

Bellevue Community League

Unapproved DRAFT Minutes - Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, June 27, 2018

In attendance: Brian Finley, Ed Boraas, Jeannette Gysbers (Bellevue Street Lights), Greg Brandenburg (Virginia Park Street Lights), Joe Hewko (Bellevue Street Lights), Shawn Jacobs (City of Edmonton Street Lighting), Steve Schmidt (City of Edmonton), Sherry Wallace (City of Edmonton), Ryan Olson (City of Edmonton), Shauna Richard (Virginia Park Street Lights)

1. Call to order
 - o Meeting called to order by Brian Finley at 17:36
2. Street Lights
 - o Sherry mentioned that, as shared, some new street light options have become available in the context of Highlands' renewal
 - o As a result of the communication from the committees/board, we've paused the installation of lights so that we can take the new information into account
 - o Ryan mentioned that the City is rolling out some new processes
 - o Joe said he's happy to see the engagement from the City
 - o Ryan described the process that the community has been through so far, around design selection, expression of interest, etc. In the past, the options were fairly limited and with less flexibility.
 - o Joe mentioned that some flexibility around style, etc., was described in the past
 - o Ryan continued describing the process of costing and providing details to residents around the EOI, and that extensive effort was required from the neighbourhood committees
 - o Jeannette mentioned that she and Joe coordinated a team of ten volunteers
 - o Ryan continued that the process then continues under the authority of the Municipal Governance Act, with a letter to residents (Dec/Jan) giving residents a chance to indicate objections. There were a negligible number of objections in this case.
 - o Ryan explained that this year they've just finished establishing updated standards, trying to take into account all users of the streets. This is a shift away from the vehicle focus toward a more holistic approach -- considering adjacent properties, pedestrian use, zoning, etc. As a result, there's more variation in how streets could look.
 - o Ryan: As part of this "complete streets" initiative, one area of consideration was pedestrian-level lighting, and additional options to communities in this regard. This is being offered to communities undergoing renewal in 2019 and beyond.
 - o Ryan: The change has required carefully thought and planning to ensure consistency and effective delivery/build.
 - o Ryan: Street light base installation has already begun in Virginia Park
 - o Joe mentioned how pleased and grateful the community is that the City was willing to pause and have a full discussion on the issue
 - o Ryan mentioned that this kind of flexibility in discussion is not expected to be the norm, but that they recognize that circumstances and processes have changed significantly
 - o Ryan: The biggest outstanding concern from the City is that they have a road contract in place with specific timelines; the cost of extending a contractor even for a day would be quite large
 - o Ryan: As a result, it's important that bases are installed immediately
 - o Ryan: surprisingly, poles had not yet been ordered. As a result, they inquired as to the impact of changing to pedestrian-level poles
 - o Ryan: Due to light pollution, etc., the City is not offering Glenora-style globes
 - o Ryan: The City tries to maintain historically-consistent lighting levels. The lighting level in this area is higher than some other communities in the city. To maintain these levels, increased wattage can be used, but this results in much higher glare levels. In extreme cases, glare can lead to safety concerns or light trespass.
 - o Ryan: As a result, communication with residents is very important if there are changes to the plan
 - o Ryan: Another challenge is that the change of pole spacing is a challenge for Virginia Park due to the bases having been placed, and for Bellevue because planning would need to be re-done, including consulting with local residents
 - o Ryan: Bases need to be installed within the next week, so adjusting spacing is not feasible, except for the Ada Boulevard portion (which is aligned with the Highlands schedule)
 - o Greg asked if this means it's too late to change in Virginia Park. (Ryan: Yes.) Bellevue? (Ryan: Yes, because the bases need to be installed in the next week.)
 - o Greg mentioned that on 74 Street, additional posts were installed "on the fly"

