



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

A vibrant, compassionate, sustainable city that includes everyone.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Monday, December 12, 2022

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance

Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT:

Mayor Patrick Johnstone
Councillor Ruby Campbell
Councillor Daniel Fontaine
Councillor Tasha Henderson
Councillor Paul Minhas
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

ABSENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Lisa Spitale	Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Jacque Killawee	City Clerk
Mr. Rod Carle*	General Manager, Electrical Utility
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services
Ms. Renee Chadwick	Manager, Special Projects and Community Partnerships
Mr. Blair Fryer*	Manager, Communications and Economic Development
Ms. Serena Trachta*	Manager, Inspections, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Mr. Mike Anderson	Manager of Transportation
Mr. John Stark	Supervisor of Community Services
Ms. Harji Varn	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance
Mr. Brad Davie	Assistant Deputy Fire Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Ms. Jen Arbo	Economic Development Coordinator
Ms. Carilyn Cook	Acting Assistant City Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Mayor Johnstone opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council add the following items as New Business to the agenda:

- 8.1 Construction Noise Bylaw Exemption Request: Front Street from Tenth Street to McBride Boulevard - Metro Vancouver Sewer Inspection
- 8.2 Release of the Electrical Utility Billing Credit Motion from Closed

THAT Council receive the December 12, 2022 On-table email and letter from the Uptown Business Association as related to Item 3.2 Feedback from Businesses about Sixth Street Bike Lanes.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

3. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that the two reports titled, “Downtown Livability – Public Realm Improvements and Activation” and “Downtown Livability Strategy – Update and Next Steps” have been combined into one presentation. She noted that as they were circulated separately, community members and Council may not have had sufficient time to review them.

In response to questions from Council, Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering, Harji Varn, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance, and Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator, provided the following information:

- The estimated \$650k cost of the permanent free-standing public toilet includes the unit itself, installation and connection with city water and electrical services, and project management costs;
- An additional staff member will be hired to monitor the free-standing toilet in Hyack Square on an ongoing basis, while also supporting increased services at other public washrooms throughout the City;
- There is a service enhancement in the budget to account for the additional cost associated with servicing the unit;
- Regarding the public toilet being in close proximity to the Wait for Me Daddy memorial sculpture at Hyack Square, staff consulted those with lived and living experience in the community, some of which may have military background; and,
- Out of five locations considered for the washroom, some had accessibility issues that may result in increased costs or be used less. As such, Hyack Square was determined to be the most appropriate site as it is a serviceable location in terms of water and sewer, is a city-owned property, and will benefit all downtown users.

In discussion, Council members thanked staff for the comprehensive presentation and noted:

- It is concerning that these initiatives are provincial responsibilities that the city is stepping up to do when the province has a surplus of funds and the city is using limited funds. Given this, it is important for Council to ensure that the city receives Federal and Provincial funds to assist with these initiatives;
- It is hoped that MLA and Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, will be a strong advocate to bring some government funds into New Westminster;
- The work around the public washroom should be celebrated as it will provide dignified facilities for all;
- The challenges are daunting and it is nice to see all of the City's departments working together;
- The breakdown of spending is good to see and the City will continue to advocate for funding from the Provincial and Federal Governments to assist with this work; and,
- Provision of toilet facilities in the public realm is a conversation that many cities are having.

3.1 Downtown Livability

a. Downtown Livability - Public Realm Improvements and Activation (Circulated Separately)

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council approve the next steps as outlined in the staff report of December 12, 2022 entitled Downtown Livability - Public Realm Improvements and Activation.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

b. Downtown Livability Strategy – Update and Next Steps (Circulated Separately)

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT staff be directed to submit service enhancement requests for the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy;

THAT staff be directed to seek Provincial funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy; and

THAT staff be directed to seek Federal funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

c. Presentation (On Table) (See above)

Procedural note: Agenda Item 5 – Opportunity for the Public to Speak to Council was addressed at this time. The minutes are recorded in numerical order.

3.2 Feedback from Businesses about Sixth Street Bike Lanes (Circulated Separately)

An informational report on the Council direction and engagement processes leading to the construction of protected cycling lanes along Sixth Street between the Rotary Crosstown Greenway on Seventh Avenue and the east entrance of New Westminster Secondary School north of Eighth Avenue,

and to report back on further business engagement requested by Council on November 28, 2022.

Mike Anderson, Manager, Transportation, provided an overview of the December 12, 2022 report titled, "Feedback from Businesses about Sixth Street Bike Lanes."

