



Vars Community Association

Annual General Meeting Minutes
October 1st 2009

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Vars CA was called to order at 07:08 PM on October 1st 2009 at the Bearbrook Community Centre by Jean Séguin.

Present:

See paper copy list (21 signatures, but 24 body presence) – Quorum; Special guest Councillor Rob Jellet

Excused: nil

Absent: Nicolina Kingston (Director at large), Christine Flood (Director at large)

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was slightly modified, moving up the Neighbourhood Plan after the Activities in the past year.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed by e-mail.

C. Conflict of interest

No issues of potential conflict of interest were raised.

D. Open Issues

• Role and Importance of VARS.CA

- The purpose of the Association was read from the constitution as written back some 7-8 years ago and it still stands as our mission statement.
- Over the past year, every element of this statement has been put to the test through discussions amongst directors, with City officials, with the Councillor's office, with community organizations such as the Optimist Club, our two church representatives, business entrepreneurs and residents.
- Our motto is simple:
YOUR IDEAS, YOUR FORUM
VOS IDÉES, VOTRE FORUM
- This Board, as for previous Boards, believes that the Association is the best way to set our community priorities and to push the agenda forward for the betterment of our residents, our children, our businesses, both on the social and economic fronts.

- The Association can only work for its people, with its people. *A commitment from the community to support the Association is the backbone to its success.*
 - As the Association and its directors operate on a voluntary basis, the assistance and cooperation of all residents is needed.
 - In some cases, there will also be a need for financial support to supplement financial assistance received from other sources. It is up to the community to find ways to ensure that the Association has the dollars in the bank to drive the agenda.
 - At the end of the day, the Association is our voice, our vehicle to implement our community ideas. We have to make sure that it is well-oiled and properly fuelled to drive through the challenges.
- **Activities over the past year**
 - Over the past year, the Committee has had to put its house in order.
 - 8 formal meetings of the Board of directors (copies of the minutes are available on the website) were held.
 - Over 30 one-on-one meetings were also held with individuals in pursuit of a variety of issues.
 - Re-instated the Association as a legal entity with Corporations Canada.
 - Re-constituted our financial books and bank accounts.
 - Spent a fair amount of time and efforts towards the management and revamping of our website.
 - Most importantly, our relationship with City officials and the services and the assistance that our community received from our City.
 - Worked with the Optimist Club and the City in obtaining a \$1,000 grant towards the Canada Day festivities. This year, this was the largest amount granted by the City for any rural festive activity. We had a terrific time, aside from the downpour.
 - In May, the Association ventured into having a fundraising supper which paid off. The community responded as well as could be expected and the food, the gifts, the discussions made the event an overall success. Special thanks go to Gary Larocque who organized the logistics and the food department for the event as well as to our sponsors which include the City and Rob's office for their financial and gift contributions.
 - The Association has also taken over the signage at both the Trudeau Park and here. This allows the community, through the Association, to advertise, more easily, our community activities. Once the revamped website is up and running, requests can be made to advertise our activities.
 - Forwarded our annual report with regards to the rink which recommended certain repairs including the painting of the boards which was completed earlier this summer. We are still waiting for confirmations on the installation of benches outside the club house as well as the financing for a puddle rink adjacent to the main rink.
 - Aside from our contributions to different events, we have invested in the purchase of a banner for the Association as well as the printing of a promotional logo of VARS.CA on re-usable water bottles which are either sold at events or handed out as promotional tools.

- Started communicating with the Community Associations of Sarsfield and Carlsbad in order to open discussions on mutual issues. More work is required to establish a constant network between the three organizations.
 - Some of the board members have attended training sessions on community associations as well as other presentation offered by the City on different topics.
 - The Committee has also concentrated on the outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan (NPI).
 - Refurbishing of the Cenotaph has taken a great deal of time for the committee. The plan to fix the monument has been in the works for some time and there is a vehicle through Veterans Affairs Canada to financially support the fixing of the monument. It is through the Association that funding can be considered and we are still putting the pieces together to complete our application for a grant.
 - The cedar trees have to be replaced and, as this is on City property, we are working together to find alternatives to move forward in a timely manner.
 - The idea of an eight foot fence to replace the cedars is contemplated. However, while some work can be done this fall, the monument can only be touched in the spring, once Veterans Affairs have committed to supporting the project.
 - Still looking for ideas, manpower and money for this important, community pride, driven initiative.
 - One goal of the VCA this year was to re-vamp the constitution. Because of all the other activities, we were unable to tackle this issue. The next Executive board members will need to work on the revision and changes needed (ie. election time to 3 years instead of 1 on rotation basis for continuity, meetings held regularly on same day of each month to diminish cost of advertising, and mailing boundaries).
- **Update on the Neighbourhood Plan**
 - As mentioned above, the Association will play an important role in implementing the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Most members of the Association's present executive committee have followed through the evolution of the Plan for the past two years (pilot project).
 - Nancy Jackson, the Plan coordinator from the City of Ottawa, gave an update on the Plan and what to expect in the coming months.
 - While working and advising us on the Plan, Nancy has also taken an interest on the role the Association will play as the plan is implemented.
 - The vision document from the community helped to develop action plans.
 - Copies of the final plan which will move on to Council (November 25th or shift later) were available for residents on the head table and distributed by Nancy and Mike.
 - A resident supported to push the date later to assure that council will concentrate on the document and not the budget issues presently.

