the Ellice St. shelter is full, so people don't migrate to the neighbourhood when there is nowhere to sleep?</p> <p>Response (KS) - Cool Aid will continue to work with other shelter and housing providers in the community. Various types of strategies could be developed.</p>
1.4.9	<p>Question (BD) - How many drop-in clients do you estimate on a daily basis?</p> <p>Response (KS) - Estimate 20 to 30 drop in clients daily. It was noted that Our Place will be the major drop-in facility for the homeless.</p> <p>Question/Comment (BD) Concerned that 20-30 people will leave the drop-in centre at 5pm, when all of his employees are also leaving work. Also, where are these 20-30 people going to sleep when they leave the facility?</p>
1.4.10	<p>CSP - Security is the major issue in the neighbourhood. Also concern about people who will not be let into shelter, and will be roaming around neighbourhood.</p>
1.4.11	<p>Question (GB) - Homeless people often carry their possessions in shopping carts. Is there space planned for shopping carts on the site so they will not be left out on the street?</p> <p>Response (DJ) There will be limited space for shopping carts in the forecourt.</p>
1.4.12	<p>KS noted that approximately 80% of Street Link Shelter users are registered residents and use the facility for many nights. Approximately 20% are transient users, who may only use the facility for one or two nights.</p>
1.4.13	<p>DS noted that neighbourhood safety and security concerns and solutions could form part of the Good Neighbour Agreement between Cool Aid, neighbours, and the City. KS said that the police are part of the Good Neighbour Agreement.</p>

1.4.14	<p>DS discussed the Lookout Shelter on the corner of Yukon and Fifth in Vancouver. This Shelter could be used as an example for the Ellice St. Shelter and asked if there was interest among the committee to tour the Lookout Shelter.</p> <p>GB noted that it would be important to hear from the neighbours and businesses surrounding the Lookout Shelter to hear their experiences. BD said he is often in Vancouver and could go to see the shelter.</p>
1.4.15	<p>GB reiterated that he would like to see the building flipped so that there is a shared access point between the shelter and his business along the west property line of the shelter site.</p>
1.4.16	<p>Question (BC) - Would the City consider a tax grant (or some form of relief) to surrounding businesses, as these landowners are carrying a social burden?</p> <p>GB noted that the City of Toronto gave compensation to land owners surrounding a social housing facility.</p>
	<p>DS noted that meeting minutes will be sent to the committee.</p>
7.7	Next PDC Meeting
7.7.1	Wednesday, April 2, 2008 - 5:00 pm - Victoria Cool Aid Society Office

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 pm

The above is a copy of the minutes of the meeting and if any discrepancies are noted herein, please advise the writer within 3 days upon receipt of minutes, otherwise minutes are deemed to be correct and accepted as written.

Minutes prepared by: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.