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Anderson provided the following comments:

- Staff were directed to implement an interim bike lane with attention to maintaining bus access to the bus stops;
- The barriers on the pavement can be easily be removed and are less expensive than removing those at the bus stops;
- In response to questions about business traffic, no businesses reported an increase in business and many were effectively neutral with respect to those questions; and,
- Measures suggested by business representatives to mitigate the impacts of the bike lanes include reduced parking rates, improving accessibility for seniors, additional police patrols, improved lighting, directional signage to off-street parking, addition of parking elsewhere, and modification of off-street (private) parking lots.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- Although temporary, the bike lanes look permanent;
- Messaging around temporary versus permanent installations must be very clear for future projects;
- This has always been about engagement and a lot of the mitigation suggestions provided were given during the initial engagement processes;
- It must be noted that the bike lanes are not complete yet;
- Missing from the engagement process are those that are excited to see these bike lanes such as the kids who are looking forward to riding their bikes to school;
- Assessment of the impacts of initiatives such as this on businesses must be done properly and early. It is important to look into this more;
- Implementation of the bike lane was driven by policy and by community members and youth from New Westminster Secondary

School coming to Council and going to the Youth Advisory Committee and the ACTBiPed Committee asking for the City to provide this safe cycling infrastructure for students;

- Various options were considered including Fifth Avenue; however, it was not preferred for technical reasons nor was it the preferred route for the user group or for broader community use; and,
- This has been a fulsome discussion within the City over many years and there is no record of active transportation improvements damaging commercial areas in the long term; however, there is evidence from other cities that it provides upturns for businesses.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council receive the report titled Feedback from Businesses about Sixth Street Bike Lanes on the December 12, 2022 agenda for information; and,

THAT Council direct staff to consider potential measures to mitigate business and public concerns and to report back with recommendations for Council's consideration; and,

THAT Council direct staff to include other municipalities' mitigation actions related to similar activities in the report back.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

If Council decides, all the recommendations in the reports on the Consent Agenda can be approved in one motion, without discussion. If Council wishes to discuss a report, that report is removed from the Consent Agenda. A report may be removed in order to discuss it, because someone wants to vote against the report's recommendation, or because someone has a conflict of interest with the report. Any reports not removed from the Consent Agenda are passed without discussion.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council adopt the recommendations for items 4.1 and 4.6 on consent.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.1 Amendments to the Community Heritage Commission Bylaw No. 6423, 1997

This report recommends membership changes and miscellaneous updates to Community Heritage Commission Bylaw No. 6423, 1997.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council consider Bylaw No. 8372, 2022, set out in Attachment 1 of the report titled Amendments to the Community Heritage Commission Bylaw No. 6423, 1997 on the agenda of December 12, 2022, for three readings.

Adopted on Consent.

4.2 Budget 2023: Engineering and Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw Report

To request Council give three readings to the attached Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022 and the attached Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022.

In response to questions from Council, Harji Varn, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance, advised that the amounts of 2.8 percent and 7 percent with respect to utility rates were not included in the previous report in dollars; however, staff will ensure that they are in the next report.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- Financial impacts were included in the previous report and this report speaks only to the empowering bylaw not to the fuller discussion;
- BC Hydro credits of \$100 for individuals and \$500 for businesses are being provided by the Ministry of Energy and Mines;
- The City will be providing the \$100 credits to residences and \$500 credits to businesses;
- The Province has frozen BC Hydro rates and Council should be doing the same to help residents with inflation;
- The City has approximately \$30M in the Climate Action Reserve Fund and a 3.5 percent climate tax for utility rate payers which should be halted to provide some relief to taxpayers;
- Halting the Climate Action Levy will not impact the utility as the funds are to be put into the reserve fund;

- While it is understood that some people are struggling we need to keep moving forward and building sustainability for future generations and not just consider our current situation. This Levy is one way to help with that;
- We have limited opportunities to build reserves for larger scale projects within the City, especially for climate action;
- The City must be more incisive and provide assistance to those that actually need relief from utility costs;
- As previously requested, Council would like to receive a report back from Finance staff on opportunities for targeted relief on utility costs;
- The costs of the climate crisis will be astronomical and if the City does not start building reserves, we will have to raise emergency funds for things such as flooding, etc.;
- The City is currently going through an asset management plan and our reserves are currently insufficient to cover the value of our infrastructure. Taking up to \$2M out of a reserve fund for a one-time cost savings is how a city would get into an infrastructure deficit; and,
- Council needs to have a discussion about the City's reserves and about how we assure affordability in the City.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT That the 3.5 percent Climate Action Levy on New Westminster utilities ratepayers be temporarily suspended in 2023 as a means of providing inflation relief to New Westminster residents and businesses.

Defeated.

Mayor Johnstone and Councillors Campbell, Henderson, and Nakagawa opposed.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council give three readings to the attached Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022; and

THAT Council give three readings to the attached Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

4.3 Child Care and Community Uses on School Sites

To update Council regarding school capacity and child care needs in the community, and the potential loss of Neighbourhood Learning Centre spaces, including two purpose-built child cares, on school sites in and on the periphery of the Downtown.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to send a letter from Mayor and Council to the Minister of Education and Child Care and the Minister of Housing, outlining the need for additional senior government support to address short- and long-term school capacity and child care needs in New Westminster; and

THAT Council recommend that the ministries work in partnership to addressing the critical shortage of childcare spaces in the Downtown and throughout New Westminster.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.4 Efficiencies – Processes and Council Meetings

This report provides Council with recommendations aimed at creating organizational efficiencies.