- Once through Council, different department within the city will have a holistic view and create a report about the experience of the NPI.
 - City will support these final recommendations/action plans to move forward, and revise annually with comments of how much is done and reason if not completed.
 - Mike Semenick will be the representative for the NPI; Nancy will be co-representative for continuity.
 - City is committed to continue to support the document; they have responsibility and accountability to push forward the document.
 - The document is the voice; the city is the tool, eyes and ears for sustainability.
 - No real money set aside for the NPI. The document did not create a wish list, but action plans to help the city to plan and direct budget.
 - Once through council, the document will come back to the VCA. The VCA will work with the City for annual report.
- **Update on financial status**
 - Copies of the latest financial statement for the period ending mid-September was distributed.
 - Darlene gave us a run-down of where the Association stands financially.
 - Bank fee issues raised by a resident and was proposed to ask bank manager to avoid these fees.
- **Update on the website**
 - Many hours spent trying to get the website back on track.
 - While technical and management issues had to be resolved, there was also the need to rethink the services agreements.
 - In mid-March, Mark Wall joined the group offering his services as webmaster and guiding us through the process of revamping the website.
 - Mark has now reached the point of introducing a new look to our website. While there remains more work to be done and the directors will still have to determine what should now be included on the website.
 - Mark quickly introduced the new features that the website will provide at www.vars.ca
 - The new website will permit for easier update and management if another person is to take to role as webmaster.
 - Issue was raised about residents that do not have internet at home. It was proposed to mail out the minutes but the board has to look at the cost and expense associated with mail-outs.
 - Jean and Gary will discuss with the principal of the St-Guillaume School regarding the internet program that was created in the past.
- **The year ahead (open discussion)**
 - NPI to be pushed forward, need involvement of the community.
 - A resident would like a privacy fence between his house and the ‘group home’. Wants information about financial assistance for funding to put up this fence. Councillor Jellett replied that the only option is if damage (with police reports) to the property, then the province could force the group home to put up a fence.

- Liquor licence was turned down because of the 3 group homes within the village boundaries (and other issues unknown). A resident asked if Councillor Jellett could write a letter to support the liquor licence at Peladeau's Grocery Store. Councillor Jellett replied that a letter was already given at time of application.
- Councillor Rob Jellett update
 - Issue with the water at the Fire Station resolved. The Fire Station was outside the village boundaries. Now the Fire Station has to come up with the financing for the work.
 - Cenotaph project: new money of up to \$10 000 by the City to work on the project through the VCA! Need to set up a different account for this project. With this new money, the Legacy fund can be put aside for other major projects.
- A resident advised that 3 Horse signs on Sand Road disappeared in the last 2 months. Also asked if the speed limit could be dropped from 80 km/h to 60 km/h. Response is that a rural road has a speed limit set at 80 km/h and transportation service needs to look at the issue.
- A resident asked if any 'watch program' was running because many mentioned safety issues within the village. Block parent has been stopped many years ago and Neighbourhood watch has not been active in the village for a few years. Pete Weston from the Queenswood Heights could be a resource person if the community wants to start a community watch program.
- **Election of Executive Committee**
 - The constitution calls for the annual election of up to seven directors.
 - Jean has already served notice that he will not run for any of the director's position, still have to go through the motions to elect all the directors.
 - Positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and we are adding the position of Webmaster to the executive team. Up to three other positions of "directors at large" can be elected.
 - To assist us through this process, Suzanne Sanford, our advisor from the City of Ottawa, will coordinate the process.
 - President
 - Jean Séguin - removed name from current board
 - Gary Larocque (nominated by Barb Lavictoire, supported by Arlene Dupuis) – declined
 - Ivan Tanner (nominated by Darlene Brown, supported by Jean Séguin) – accepted
 - Vice-President
 - Gary Larocque (nominated by Jean Séguin, supported by Francine Portenier) – accepted
 - Secretary
 - Hélène Manning-Lemieux (nominated by Barb Lavictoire, supported by David Jones) – accepted
 - Treasurer
 - Darlene Brown (nominated by Mark Wall, supported by Barb Lavictoire) – accepted

- Webmaster
 - Mark Wall (nominated by Barb Lavictoire, supported by Gary Larocque) – accepted
- Director at large #1
 - Barb Lavictoire (nominated by Arlene Dupuis, supported by Darlene Brown) – accepted
- Director at large #2
 - Hope Louis-Suggett (nominated by Jean Séguin, supported by Ivan Tanner) – accepted
- Director at large #3
 - Francine Portenier (nominated by Gary Larocque, supported by Hope Louis-Suggett) – accepted
- Director at large
 - Arlene Dupuis (nominated by Jean Séguin, supported by Gary Larocque) – declined
- **Closing remarks by the President**
 - The past president thanked the outgoing board for their support and fantastic work over the past year.
 - To Rob, his office and City officials who have guided the VCA through our efforts to get the Association back on track.
 - To the new Board, best wishes in your upcoming challenges.
 - Dear friends, our new President, Ivan Tanner
 - appreciation for confidence
 - pointing out hard work to put the VCA back on track with the CCC/NPI
 - communication is a priority – need tools to better communicate throughout the Vars

E. New Business

- Before moving on to the closing remarks, presence prizes were drawn (4 water bottles from the VCA as well as 7 pizza gift certificates generously provided by one of our local business, Milan Pizza).
- Suzanne Sanford recognizes Jean for all the hard work. The VCA will be in good hands with Ivan. She is looking forward to working with the VCA again this year.

F. Agenda for Next Meeting

- To be determined by the new board.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 9:13 PM by Hope Louis-Suggett, seconded by Adam Metcalfe. The next general meeting will be confirmed by the new board.

Minutes submitted by: Hélène Manning-Lemieux
 Approved by: Ivan Tanner