

Mount Edwards Court Neighbourhood Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 5, 2016  
The Chapter Room  
Christ Church Cathedral

Kathy Stinson, Cool Aid introduced herself as chair.

Everyone in the circle introduced themselves and their connection:

- Chris Coleman, City Councilor
- Roger Butcher and Heidi Hartman, BC Housing
- Dan O'Connor, VicPD
- John Sherratt, Cool Aid agreed to take Minutes: to capture general themes and any action or follow-up items.

An attendance sheet was circulated – minutes will be emailed and posted on the Cool Aid website:  
[www.CoolAid.org/mtedwards](http://www.CoolAid.org/mtedwards)

Kathy opened the meeting with a reminder of the purpose of the meeting.

An agenda was circulated and accepted

Minutes from previous meetings were accepted with following amendments:

- March 8, 16 – accepted
- March 15, 16 – accepted
- March 22, 16 – accepted with Christopher Schmidt's amendments to be added

There was a request for VicPD to provide a report in advance of the meeting. Dan O' agreed to provide statistics at the meeting and explained the reason the public page for Police Statistics is currently down.

Dan O', VICPd advised the group that, as a Peace Officer, he is obliged to keep the peace at this meeting. He reminded the group to stay on task and that if the meeting became unproductive, he would leave and encourage others to do so as well.

**Action Items from the previous meeting:**

3.1 Proposal to BC Housing to fund Security at Mt Edwards

- Heidi H explained that BC Housing has decided to continue with the current Community Liaison model at Mt Edwards but will monitor critical incidents. This model has been successful at other BC Housing buildings.
- Clarification was given that security at MyPlace also follows this model

### 3.2 Cool Aid to continue to tighten up Community Liaison Presence

- John S reported that all staff at Mt Edwards are aware that presence outside is their number one priority
- John S reported that random checks of the security system show improved presence of Community Liaison outside
- John S clarified rationale for having Community Liaison rather than Security
- Stuart H from CCS asked the neighbours to clarify if they wanted static presence in front of Mt Edwards or if they wanted a patrol around the neighbourhood. He also indicated that he appreciates the consistent presence of Community Liaison during the hours of school pick-up, drop-off
- Three neighbours expressed that there has been no improvement in the presence of staff outside and one neighbour has proof in the form of video

#### **ACTION ITEM: Cool Aid to continue to tighten up the Community Liaison Presence**

### 3.3 Update from working group drafting a Good Neighbour Agreement

- A working group consisting of: neighbours in close proximity to Mount Edwards; Chris Coleman City Council liaison; Stuart Hall Cathedral School; FGNA Chair Don Monsour and co Executive Director Kristina Wilcox; Dan O'Connor VicPD; and Cool Aid representatives met on Tuesday, March 29 to discuss a Good Neighbour Agreement
- The group agreed that it would be a 'Neighbour Agreement'
- The group anticipates one more meeting before a draft agreement is ready to bring to the larger group
- The group acknowledges that there are neighbours who choose to not participate in this process
- A member of SpeakUp Fairfield wanted it noted that this group does not support a (Good) Neighbour Agreement.

#### **ACTION ITEM: Update from working group drafting a Neighbour Agreement**

#### **Brief Updates / specific concerns to be addressed:**

##### 4.1 Mt Edwards Housing

- No Police or EMS calls since last meeting
- A fire alarm sounded at approximately 4:30 on April 5, 16. All staff/residents are safe
- 1 resident has moved out to market rent and one new resident from Tent City has moved in

##### 4.2 Christ Church Cathedral School

- Clarification that the school was not broken in to
- One needle was found on the school grounds
- Security is being updated at the school, including cameras and new locks
- Enrollment is down approximately 8% over last year
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#### 4.3 Church