In response to questions from Council, Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, and Jacque Killawee, City Clerk, provided the following comments:

- Committee of the Whole (CW) meetings would be held in the same way that Council workshops are held in the afternoon and open to public attendance;
- Evening meetings can run very long and it may seem that Council is rushing through weighty issues whereas in the afternoon there is more time for Council deliberation; and,
- CW recommendations would go to the next Council meeting primarily for adoption as Council would have already deliberated on the items.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- In order to allow more time for feedback this could be moved to a future Council meeting and be discussed during the strategic planning sessions;

- It would be up to Council to ensure that conversations from CW meetings are not rehashed during regular Council meetings;
- One of the advantages of returning to CW meetings would be not having staff required to attend meetings late at night; and,
- The CW meetings would include full Council and be subject based.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council recommends that re-introducing the Committee of the Whole Council meeting and creation of a new Standing Committee of Council on Development be postponed until after Strategic Planning; and,

THAT Council directs staff to proceed with reporting back on enhancing the Preliminary Application Review (PAR) stage, creating a policy for streamlining the Voluntary Amenity Contribution (VACs) process for small projects, and information-only staff reports to Council listed on the City's website as document in the report titled Efficiencies – Processes and Council Meetings on the December 12, 2022 agenda; and,

THAT Amendment of the Delegation Bylaw to include administering the Noise Bylaw for private development and civic projects come back to Council for further discussion.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.5 Staffing Challenges Update

To update Council regarding the City's staffing and service delivery challenges.

In discussion Council noted the drastic shortages in staffing, possibly with people being on leave for a variety of reasons, and that it is important for the community to hear about these challenges, consider holistic workloads, etc., and keep these challenges in mind when discussing various projects.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council directs that the Senior Management Team report back on a comprehensive staff recruitment and retention strategy for Council's consideration.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.6 Proclamation - International Migrants Day, December 18, 2022

Adopted on Consent.

5. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK TO COUNCIL – 7:00 PM

Chelsea Watt, President of the Board of Directors of the New West Farmer's Market, thanked the City for the support that it has provided through 2022. She advised that during 2022 the Market had approximately 73 vendors which was significantly higher than during the height of the pandemic when there were only 19 vendors. Ms. Watt shared that the growth of the Market is important to support the cost of running it She again thanked the City for the ongoing support over the years and stated that they are excited to work with the City again next year.

Amalia Fowler, recounted that when she required emergency medical services in November, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services (NWFRS) were the first on scene but did not have a pulse oximeter reader nor access to epinephrine nor epi pens which are very important items for medical calls. Ms. Fowler stated that in her extensive experiences with first responders, NWFRS is the first fire department that she has encountered that did not have a pulse oximeter reader. Ms. Fowler questioned why NWFRS are less equipped than other fire departments and requested that Council review the NWFRS budget so that these medical items can be purchased.

In response to Ms. Fowler's request, Brad Davie, Assistant Deputy Fire Chief, advised that this is a licensing and training issue and that delays in ambulance services put more of an onus on fire departments to attend medical emergencies. He shared that the Department will be requesting a budget enhancement for the upcoming budget in order to bring crews up to the Emergency Medical Responder level which would include having a pulse oximeter reader and epinephrine injections available.

Tammy Dewar, mother, small business owner, and supporter of the Active Transportation Network, advised that her family considered getting a new car; however, EVO car share became available and transit provide better access across zones. She asked that Council continue to support the All Ages and Abilities Active Transportation Network infrastructure.

Ken Armstrong, Queensborough resident, noted that after the last snow event, it is evident that there are areas in the City that need improvement with respect to snowfall response. Mr. Armstrong advised that more active transportation into and

out of Queensborough, such as a light rapid transit line, bike routes, etc., should be pursued, acknowledging that we will not be car-free for a long time and many in Queensborough will still need to rely on their cars to get anywhere.

In response to questions from Council, Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering, provided the following comments:

- Staff will contact the operator of the Q to Q Ferry to determine the feasibility of running the Ferry during snow events and report back to Council; and,
- Staff have pursued the possibility of Compass card use on the Ferry with TransLink to no avail.

Mayor Johnstone encouraged Mr. Armstrong to participate in Queensborough Transportation Plan engagement.

John Kendler, resident, shared a PowerPoint presentation that outlined residential recycling collection in New Westminster and noted his concerns around the capital and operating costs of glass collection as well as the issue of contaminated glass. Mr. Kendler urged the City to not move forward with multi-family glass collection, end single family glass collection, and transition to Recycle BC collection.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- That staff bring this issue back to Council for a more fulsome discussion;
- Need for clarity on what the subsidy is and what the City would be receiving; and,
- This does not seem to be an appropriate item to be addressed during the Strategic Planning process.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council, as part of the Strategic Plan, the opportunity to transfer the City's recycling program to Recycle BC.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

Larry Church, resident, shared:

- The results of a non-rainy day survey that showed not many students are biking;
- That the sidewalks do not meet the guidelines for accessibility, noting that the Master Transportation Plan classifies Sixth Street as a great street, therefore the sidewalks should be 3 metres wide as opposed to the current 1.5 meters; and,
- That the bike lanes are not being used as planned with bike use only for 175 days per year, not 190 days per year, and that they negatively impact the bus stops for seniors that live in the area.

