

West Southlands Residents Association

September 13, 2022 Annual Meeting Notes

Linda Jinks, WSRA Board co-chair, welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting.

Update on **Flood Control**

- Jeannie Lee, City of Vancouver Flood Management Engineer, Sewer & Drainage Design, Engineering Services (accompanied by Bruce Todd, Superintendent of Maintenance, Sewer Operations; and Nav Sharma, Flood Management Engineer) made a short presentation outlining what happened last November, the current situation, and some plans:
 - Much of West Southlands is in the Fraser River flood plain.
 - The **drainage system meant to handle rainfall in the area** include ditches, storm sewers, and catch basins connected to the storm sewers. The storm sewers outfall to the Fraser River at the bottom of Dunbar (through Point Grey Golf Course) and the ditch along the Wallace Street trail. To prevent back flow from the river into the neighbourhood storm drainage system, there are tide gates that close the outfalls at high tide.
 - **During the November 13-15, 2022 atmospheric river**, Vancouver had 150 mm of rainfall in 48 hours. This occurred after 2 weeks of consistent rainfall that had saturated the ground and raised ditch water levels. The rain flowed downhill causing ponding along Dunbar, and from Musqueam Creek into the Park, which then overflowed across the West 48th Avenue path through the forest onto 49th Avenue, then to 50th. On November 15th, there was both a King tide and a 0.5-m storm surge which combined to shut the Dunbar and Wallace tide gates preventing the storm water drainage system from emptying into the River. A storm surge results from storm winds and raises water levels higher than normal tide levels, so the resulting water level in the river was higher and lasted longer than the typical high tide, keeping the tide gates closed for longer than would otherwise have been the case.
 - **Work since the floods** has included on-going inspection, repair, and monitoring of the drainage systems. This has included cleaning the ditches; repairing broken pipes and tide gates; and cleaning catch basins. Repairs to the Dunbar outfall should be done this fall or in 2023.
 - **The City is investigating other possibilities**, including storm sewer upgrades, increasing ditch sizes, relocating or enclosing the Wallace Street ditch, rain gardens around catch basins, regrading roads so slopes reduce flood risk, and portable pumps at the storm sewer outfalls to empty overland flooding when high river levels close the tide gates.
 - Jeannie encouraged everyone to monitor the drainage systems along our streets (e.g., blocked catch basins, overflowing ditches, blown man hole covers) and **report issues via phoning 311 or using the Van 311 app**.
- There were many **questions and comments from the audience**. There were two general sentiments: worry and frustration that not enough was being done to prevent a recurrence of last year's flooding; and gratitude to City staff for the work that is being done. There were some specific items queried and commented on:

- Questions about the **May 2022 overland flooding on Dunbar** after a severe thunderstorm. City staff said that kind of flash flooding is difficult to accommodate without greatly increasing the size of storm sewers. It may become more frequent with climate change (up to now this occurred less than every 50 years), requiring solutions.
- Question about the work being done on the Wallace ditch between 50th and 48th. This is a joint City-Musqueam project to restore land to the Musqueam that has been eroded over time by ditch encroachment to the west.
- Residents were especially interested in having **permanent automated pump stations** installed at the two storm drainage outfalls.
- Residents wanted to know if they can get **sand bags from the City** to prepare for storm flooding. The answer was yes, we can get loads of sand and bags, and may be able to get filled sand bags. To do so, we should use the 311 system. (*Post-meeting note: Canadian Tire, Home Hardware, and Lowes stock sandbags.*)

Administrative items

- **Minutes of the 2021 meeting** were distributed. Their approval was moved by Linda Jinks, seconded by Fred Wallace.
- The **treasurer's report** was given orally by Robert Matas. Briefly, we currently have \$754 in the bank, after spending slightly more than we took in last year. Our funding comes from \$20 membership fees, and is spent on costs associated with the annual meeting, printing notices distributed by hand to WSRA's approximately 300 households, the website, and registration of the association. Report approval was moved by Linda Jinks, seconded by Jeff Watchorn.
- Linda indicated that the WSRA currently has 5 **board directors** (Linda Jinks, Mary Tataryn, Robert Matas, Troy Iwanik, Kay Teschke) and was seeking 2 to 3 more. Cynthia Fung and Isla volunteered to join the board. The election of existing and new Board members was moved by Linda Jinks, seconded by Val Reed and John Joffe, respectively, and approved by attendees. *Post-meeting note: Unfortunately we discovered after the meeting that directors must be at least 18 years old, precluding Isla's kind volunteering.*
- After a call at last year's meeting, our **website "wsouthlands.org"** was created by Keiko Honda and Robert Matas. Thank you both! Pages of particular interest may be:
 - Neighbourhood News – with newsletters and other new bits of info
 - City / Region Info & Reports – with contact info for the city and other regional organizations

Neighbourhood news

- Robert Matas reported on the **Iona Sewage Treatment Plant** (south side of the River) which is being upgraded to **tertiary treatment**. Wharves will be built on the south shore of the Fraser to accommodate barges needed for the project. There may be noise from pile driving. They are drilling holes in the Fraser River in October as part of their work on seismic modelling and project design. The date for construction will be in 2023 or later. There will be an opportunity for feedback, possibly in the spring.
 - A resident asked about recent **noise in the middle of the night** and whether it might be from this project. The MetroVancouver contact number is 604-432-6200. It might also be airport run-up noise. Airport noise issues can be reported via 604-207-7097 or noise@yvr.ca

- Linda reported on odours coming from the Air Management Building for the **Highbury Interceptor** at the west side of Musqueam Park. The filters were meant to be changed every 6 months but hadn't been changed for 18 months. They have now been changed and this has reduced the odours – though perhaps not completely. There is an odour-reporting system via **smell-Vancouver.ca**
- Linda talked about how the **beautiful new little library** (built and installed by her husband Barry Jinks at the bottom of Olympic St) has attracted lots of users. A big success. She welcomes more children's books and more doggie bags.
- Mary reported that she has approached the Parks Board about installing a **children's playground in Musqueam Park**. It would take about 2 years of work to get the go ahead, so she wanted to confirm that residents would approve. Meeting attendees supported this idea. She is hoping the playground will include Musqueam art work.