



MINUTES OF A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, January 16, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Langley City Hall
20399 Douglas Crescent

Present: Mayor Pachal
Councillor Albrecht
Councillor James
Councillor Mack
Councillor Solyom
Councillor Wallace
Councillor White

Staff Present: F. Cheung, Chief Administrative Officer
R. Bomhof, Director of Engineering, Parks and Environment
K. Hilton, Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services
C. Johannsen, Director of Development Services
S. Kennedy, Fire Chief
D. Leite, Director of Corporate Services
G. Flack, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
K. Kenney, Corporate Officer
P. Kusack, Deputy Corporate Officer
B. Zeller, Manager of Human Resources

Mayor Pachal began by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Katzie, Kwantlen, Matsqui and Semiahmoo First Nations.

1. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the January 16, 2023 regular agenda be adopted as amended to add "Local Government management Association (LGMA)" as Item 4.c.

CARRIED

2. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

- a. Regular Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2022

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 12, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. **DELEGATIONS**

- a. Steve's Place - Low Barrier Homeless Shelter

Stewart Furness, provided information to Council on a proposed low barrier homeless shelter to be financed entirely by private individuals and churches in the community, providing information on the following:

- his wife and family moved to Langley 43 years ago to raise their four children;
- on July 25, 2022, their son Steven was one of the two individuals who died when four people were shot on the street in the Langleys;
- the majority of the homeless have mental health problems and all have some various health problems;
- according to a recent survey there are now 300 homeless people living in Langley; however, it is likely that some are living in their car, sofa surfing, or living at Gateway of Hope; his personal experience is that there are less than 100 people who are sleeping in tents and doorways in Langley City, which is the group that needs to be helped as soon as possible;
- although there are some problems Langley cannot fix as they are under provincial or federal jurisdiction; there are some things that are under municipal jurisdiction: Zoning and other City bylaws are creating obstacles to the changes that are needed;
- during the last six months he has spoken with many people who are trying to help the homeless and heard that bylaw enforcement officers have forced churches to put homeless people out on the street and that a local charity was fined \$800 for handing out sandwiches to homeless people in the casino parking lot;
- flexible zoning is needed to allow homeless people to have a hub during the daytime and where they can also sleep at nighttime;
- bylaw enforcement officers need to be instructed to use common sense when dealing with housing societies, churches, and homeless people;

- City bylaws should not impede these homeless people from getting off the street so that social services can help them;
- There are two commonly held myths about the homeless problem

Myth #1:

- the homeless in Langley came from some other place.
 - In his experience most of the homeless grew up in Langley, which was confirmed in a conversation he had with an RCMP constable who patrols the downtown area

Myth #2:

- the Gateway of Hope has everything under control and we don't need to do anymore.
 - Although Gateway staff are doing their best in a very difficult situation, Gateway of Hope does not have everything under control as the shelter is at full capacity and not able to move people to permanent housing due to the rental situation and also because there is a clash of cultures between the homeless population and the rules which gateway has in place, resulting in most of the homeless not returning to the Gateway of Hope after they are rejected and so end up living on the street;
 - Rents remain high and the BC shelter allowance hasn't been increased over time which is causing a bottleneck which stops Gateway of Hope from helping new people;
- new low barrier shelter space is needed in Langley in order to help those people who will not go to Gateway of Hope;
- the shelter space doesn't need to be a hotel or an apartment; it can be property which is currently commercial or retail; however, zoning changes would be needed to permit this type of use;
- In his opinion, in the grand scheme of things, with only 100 homeless, Langley's homeless problem is very small; however, even 100 people living on the street is too many;
- the community services hub under consideration will take years to complete; the unsheltered homeless need help right away;
- he urged Council to immediately consider renting a space to be used as a stopgap measure; which could double as a warming center and could also be used in case of an unexpected local emergency;
- if Langley City could arrange such a building, housing groups would take care of everything else.

- It is his understanding that only Langley City can provide this option as the City's bylaws prevent individuals from renting a warehouse and inviting people to sleep in it.

In response to a question from a Council member, Mr. Furness advised that he does not currently have the financing for the proposed shelter as it takes at least six months to start a charity and he needs to provide a business plan and mission statement; also he cannot rent a warehouse and allow people to sleep in it which is why he needs Langley City to take a leadership role in this regard.