Regarding the Royal City moniker, Mr. Church stated that the decision should not have been made without community input and requested that the Mayor bring the motion back for reconsideration.

Jens Vent-Schmidt, resident, shared of his fondness for small and local businesses which are now struggling due to online shopping, the pandemic, inflation, etc. He shared that when shopping locally, he usually bikes, noting that the city needs more accessible bike routes and bike parking to help support local spending. Mr. Vent-Schmidt shared his support of the All Ages and Abilities Bike Network and also suggested that the City implement more car-free days and have no-vehicle areas.

Rick Folka, New West Progressives, questioned why Council did not use the \$26M received from the sale of climate credits for the Queensborough substation to save the city from borrowing \$25M. In comparing a BC Hydro charge for a residence in Burnaby against his rate in New Westminster, Mr. Folka noted that the electrical rate for Burnaby was 0.09 per kilowatt hour whereas New Westminster's was 0.1182 per kilowatt hour, over 30 percent greater. He shared that New Westminster has a climate action levy and Burnaby does not, and that it appears that the city is "double dipping." Mr. Folka advised that other utility rates will increase later this evening and that his income will not increase to meet the rise in rates and that many residents will be unable to meet these increases.

In response to questions from Council, Harji Varn, Chief Finance Officer and Director of Finance, shared the following comments:

- The Climate Action Reserve Fund has \$26M and the Climate Action Levy is about \$4.5M; and,

- The climate levy of 3.5 percent will collect \$1.869M next year.

Victor Pauls, Sapperton resident, shared that as a previous 51-year resident of Richmond, he became accustomed to noise pollution; however, as a current resident of Sapperton he notes that residents there are desperate for relief from the train whistles. He advised that upon first purchasing their home, they did not realize the extent of the train noise and stated that there are noise bylaws for businesses, construction sites, etc., but none for trains. Mr. Pauls requested that the City make whistle cessation in the Sapperton area a priority and offered to create a community advisory panel to assist with whistle cessation.

David Brett, resident, shared his past and present as an organizer of events such as May Day and the Hyack Festival, noting that he is currently the Director of Indigenous Engagement for May Day. He shared his concern that the City's recent policies may undo some of the reconciliation work is done, specifically that the City is alienating the Qayqayt First Nation by not formally acknowledging them in the land acknowledgement. Mr. Brett advised that there is an opportunity for the new Council to re-think what the City is doing with respect to First Nations engagement.

Mayor Johnstone clarified that the City was adding six nations to the list of 10 nations that have already been consulted with and that the Qayqayt First Nation would have been one of the original nations consulted and therefore already on the list.

Procedural note: At this point in the meeting, Council resumed addressing agenda items in regular order. The minutes are recorded in numerical order.

6. **BYLAWS**

6.1 **Bylaws for readings**

- a. **Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022, be given First Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022, be given Second Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Engineering User Fees and Rates Amendment Bylaw No. 8377, 2022, be given Third Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

b. Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022, be given First Reading.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022, be given Second Reading.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Electrical Utility Amendment Bylaw No. 8378, 2022, be given Third Reading.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

**c. New Westminster Community Heritage Commission
Amendment Bylaw No. 8372, 2022**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT New Westminster Community Heritage Commission
Amendment Bylaw No. 8372, 2022, be given First Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT New Westminster Community Heritage Commission
Amendment Bylaw No. 8372, 2022, be given Second Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT New Westminster Community Heritage Commission
Amendment Bylaw No. 8372, 2022, be given Third Reading.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

6.2 Bylaws for adoption

**a. Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Amendment Bylaw No. 8370,
2022**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Amendment Bylaw No.
8370, 2022, be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

Procedural note: All members of Council agreed to take a break from 9:17 p.m. to 9:35 p.m.

7. MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

7.1 Motions for Discussion and Decision

a. Halting the Phase-out of the Royal City Moniker

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine introduced the motion advising that he brings it to Council in the spirit of rectifying the issues the motion has created coming from Mayor Cote without notice. Mayor Cote noted the importance of removing the moniker as part of reconciliation; however, local Indigenous peoples were not consulted. Councillor Fontaine noted that motion was an issue that came up often during the recent municipal election campaign and, if the moniker is dropped by the City, businesses that use the Royal City moniker may be looked upon poorly.

In response to questions from Council, Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications and Economic Development, provided the following comments:

- The “Royal City” moniker has not been used by the City since 2009 and it is not used now in any social media communications; and,
- The work plan coming out of the July 2022 motion was around the use of the crown logo. Staff understand that they have been assigned to phase out the crown logo after public consultation and report back to Council in 2023 with all the steps, etc., that would be required to do so.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The original motion directs staff to engage with the community with a new brand identity;
- The new motion does not give direction to staff that they have not already been given;
- The motion is asking Council to take the position that we are not halting the moniker and if we did, consultation would take place first; and,
- If the City has not used the moniker since 2009, then nothing will change from the status quo without robust public consultation.

Mayor Johnstone advised that Councillor Fontaine's motion to be out of order as it does not provide direction to staff. Councillor Fontaine challenged the Mayor's decision noting that Council is making the same mistake again this evening, and that the point of the motion is to stop unnecessary work by staff.