- Shawn: For existing locations, the glare values are simply too high to use existing locations (e.g. with higher wattage). It's not just a matter of additional poles; existing positions would have to be reevaluated.
- Greg expressed concern that Highlands will be going with pedestrian-height poles and that the inconsistency is problematic
- Sherry explained that Highlands has not been briefed on the full implications of the pedestrian-height poles and they may not choose that option
- Ryan explained that for future engagements, if a community prefers the pedestrian-height option, the City will ask for both a pedestrian-height selection and a standard selection, so that the practicalities can be evaluated with a fallback option
- Greg expressed concern about the broader process, particularly the 50% payment requirement for new sidewalks and its implications for willingness for residents to express support for further upgrades such as street lights
- Greg spoke about the psychological impact of the upgraded lights in the neighbourhoods that were able to get them, and expressed concern that limiting the upgrades to neighbourhoods/regions that can afford them can lead to classism
- Greg continued that there were discussions about doing all of Ada as one piece, but recently that changed to do the Virginia Park portion of Ada Boulevard sooner. If consistency is not maintained, this sets a visible boundary at the bridge, to the disadvantage of the Virginia Park residents
- Ryan mentioned that the bridge infrastructure represents a fixed point of attachment for any work happening along Ada, and while there may be an option for inconsistent lighting, it's not necessarily a given
- Greg expressed concern about the way the process evolved: with Ada Boulevard being separated from the rest of the neighbourhood renewal, and then further having Virginia Park's portion of Ada treated separately from the rest of Ada
- Greg further expressed concerns about the specifics of the proposed sidewalk placement, width, and bridge interface.
- Greg: Virginia Park is deeply disappointed that pedestrian-height post-top lights are not an option. The negative aesthetic impact is significant. Had VP expected a change in the process between VP/Bellevue and Highlands, they would have expressed a preference for delay while the process was fleshed out
- Shauna expressed concerns around the disparity in the level of consultation, opportunities for input, and opportunities presented for selection
- Ryan responded that the change was driven by a change in standards at the city, and there's never a perfect time to make a change. As a result of the timing, it's simply too difficult to offer post-top options to Bellevue or VP.
- Joe responded that businesses all go through transition from time to time, and that planning is done to mitigate the effects of the changes. As well, such changes are normally known in advance and don't just happen immediately. Joe said that he would expect that while VP/Bellevue were voting, that the city was aware that changes were on the horizon
- Ryan: Changes to street standards have been discussed for a long time; as they realized that "complete streets" was going to be adopted, then the implications for decorative lighting were considered. This was only in the past few months.
- Sherry responded that she had the updates only the day before the presentation at Highlands' AGM
- Joe responded that the changes were surely contemplated prior to that
- Shawn explained that years ago, developers were permitted to put up almost anything they wanted to. The post-top options were generating lots of complaints around density of spacing, glare, etc. The existing neighbourhoods with post-top options have historical designation. Shawn only recently became aware that these options were being offered. The light placement design takes upward of six months, and there's no way the design could have been complete in time, from the time the new options were identified. Shawn says that it's still unclear whether the post-top options will be permissible in Highlands. The City light standards will have to be considered, as well as the practice of placing lights in existing locations, etc. The post-top lights are inefficient and are difficult to work out properly. This has led to reactions such as lowering the poles, using longer arms, etc. Nonetheless, the post-top options continue to cause challenges and concerns.
- Shawn continued that in the past the City would reconsider placement, etc., each time. As a result, residents complained frequently, leading to the City adopting the practice of reusing the same locations. Lighting the roadway becomes very challenging when there's a demand to reuse existing placements where possible. Lights have 20-year warranties.
- Shawn: even for Highlands, the post-tops would require a lot of evaluation and consideration, and are not certain

- Greg asked what the issue was with 75A Street
 - Sherry responded that there were concerns around the senior's residence considering placement
 - Greg: Are there any new options at a similar price that are available to us, outside of the post-top options?
 - Ryan: There's a communication concern if we're deviating from what has been communicated to residents
 - Joe talked about the door-knocking campaign in Bellevue, with over 80% coverage. Bellevue used as a benchmark a price of ~\$1.68/mo for a typical home. Residents asked about post-top lights, but the Bellevue committee had been told that post-top lights were not available for consideration. Once the new pricing guidelines were released, residents were happy to hear that an upgraded (fluted) option was available for a lower price than originally expected for octagonal
 - Joe asked about the renaissance lights, and asked if they'd be an option with the selected poles & arms
 - Shawn said it would be possible from a technical perspective
 - Ryan reiterated that we have to be careful to consider what has been communicated in the past, and whether a new selection would require further communication
 - Shawn mentioned that a new lighting analysis would need to be conducted as well
 - Greg again expressed Virginia Park's deep disappointment that the expected flexibility was not in evidence
 - Greg asked if it would be possible, given that more dramatic changes are not possible, for Virginia Park to receive fluted poles, to maintain consistency with Bellevue
 - The City reps asked if this was discussed at the time
 - Brian explained that this was discussed, but there were timing challenges, and it wasn't possible to get the committee members together to harmonize a decision
 - Ryan responded that they could consider that, and further that Ada could possibly be considered separately as a harmonized unit
 - Greg responded that a potential fourth look in Ada is not palatable. He felt strongly that the consistency between Bellevue and Virginia Park is a bare minimum.
 - Brian asked what happens next with respect to Ada
 - Ryan: As far as Ada is concerned, the City will take from this meeting that the decisions will be need to be made with care and attention
 - Greg recommended that the City make any decisions around Ada to support any possible outcome (putting in more holes to possibly support either option)
 - Ryan responded that he only meant there's the potential to pause on Ada so that this conversation can continue
 - Greg: All of Ada or the Bellevue portion?
 - Ryan: We can take this away to consider our options, and hold off on ordering poles for the Virginia Park portion
 - Joe: At some level, this came up because of issues with transition planning at the City. It's important that we explore our options properly and weigh our options (e.g. new lights atop planned arms). When Ada raised issues, additional consultation was held and a lot of additional expense and time were taken.
 - Ryan: We can consider the light options as well
 - Brian summarized: There are three takeaways: Ada, standardization of poles, renaissance lights
 - Jeannette: Highlands has been waiting for the outcome of this meeting, and has expressed interest in standardizing. Their deadline is Tuesday, so feedback is required imminently.
 - Brian: It's obvious how, as a Virginia Park resident, it would be of clear and obvious benefit to have consistency across all three communities.
 - Ryan: The City is stretching in order to be as open and transparent as possible. The City is looking forward to working with the committees to see what can be done reasonably.
 - Shawn: Renaissance arms can be technically fitted onto the arms, but given that the bylaw has already been passed, even a \$10 increase could result in recanvassing and further complication, which could compromise project timelines and City schedules.
 - Shawn: The planned bulbs have a color temperature of 3000 deg K. In some parts of the plan, the pole height has been reduced to ~24.5' in order to stay below the tree canopy
 - Shawn: the post-top lights have seen an increase in vandalism
 - Jeannette asked if the City is aiming for less light trespass
 - Shawn replied that reducing light trespass is indeed a goal
3. Adjournment
- Meeting adjourned at 19:03