- No update

#### 4.4 Neighbourhood Association

- No update

#### 4.5 Police

- The importance of calling Police if an incident occurs was reiterated
- An explanation of the resources available during evening shift for Victoria and Esquimalt was given, noting that there are 24 officers available
- The following statistics were provided:
  - Mt Edwards ATOM:
    - September '15: 3 calls
    - October '15: 5 calls
    - November '15: 4 calls
    - December '15: 9 calls
    - January '16: 3 calls
    - February '16: 9 calls
    - March '16: 10 calls
  - Type of Call, last two weeks
    - Mt Edwards
      - 1 prowler
      - 2 suspicious person
      - 1 assault
      - 1 found bike
    - North of ME
      - 2 suspicious person
      - 1 unwanted person, 1 mischief
      - 1 assault
    - West of ME
      - 2 unwanted person
      - 2 property crime
      - 1 weapon
      - 1 assault
    - South of ME
      - 1 unwanted person
      - 1 check wellbeing
      - 1 indecent act
    - East of ME
      - No calls

**ACTION ITEM: VICPD to check with analysts to determine if historical stats can be provided**

**ACTION ITEM: VICPD to look into ways for neighbours to report concerns to Police/Province with becoming vulnerable**

**ACTION ITEM: VICPD to look into increasing Mt ED atom to include Tent City**

#### 4.6 City of Victoria

- An explanation of the forums for expressing concerns to the city was given. The 3 avenues are:
  - To work through City Council
  - To speak to the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Committee for the Fairfield Gonzales Neighbourhood Association
  - To work through the Province

**ACTION ITEM: Take back to City Council the disappointment the neighbours feel with regards to Bylaw enforcement, City Staff, Councillors**

**ACTION ITEM: City to create forum for the neighbourhood to voice concerns over the future of neighbourhood given the continuation of Tent City**

#### 4.7 Neighbours

- A representative from Speak-up Fairfield reiterated their opposition to a Neighbourhood Agreement and stated their rejection of any such agreement
- A neighbour expressed concern that pictures were taken at a past meeting by a resident of ME of anyone who expressed their concerns
- A neighbour asked for clarification on the term 'Gold Standard Operation' used by Roger B from BC Housing at a previous meeting. It was asserted that the security being provided at Mt Edwards is similar to other BC Housing properties and is therefore not superior in operation. BC Housing affirmed that Mt Edwards is a Gold Standard operation. Cool Aid pointed out that Mt Edwards has a much higher staff ratio than any other Cool Aid supportive housing building; as well none of Cool Aid's other buildings (including shelters) have a dedicated outside staffing presence like the Community Liaison; from this perspective Mount Edwards is being funded to operate at a 'Gold Standard'.

#### **Discussions**

- A discussion ensued about the court injunction process, clarifying the level of proof required
- A discussion ensued about the importance of neighbour participation in the injunction process

Note: Dan O'Connor subsequently provided this information for neighbours who want to have their voices heard:

The two e-mails below are the contact for the Province Legal Team for Tent City. Anyone with information to share should contact them by e-mail.

Chewka, Kaitlyn - [Kaitlyn.Chewka@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kaitlyn.Chewka@gov.bc.ca)

Webber, Katie - [Katie.Webber@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Katie.Webber@gov.bc.ca)

- A neighbour asked all other neighbours to reflect on their specific concerns about Mt Edwards and the specific response that they would like

**ACTION ITEM: All neighbours to reflect on specific concerns and expected response**

**ACTION ITEM: That every effort is made to reserve the Chapter room or the gymnasium**

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, April 19, 2016, 7:00 pm, Chapter room

At the meeting of April 19<sup>th</sup> it was agreed to attach the amendment document supplied by Christopher Schmidt to these minutes, subject to one revision, removing a reference to SpeakUp Fairfield being a voice for the neighbourhood.

Cool Aid sought acceptance of the minutes for March 8, 2016 and March 15, 2016 and March 22, 2016. A concern was raised and two additional items were raised: a request was made that the meeting be held in a room where people can hear each other and a request was made that the police provide statistical information in advance of the liaison meetings. The conversation moved to this topic and no confirmation of acceptance nor finalization occurred: no statement was made to accept nor to finalize these draft minutes documents.

The Police stated that it can report general trends in crime activity but it cannot correlate the crimes to Mount Edwards or Tent City.