WHEREAS there has been widespread concern from New Westminister citizens and business-owners regarding Council's decision to phase-out the Royal City moniker; and

WHEREAS unlike any other city in Province of BC, the City of New Westminister has the unique distinction and opportunity to market itself as the "Royal City" and;

WHEREAS many citizens and local business owners have openly stated they believe there was not adequate consultation with Indigenous people, residents and business owners prior to the previous Council's decision to phase-out the Royal City moniker; and

WHEREAS the City has limited resources and tax and utility rates have been going up over the last four years at a rate much higher than inflation; and

WHEREAS the final cost related to phasing out the Royal City moniker and rebranding has yet to be determined but is estimated to be significant; and

WHEREAS there is a shortage of staff at the city and our human resource capacity should be focused on the delivery of essential programs and services

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of New Westminister halt the phasing out of the 'Royal City' moniker in our branding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT no future change to the branding shall be undertaken without due notice and proper consultation with our residents, businesses and Indigenous people.

The Chair, Mayor Johnstone, ruled that the motion was out of order as it does not provide new direction to staff.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the ruling of the Chair, Mayor Johnstone, with respect to the above motions being out of order, be sustained.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

b. Elimination of Train Whistle Noise and Supporting Increased Livability

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine introduced the motion stating that he had spoken with a previous city Councillor, Chuck Puchmayr, who encouraged him to bring the motion forward in effort to hasten the cessation of train whistles. Councillor Fontaine shared that since train whistles ceased in his neighbourhood he can now sleep at night when many cannot, and noted that this issue is about community livability and not being subject to up to 8 train whistle blows in any given night.

In response to questions from Council, Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering, provided the following comments:

- The City does not need approval from the Federal Minister of Transportation or any other political body outside of Council stating through a resolution that they want whistle cessation at a particular location;
- There is value in having a technical advisory committee and have all railways come together to address whistle cessation. From a technical, procedural, etc., point of view there is no need for an elected official to sit on such a committee; and,
- We would require agreements with the individual rail companies to seek agreement on the technical issues to provide safety implements in order for them to cease whistles at specific crossings.

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that it would be valuable for Engineering Staff to hold a workshop for Council to share all of the work that is and has been done with respect to whistle cessation as Council

needs to be made aware of the complexities of this issue, especially in Queensborough.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The concern is understandable and this is an important issue; however, whistles are necessary for public safety;
- This motion speaks to cessation at all crossings in the City before 2026, although we don't know if that is possible with respect to the budget or if it can be done at all crossings;
- A more robust report on whistle cessation would be helpful. The public must receive the same updates on this issue that Council does and the community should know that this is a priority;
- As there are technical challenges and two regulatory bodies that need to be addressed, along with the budget aspect, we may not be able to commit to doing this by 2026;
- This should be revisited after the strategic planning sessions;
- This should not be delayed until after the strategic planning session as people are counting on us to move quickly on this issue;
- The City needs to be clear as to what the role of public engagement would be in this process, and it is not clear what role a committee of community members would have in this process; and,
- Although not mentioned in the motion, Council should be informed of all grants available from the Ministry of Transportation.

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS an important role for any city government is to ensure the livability of its residents; and

WHEREAS citizens who live in high density living are helping to reduce the city's carbon footprint and as such are helping to tackle climate change; and

WHEREAS train whistle noise has severely impacted the quality of life for residents in both Sapperton and Queensborough; and

WHEREAS the former Railway Community Advisory Panel was disbanded notwithstanding the fact it was credited with helping to advance the elimination of train whistle noise; and

WHEREAS a significant number of residents in the affected neighbourhoods indicated during the recent civic election they do not believe enough has been done to eliminate train whistle noise; and

WHEREAS the current Mayor and Council have the ability to strongly advocate to senior orders of government to assist with infrastructure costs and policy changes related to upgrading train crossings

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council recommends that the discussion to re-establish the Railway Community Advisory Committee be postponed for discussion during Strategic Planning.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council directs staff to provide quarterly updates to City Council and the public regarding progress made to eliminate unnecessary train whistles; and

THAT Council direct staff to ensure that the website containing critical information regarding whistle cessation is updated with the latest information.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the following motions be referred to staff for a report back:

THAT that the City of New Westminster establishes a target of eliminating all unnecessary train whistles which are negatively impacting the quality of life for thousands of Sapperton and Queensborough residents by no later than 2026; and

THAT that City Council draft a letter to the Federal Minister of Transportation advising that we wish to accelerate negotiations with

the Federal Government to get their support and assistance with whistle cessation in our neighbourhoods; and

THAT Council direct staff to report back on the capital costs related to the infrastructure upgrade to the Sapperton and Queensborough train crossings and if we are eligible, to apply for provincial or federal infrastructure funding to lower the tax burden on city ratepayers.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Procedural note: All members of Council agreed to extend the meeting to 11:00 p.m.

c. Reducing Crime and Increasing Public Safety in New Westminster

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine introduced the motion and stated that we hear over and over that public safety needs to be addressed and this advisory committee would provide suggestions to Council on how to address crime, etc., to increase public safety.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- It is imperative to let the important work that is already underway (i.e. the Downtown Livability Plan) get completed and to not duplicate committees for things that are already being addressed such as through the Downtown Livability Plan and the Police Board;
- This is recognized as an important issue; however, this motion should be postponed until after the strategic planning sessions;
- A citizens' assembly could also be explored; and,
- An advisory committee may not be the best way to do public engagement on this topic.

