

## **Victoria West Community Association Purposes**

1

The PURPOSES of the VWCA, which were approved at the March 26, 2013 Special General Meeting, answer the question “WHY? do we do what we do?”

On Saturday April 7, 2013, a group comprised of Kate Longpre, Diane Carr, Ava Christl, Patti Parkhouse, Jack Meredith, Stephen Childs, Mike Medland, Mark Fournier, Rebecca Kennel, Audrey Whittall, Nan Judd, Cherie Miltimore and Marlena Turner, some of whom were board members, some committee members and some, residents of Victoria West, came together to consider the HOW? and WHO? A Summary of their thoughts follows:

**The purposes of the Society are to promote, facilitate, support or undertake any activity that will enhance the quality of life in the Victoria West community including, but not limited to, the following:**

**PURPOSE 1: to promote community awareness and pride, and encourage the participation of Victoria West residents in community projects, events, and the community association**

HOW do we do this? WHO is involved?

- Communication – newsletter, website, social media, bulletin. The general plan is good but we can do more eg Is the website calendar working as it should?
- Identity (branding) exercise needed. A community wide process to promote the VWCA with perhaps a competition to encourage participation and community building through a project that ‘flies the flag’ for the VWCA and promotes its visual identity. Perhaps a shirt contest or banners that are in use whenever the association is out in the community –eg at Sludge Forum, Esquimqilt involvement was very evident with their banner, but Vic West needs a similar visual presence.
- Growing Partnerships. More of what we already do well but need to do more of. Partnership possibilities with the school, the church, renters like Party Perfect which brings 20+ parents into the centre each weekend.
- Fleshing out the Committees. Personal invitations to people with the skills needed on the committees.
- More low tech – A phone tree is an effective way of getting word out. Do we use it?
- A membership analysis. What do we know about our members? Who are we serving? Who knows about us? Part of a membership drive.
- We need a Volunteer Coordinator.

**Purpose 2: to identify community needs and to consult with the appropriate municipal or other bodies to promote the development of services, programs, projects and events to meet the identified community needs:**

HOW do we do this? WHO do we involve?

## **Victoria West Community Association Purposes**

2

- Through surveys – on line, website, mail out and at events
- At meetings – we need to open a time at board meetings for members to speak to issues of concern or events etc
- Through placemaking activities where residents come out and are working together
- Through personal conversations at events, at the centre
- What can we do better? Need to be seen to be approachable. Consider how we consult. Need to actively seek out partnerships, be open to collaboration with other groups, look at other models.
- We need to follow up on potential volunteers who offer to help or sign up to volunteer, but who get overlooked in the process. We need a Volunteer coordinator.

**Purpose 3. to raise awareness of and provide information on issues that affect the community and its future, and to provide a forum for community members to raise issues of potential concern to the community**

HOW do we do this? WHO is involved?

Things we are good at and need to maintain:

- Communications to build awareness
- Keeping a finger on the pulse of issues; staying in touch with City Hall
- Being responsive in a timely manner.
- Making space available in the centre for public forums
- We have a formal process for who speaks publicly on behalf of the membership and board.

How could we do what we do well more or better?

- Take it to the people. Take the ‘community living room’ out of the community centre and into the neighbourhoods. – a ‘curbside open house’
- A neighbourhood’s interest and involvement depends on the issues. Songhee’s residents strongly supported the stand against the marina. Need for membership analysis – Songhees residents are generally older, many don’t come out in the evenings. Possible afternoon meetings for them?

**Purpose 4: To advocate for and facilitate participation by Victoria West residents with developers, government agencies and other bodies concerning neighbourhood plans, land use proposals, developments and public projects within Victoria West**

HOW do we do it? WHO is involved?

## Victoria West Community Association Purposes

3

- Largely land use issues. Dealt with by the Land Use Committee and the Community Associations Land Use Committees which are part of the municipal process for land development approval / permits. Process includes a public meeting held by the VWCA Land Use Committee and three other committees are involved. Very few people attend most of these meetings.
- Collaboration with other community associations is beneficial.

**PURPOSE 5. to plan, administer, operate and maintain the necessary organizational structures, facilities, and staff to achieve the purposes and functions of the association.**

HOW do we do this and WHO is involved?

- Community Centre Committee oversees centre operations. Project Committees or Collectives oversee their projects,
- We need to determine community needs as part of the planning process. EG Parks & Environment Committee. What need has the community identified?
- Some committees may be formed ‘because we have always had this committee’ But needs change and it is alright to change structures to meet changing needs.
- Projects and activities are primarily about community building – making connections amongst neighbours and families, building capacity and skills among participants.
- Different levels are in play. 1) Need to pay ongoing attention to the people who are involved. 2) Governance structures, by-laws and committees etc and 3) running the centre.

Purpose #5 is what is needed to carry out purposes #1 - 4.

- Acquiring responsibility for the centre has caused us to review and evaluate everything we do,
- We need to develop long term plans that are useful tool or maps to help us navigate. They must reflect the concepts held by the membership
- Need to celebrate values and achievements in a visual way – use the wall space of the centre to tell the association’s story
- Goal setting needs to be mapped out. Need to update and ‘personalize’ the 2010 strategic plan. Need to know what the membership expects from us.
- Need to address the issue of staff support for association projects, events and administration.

Human Resources: VW Community Centre staff support for association projects, events and administration (eg membership or communications)

## Victoria West Community Association Purposes

4

- Volunteer commitment has grown with the expansion of association responsibilities since acquiring for the community centre facility, its programming and operations.
- The association needs support from paid staff.
- “Staff are not here to provide support for projects”
- Currently, staff *do* provide support where possible and when requested, to both the centre and the association but roles and responsibilities of volunteers and staff need to be further articulated and understood by everyone.
- “Why can’t we go directly to staff when asking for support?”
- The process for something (\$ or staff support) that a committee or project needs is to take it to the committee who will refer it to the president, who will direct the staff. (Might this be a role for an Operations Committee?)
- Discussion on comparison between different Community Centres and staffing levels. It is difficult to compare community associations in Victoria because each structure is unique, but none receive adequate staffing dollars as part of their city grant. Social Services programs (which VWCa is not involved with ) provide the most staffing dollars.

●

Financial issues:

- VWCA needs to determine what they need money for and their level of comfort around fundraising. The association first needs charitable status.

Notes prepared by Anne Russo, Facilitator