A neighbour raised a concern that the reporting system was not working properly and asked if it is fixed. The Police answered that it is not fixed but that a media release will occur when it is fixed. The concern was raised that if that resource is being used to justify somebody's political position, there should be confirmation that it is correct. The Police answered that the statistics that they provide are not through that system and that the statistics provided to the court were accurate.

Cool Aid agreed to reference within the Good Neighbour document the emailed statement from Speak Up Fairfield about residents opposing the Good Neighbour Agreement.

The Neighbourhood Agreement working group stated that despite everyone not being in favour of this document, they are working to make the current operation work for everybody. The working group stated that it will share its draft document with the mailing list and they will bring it to the larger group.

The Police reported that Tent City started at the end of November 2015 and that calls to the police for the Mount Edwards area have increased from December onward.

A neighbour raised the concern that the Police's providing statistics for only the Mount Edwards atom is lacking since it does not show activity like the theft of bicycles from the Strathcona, some of which were later recovered from Tent City.

The Police agreed to run atoms for the atoms surrounding the Mount Edwards atom.

The City stated that voices can be heard through the City although Council has not taken a position since its position is fractured, that voices can be heard by the Province through the chair of the community association's Planning and Zoning committee, and to make sure that in future court actions voices of the community are heard. The City promised to report back in two weeks with something demonstrable that could engage community voices.

A neighbour raised the concern that the City has not acted on his bylaw complaints and asked that the City be notified about the extreme disappointment with the bylaw officers while this project was developing as far as its failure to deal with things within its jurisdiction such as overnight camping, building code, and health code. The impression is that some people on Council or in the Mayor's office are trying to force this issue to have the province deal with homeless issues but that problems are created when you move ground zero next to a school. Another neighbour noted that the Mayor's Task Force for Housing Affordability makes it clear that one of its objectives is to get the Province to pay for housing the homeless and that this area is a rotten battleground for that issue.

A neighbour asked BC Housing how it can refer to Mount Edwards as a "gold standard" when it is satisfied with running the same level of security at Mount Edwards as it runs at other facilities, which do not have an elementary school 30 feet away. BC Housing replied that the My Place shelter is 350 meters away from a public school. A neighbour identified the big difference and that four-year-olds go to school at the Cathedral School. BC Housing stated that it has an operation in Burnaby that is a safe distance away but close to the school.

BC Housing turned the gold-standard question back on the neighbour by asking whether any major crimes have occurred in the neighbourhood in the months since Mount Edwards opened. Neighbours responded by stating that calls to police have gone up and that they don't want major crimes. BC Housing stated that as far as it is concerned, right now Mount Edwards is running at gold standard level. Cool Aid stated that Mount Edwards is running at a much higher level of staffing than most of Cool Aid's supportive housing, most of which has one staff. Cool Aid stated that Mount Edwards has three times as many staff as in any of its other buildings.

A neighbour raised a concern that BC Housing promised a gold standard in terms of security that is provided outside and that security guards was the phrase used by BC Housing. BC Housing denied using the word guards.

Cool Aid stated that Mount Edwards is the only Cool Aid building that has community liaison staff outside of it and that it is the only building that is staffed to the level that it is so it is quite a bit above every other building that Cool Aid operates in Greater Victoria. It stated the supportive housing and low-barrier housing are the same thing.

Cool Aid stated that all of its housing supports people who have mental health and addiction issues and that all of its buildings are run in the same manner, and that Mount Edwards is no different than any of its other buildings, and that those facilities run very well and the residents blend into the neighbourhoods since they have lived there for a number of years.

BC Housing stated that it would have to get back to the individual who asked how many individuals live in the low-barrier facility that is close to a school in Burnaby.

A neighbour raised a concern about a man taking photos of attendees at the March 22, 2016 meeting; another neighbour reported that he was taking pictures of anybody who raised concerns or objections to Mount Edwards and that he told the neighbour that he was from Mount Edwards. The concern was raised that his taking pictures of attendees is part of the intimidation factor.

It was raised that there were complaints about the quality of sound in the gymnasium where the March 22, 2016 meeting was held. Speak Up Fairfield informed the School that, as far as quality of sound is concerned, the gym was a better venue than the upstairs chamber of the cathedral.

*End of Amendments*