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS reports of increased crime and public disorder are of concern to New Westminster residents and business owners; and
WHEREAS City Council can play an important role in helping to reduce the level of crime on our streets; and

WHEREAS the previous City Council initially voted 4-3 to ask the NW Police Board to freeze its budget and modify its request for a \$1.7M increase in funding in 2021; and

WHEREAS City Council eventually voted in favour of an increase in the NW Police Department 2021 budget by a vote of 5-2; and

WHEREAS the New West Police Department plays a critical role in reducing crime and improving public safety in our city; and

WHEREAS it is important for New Westminster to reduce crime and public disorder to support our commercial districts; and

WHEREAS the residents of New Westminster raised many concerns in the recent civic election that not enough attention was being focused on the issue of crime and safety in our city;

WHEREAS it is important to engage with our local citizens and residents and obtain their feedback in the development of new strategies to combat crime including random acts of violence; and

MOVED and SECONDED

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a new Crime Reduction and Public Safety Advisory Committee be created and that staff report back to Council on the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee by no later than January 31, 2023.

Defeated.

Mayor Johnstone and Councillors Campbell, Henderson, and Nakagawa opposed.

d. Creation of a New Finance and City Services Standing Committee

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine introduced the motion noting that it would allow for additional opportunity for scrutiny of the capital and operating budgets and provide more time for Council and the public to delve deeper into the City's finances.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The work done by staff to provide comprehensive regular budget updates is appreciated;
- This would be an opportunity for all of Council to be engaged with the budget on a more regular basis;
- This should be postponed and discussed during the upcoming strategic planning sessions; and,
- These conversations should be happening with all of Council as a Committee of the Whole (CW) Finance Committee;

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS it is important that we increase the level of openness, transparency, and accountability regarding the City's finances; and
WHEREAS we are facing a major infrastructure deficit and increased spending pressures; and

WHEREAS several other Metro Vancouver cities have established committees to provide better oversight and accountability on city spending and services; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster has consistently increased property taxes and utility rates well above the rate of inflation over the last four years; and

WHEREAS increased population growth in the City of New Westminster has served to increase our overall revenue; and

WHEREAS the establishment of a new Finance and City Services Standing Committee would help increase the public's confidence that

their tax dollars, user fees, fines and other payments to the City are being spent effectively;

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council recommend the establishment of a new Finance and Assets Management committee and refer it to the strategic planning process to allow further discussion.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

e. Creation of a New Amateur Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine advised that the reason for the motion is to try to find new opportunities to involve amateur sport and recreation organizations in the City and to provide better advocacy to the government for grants for amateur sports in the City.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The City is looking at updating the recreation plan during which we will hear from the sport community, so this may be premature;
- Recommend postponing this discussion until after the strategic planning sessions;
- Council needs to have a fulsome conversation about the City's current advisory committees and those that are being proposed;
- It is important for us to hear from the sports community, not just organized sports, as some may already have committees to support them; and,
- Council will be setting priorities and determining where Council and staff time is spent.

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS New Westminster has a proud tradition of producing top athletes and successful amateur sport teams; and,

WHEREAS the city has grown at a very rapid rate the last decade and our sports and recreation infrastructure has not been keeping pace; and,

WHEREAS there are not enough swimming pools, ice rinks, pickle ball courts, artificial turf fields and other sports infrastructure to meet the growing demand in the City of New Westminster; and,

WHEREAS it is important for any city to invest in sports and recreation infrastructure if they are going to make high density living more liveable; and,

WHEREAS the opportunity exists for the City to work more closely with our amateur sport and recreation associations to determine their current and future needs; and,

WHEREAS sports tourism can play an important role in helping to generate economic activity within our city

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council recommends deferring discussion of the creation of a new Amateur Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee to the Strategic Planning process.

Carried.

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVE and SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to defer the 2023 recruitment process until March 2023 for all non-planning committees except for the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and

THAT Council extend the terms of the existing committee members until March 2023.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

f. Advocacy to the BC Government to Increase Housing and Wrap-Around Supports for People Living with Mental Illness

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine noted that that motion speaks for itself.

