

Mount Edwards Court Neighbourhood Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 29, 2016

The Chapter Room

Christ Church Cathedral Victoria, BC

Don McTavish, Cool Aid and Stuart Hall, Cathedral School introduced themselves as co-chairs

Purpose was discussed – to work together to make the neighbourhood safe for all; to provide a forum to bring forward concerns

Everyone in the circle introduced themselves and their connection

- Charlayne Thornton-Joe, City Councilor was in attendance, subbing for Chris Coleman who is the Councilor liaison for this neighbourhood
- There were a few reps from the Fairfield Gonzales Community Assoc. in attendance
- Constable Dan O'Connor, a Community Resource Officer was there on behalf of VicPD
- Kathy Stinson, Cool Aid agreed to take Minutes: will capture general themes and any action or follow-up items

An agenda was circulated and accepted (see attached)

An attendance sheet was circulated – minutes will be emailed and posted on the Cool Aid website; go to: <https://coolaid.org/our-services/homes-2/supportive-housing/answers-about-mount-edward-court/>

A number of people wanted clarity on what would happen in the long term regarding Mount Edwards (i.e., a year from now) and what the process for input and decision making would be. It was noted that if the purpose changes a rezoning will occur, following the usual CALUC process.

ACTION: Cool Aid will take the lead on developing and communicating a clear process for the future

A neighbour expressed concern over witnessing an overdose (not by a ME resident); ME staff responded quickly as did emergency services. A belief was expressed that in many years living here, this is the first such incident. An adjacent neighbour responded that in 12 years she had seen many incidents of homelessness and drug use.

Question regarding numbers:

- All 38 rooms were filled as of Friday
- 34 residents have had connections with Tent City; with the majority of those coming directly from the camp

How to access staff at ME if there is a problem:

- use the 24/7 phone number: **778-265-3456**

Policing questions/concerns:

- Is there a stats baseline regarding calls – yes, that information is available
- Patrol presence has increased; residents should call if they witness any problems; the nature of the call will dictate the response time; more calls means more presence

Security questions/concerns:

- Statement by a neighbour that the Mayor had promised 24/7 security
- Stakeholders need confidence in the approach – perception that high visibility is a deterrent

Concern that the Community Liaison staff responsible for outside security:

- Does not have the right physical presence or professional demeanor
- Is not always present or visible

What are the responsibilities of security staff:

- Build rapport with ME residents and neighbours
- Ensure there is no loitering around the building, move along unwanted guests
- Respond if any ME residents are acting out
- Ensure there is no 'using' or smoking around the building
- Ensure that no carts or belongings are left in the vicinity
- Document any incidents
- Call police if necessary

What hours is security provided and what area?

- There is a dedicated Community Liaison staff outside 7 days a week from 7 am to 5 pm
- 5 pm to midnight the position is rotated through the 3 support staff so that a dedicated outside presence remains during those hours
- Between midnight and 7 am Staff do regular outside checks and monitor the security cameras
- Staff patrol beyond the footprint to building, going up to Rockland and Quadra, down Rockland to Cook; Vancouver to Burdett, Vancouver to Meares and even Meares to Quadra
- Staff have no real authority beyond the property we are responsible for; are well trained in deescalating situations and conflict resolution; have no authority to make citizens arrests – neither do security company staff – they must rely on police ; they carry a radio

ACTION:

- **Charlayne will get clarity from the Mayor on her statements re: security**
- **Cool Aid will follow up on concerns raised with staff**

Guest Policy:

- No guests are allowed for the first month while staff get to know residents; professional support workers from other agencies are not included in this category; some family members may be permitted on a case by case basis
- After the first month, ME Residents will have the option of having guests visit once they have been vetted by staff

Neighbourhood access questions:

- Could a cross walk be added at Burdett in case there is something happening right in front of Mount Edwards where the current crosswalk is located?
- Could the block be reopened at Rockland and Quadra to allow for through traffic?

Charlayne advises that the City would not want to take a reactive approach; rather wait and see how things are over the next couple of months.

Will ME residents be invited to participate in these neighbourhood meetings?

- Yes, the first house meeting happened on Friday, residents were advised that these meetings will take place weekly and that they are welcome;
- This will be reiterated at all resident meetings

Concern was raised that we were not able to get through the agenda:

- It is important that these weekly meetings stay focused on the here and now of what is happening in the neighbourhood;
- That they be used to raise concerns and brainstorm solutions to any operational aspects that Mount Edwards may have introduced or exacerbated
- This is not the venue for longer term discussion regarding the future of Mount Edwards

Future meetings:

- Will alternate between afternoon and evening

Tuesday March 8th, noon to 1:30, Chapter Room, Cathedral

Tuesday March 15th, 7 pm to 8:30, Chapter Room, Cathedral