He further advised that it was his understanding that, during the COVID pandemic, when the homeless were housed in hotels, calls to police went down by a considerable margin (80%).

b. Proposed Closure of Sections of Fraser Highway One-Way During Construction

David Stingl spoke regarding the Fraser Highway traffic & parking study and the construction timeline with respect to closing the one-way on Fraser Highway. He presented a petition signed by 15 business owners on the Fraser Highway one-way and read out the petition:

"We, the undersigned, are business owners/managers of retail businesses on the one-way section of Fraser Hwy. in historic downtown Langley. We are deeply concerned about the Langley City Council's current plans to push forward on the "revitalization" of the downtown core. For the following reasons please consider delaying the project until the following issues can be addressed.

1. The current plan is based on studies conducted in 2018. The last time business owners were consulted or asked for input was the DLBA AGM in early 2019.
2. We have just (barely) survived a worldwide pandemic and are now staring down the barrel of a looming economic recession. Much has changed including the traffic patterns / parking issues the earlier studies are based on.
3. There is major Development planned for the area which may render much of the planned work redundant and unnecessary. This includes, but is not limited to, the planned permanent removal of many parking spaces.
4. The current plan will drastically cripple most of the downtown retail businesses financially."

Mayor Pachal clarified that this construction project was not going to be happening this year or imminently despite some information that has been circulating amongst business owners on the on-way. Consultation with affected business owners will be undertaken before proceeding with this project so that business owners can provide input and get their questions answered. If the City were to move forward with this project, the earliest it would happen would be sometime in 2024 as there is much work to be done to prepare for such a project.

Mr. Stingl noted that the names on the petition were gathered today during a two-hour period so do not represent the full extent of the number of concerned business owners. Many business owners thought the revitalization project planned for the one-way was not proceeding as they hadn't heard anything about it for some time until they received a letter in November from the Downtown Langley Business Association advising that Council would be considering this project in their upcoming budget deliberations.

In response to questions about details of the project, Mr. Bomhof, Director of Engineering, Parks and Environment advised that:

- until the budget for this project is approved and part of the Department's capital budget, it would be too early to have those types of discussions;
- with respect to whether the construction could be phased, staff would need to retain experts in the construction field to advise what is possible in terms of phasing the project in order to maintain access to the business so that the one-way is not shut down for the duration of the project.

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Upcoming Meetings

Regular Council Meeting – January 30, 2023
Regular Council Meeting – February 13, 2023

b. Council Advisory Bodies Update

Mayor Pachal advised that in accordance with the City's Advisory Bodies Policy, the public and Council as a whole are to be kept informed of the activities of the various advisory bodies Council members sit on. To this end, minutes of City committees that Council members sit on are made available to the public and all of Council for information; however, there are other advisory bodies that Council members sit on as Council representatives for which minutes of the meetings are not taken. Accordingly, the purpose of this new standing item on the agenda is to provide an opportunity for Council members to verbally update Council

and the public on any significant activities of these advisory bodies that they sit on as Council Representatives.

- c. Local Government Management Association (LGMA) – Mayor Pachal
Mayor Pachal read a letter received from the Executive Director of the LGMA acknowledging the contributions of Kelly Kenney, Corporate Officer as a volunteer committee member on the LGMA's FOI and Records Management Committee over the past three years.

5. **BYLAWS**

- a. Bylaw 3231 - Records Management Bylaw

First, second and third reading of a bylaw to establish the City's records management system and to designate and authorize a City of Langley Officer to act on behalf of the City to manage and maintain the records management system

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the bylaw cited as "Records Management Bylaw, 2023, No. 3231" be read a first, second and third time.

CARRIED

6. **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

- a. Out of Province Travel Request - Assistant Fire Chief

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Assistant Fire Chief Chris Miley be authorized to attend the 2023, Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) in Indianapolis, Indiana from April 24, to April 29, 2023.

CARRIED

- b. Regional Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and Corporate Officer are authorized to sign the new Regional Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement.

CARRIED

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Motions/Notices of Motion

1. Additional suppression firefighters in each annual budget from 2023-2026 - Councillor Solyom

Councillor Solyom provided background on his proposed motion which was included in the agenda

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Staff include at least two full-time suppression firefighters in the 2023 budget, at least three full-time suppression firefighters in the 2024 budget, at least two full-time suppression firefighters in the 2025 budget, and at least two full-time suppression firefighters in the 2026 budget for Council to consider.

BEFORE THE QUESTION WAS CALLED Council discussion ensued with Council members providing their perspectives on the merits of the motion.

In response to a question from a Council member, Mr. Kennedy, Fire Chief advised that he could certainly provide the Fire Department's current overtime costs for information as requested; however, there are other factors besides coverage that contribute to these overtime costs.

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED and the motion was

CARRIED

b. Correspondence

c. New Business

8. ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the meeting adjourn at 7:43 pm.

CARRIED

Signed:

MAYOR

Certified Correct:

CORPORATE OFFICER