Procedural note: All members of Council agreed to extend the meeting to 11:30 p.m.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- During a meeting with BC People First, an organization run by and for people with developmental and cognitive disabilities, self-advocates spoke of their experiences with large residential care facilities as well as New Westminster's dark history with Woodlands School. There was a clear call for de-institutionalization and that people be offered support in their own community in ways that respect their autonomy, choice, and independence;
- All members of our community, housed or unhoused, who are struggling with mental health or addiction issues deserve to have autonomy over where they receive support and to have local options for secure and stable housing with wraparound supports;
- The inference is to move people out of New Westminster in order for them to receive supports as there is no land in New Westminster to build a residential mental health care facility;
- The City must be strategic in what we are advocating for and this proposal seems very institutional;
- We need to ensure that we are listening to the voices that would be impacted by this;
- The motion is speaking to those that do not have mental health supports in their communities and is a call for the Provincial Government to step up and provide support for the unsheltered and vulnerable people who are being overlooked;
- Many of the unsheltered population in New Westminster are from other parts of the province and are in need of increased mental health services; and,
- The motion is in opposition of what the city has done to reconcile its shameful history of institutionalizing those with mental health issues.

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS it has been documented that there is a severe lack of provincial health supports in the Metro Vancouver region for individuals living with a mental illness; and

WHEREAS there is a connection between mental illness, substance use disorder and homelessness and this is evident on the streets of New Westminster and other Metro Vancouver cities; and

WHEREAS many of the people experiencing homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region, including New Westminster, are living with untreated mental illnesses due to a lack of access to care; and

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia recently indicated it was able to allocate up to \$1 billion toward the development of a new Royal BC museum, a plan they have since abandoned; and,

WHEREAS homelessness, a lack of mental health diagnosis and treatment, and deaths due to toxic drug supply are at a crisis stage; and,

WHEREAS the Province of BC closed Riverview Mental Health facility in Coquitlam but the equivalent financial supports were not transferred into community-based mental health care; and,

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster has limited jurisdiction and funding to support people living with mental illness who are unhoused; and,

WHEREAS it is important that Council advocate to Members of the Legislative Assembly for increased mental health and housing supports for people forced to live on our streets.

MOVED and SECONDED

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council request the Mayor write to Premier David Eby and request that funding be set aside and prioritized in the 2023 Provincial Budget to begin the planning, development and construction of large-scale, community-based, modern mental health residential care facilities in the Metro Vancouver area; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff create a motion with a similar intent that can be sent to the LMLGA and UBCM for consideration.

Defeated.

Mayor Johnstone and Councillors Campbell, Henderson, and Nakagawa opposed.

g. Supporting Better Governance, Decision-Making and Public Engagement at City Hall

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

Councillor Fontaine introduced the motion by thanking Legislative Services staff for getting agenda packages to Council earlier, noting the importance of receiving information early in order to be able to ask questions of staff on related topics.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The new, five-day timeline may result in more on-table items, leaving Council even less time to review reports;
- While the spirit of the motion is supported, staff could recommend a timeline;
- The new schedule will provide Council with more time to review the larger agenda packages and makes engagement with the city more accessible; and,
- Working the new schedule around long weekends, as well as ensuring the reports have the most up to date information will be challenging; therefore, we will need to be more flexible with respect to receiving late reports.

MOVED and SECONDED

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster should do everything possible to seek input from the public regarding matters before Council; and

WHEREAS the current practice of releasing the Council agenda and supporting materials on the Friday before the Monday meeting does not allow for adequate public notice and feedback; and

WHEREAS it is best practice in good governance that as much time be provided to decision-makers to review materials and ask questions of staff prior to casting a vote,

MOVED and SECONDED

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Clerk make the agenda and supporting documents available to members of Council no less than five business days prior to the meeting; and,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to bring forward changes to the Procedure Bylaw No. 6910, 2004 to reflect the new council package distribution timelines.

Carried.

Mayor Johnstone and Councilor Campbell opposed.

7.2 Notices of Motion

a. **Reducing the cost and time related to the development of new housing in New Westminster**

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster is regularly looking at ways to reduce building costs and speed up the permitting process; and

WHEREAS there is a demonstrated interest on the part of our city to reduce red tape as it pertains to new housing development; and

WHEREAS introducing 'pre-approved' housing designs has worked well for laneway housing developments for other cities; and

WHEREAS it is anticipated there would be a desired interest on the part of home builders to use a 'pre-approved' housing design; and

WHEREAS the development of 'pre-approved' housing designs would help to create more affordable housing; and

WHEREAS 'pre-approved' housing offers the opportunity for the City of New Westminster to reduce costs and increase capacity for future housing developments; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster can be a leader when it comes to the development of 'pre-approved' housing designs in our region

BE IT RESOLVED that staff report back to Council by April 30, 2023 with a plan for the City of New Westminster to develop up to 15 standardized and pre-approved housing designs for implementation by December 31, 2023

b. Delaying the demolition of the Centennial Community Centre and beginning to address our city-wide infrastructure deficit

Submitted By: Councillor Minhas and Councillor Fontaine

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster is facing an 'infrastructure deficit' which can result in families, seniors and other residents having limited access to programs and services; and

WHEREAS the Centennial Community Center is used for numerous city programs and provides invaluable access to indoor recreation and meeting spaces; and

WHEREAS even with the opening of the new t̄əm̄əsew̄tx^w Aquatic and Community Centre our city continues to be challenged with an overall infrastructure deficit due to rapid population growth and a lack of net new capacity in sport and recreation infrastructure development in the last two decades; and

WHEREAS prematurely tearing down an older building and sending it to the landfill and recycle center is impactful to our environment; and

WHEREAS the Centennial Community Center is scheduled to be torn down and replaced by surface parking; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster has not yet begun the process of physical demolition at the Centennial Community Center; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster has full control over the amount of parking spaces required at any given site

BE IT RESOLVED that the demolition of the Centennial Community Center be temporarily delayed and the building continue to operate in its current form until an equivalent capacity for new recreational facilities and meeting space can be identified and/or constructed in our city; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff report back to Council on the financial implications on the city's operating budget related to delaying the Centennial Community Center demolition

c. **Quantifying the downloading of costs from senior orders of government as it pertains to the City of New Westminster 2023 operating budget**

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

WHEREAS it has been identified the City of New Westminster is facing unprecedented downloading from senior orders of government and it has taken on the financial burden of operating a number of programs and services as well as investing in capital infrastructure that would normally be funded by the provincial and federal governments; and

WHEREAS cities collect approximately only 10 cents of every tax dollar with the federal and provincial governments collecting the balance; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster relies heavily on business and residential property taxes to fund our operations and has limited capacity to raise additional funds; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster is facing serious inflationary pressures as it pertains to the development of its own 2023 operating and capital budgets; and

WHEREAS properly identifying and tracking downloaded costs will help in our advocacy to senior orders of government to obtain new funding sources

BE IT RESOLVED that staff report back to Council, as part of the 2023 Budget development process, with an itemized list of expenditures the City of New Westminster has incorporated into the

draft operating and capital budgets which are typically considered outside of municipal jurisdiction and are not part of our 'core services'

d. Supporting the need for a 'Snow Summit' in Metro Vancouver to review the impacts of recent climatic event

Submitted By: Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

WHEREAS the Metro Vancouver region faced unprecedented gridlock after a snowstorm on Tuesday, November 29th, 2022; and

WHEREAS the snowstorm triggered gridlock on most of the provincial highways, onramps and off ramps as well as most of the major bridges and tunnels including the Port Mann, Alex Fraser, Queensborough and George Massey Tunnel; and

WHEREAS this traffic gridlock may have been preventable; and

WHEREAS the snowstorm and traffic gridlock which ensued resulted in significant impacts to the lives of hundreds of thousands of Metro Vancouver commuters and businesses; and

WHEREAS other cities in G7 nations have learned to better cope with snow as it pertains to traffic movement; and

WHEREAS it is important after any major event similar to the Nov 29th snowstorm that it be analyzed and reviewed at a regional and provincial level; and

WHEREAS we live in an active seismic zone and must do everything possible to prepare for large-scale emergencies that could render our bridges and tunnels unfit for use for a period of weeks or months; and

WHEREAS it is incumbent upon our elected leaders to ensure the public receives a full report regarding our collective preparation and response to the November 29th storm

BE IT RESOLVED that Council request Mayor Johnstone, as our representative on Metro Vancouver, introduce a motion requesting a 'Snow Summit' be held as soon as possible to review and analyze the circumstances which led to a record level of traffic gridlock in our region on Tuesday, November 29th; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Anvil Center be offered as a possible venue for this summit which should include, at a minimum, representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, Metro Vancouver, BC Ambulance, TransLink, ICBC, Mainland Contracting and senior officials from the various municipalities in our region that can speak on behalf of our first responders including fire and police

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 ON TABLE Construction Noise Bylaw Exemption Request: Front Street from Tenth Street to McBride Boulevard - Metro Vancouver Sewer Inspection

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council grant an exemption to the Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to Metro Vancouver to conduct a sewer inspection on Front Street from Tenth Street to McBride Boulevard. The weekday work will be done for four days between December 13, 2022 to December 23, 2022 weather dependent.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

8.2 Release of the Electrical Utility Billing Credit Motion from Closed

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council receive December 12, 2022 on-table memo titled, “Release of Motion from Closed Meeting” for information.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

At the closed Council meeting on December 12, 2022, New Westminister City Council approved public release of the following motion:

THAT Council direct the Mayor and Corporate Officer to sign and execute the BC Hydro agreement that compensates the City and provides the electrical billing credit to all New Westminister residential and commercial customers based on the terms and conditions provided to the City from the Ministry of Energy and Mines under the Electrical Utility Billing Credit.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Councillor Minhas shared the history of the Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar and acknowledged the unprecedented efforts of Gurdwara members to assist and make comfortable the many drivers who were stuck on the Queensborough Bridge and on Highway 91 during the November 29, 2022 snowfall emergency by way of providing food and drinks to those stranded. He advised that he had invited members of the Gurdwara to attend a future Council meeting so that they could be thanked in person.

Mayor Johnstone thanked members of the Gurdwara, other residents, and first responders who assisted those who were stranded during the snowstorm. He advised that members of the Gurdwara visited the Mayor's Office a couple of days ago to receive a small token of appreciation, on behalf of Mayor, Council, and the City, for their help in the community.

10. END OF THE MEETING

The meeting ended at 11:25 p.m.

Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

Jacque Killawee

CITY CLERK