



The Strathcona Community Council
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SCC Executive Meeting: Monday, September 17, 2018

Location: Erskine Presbyterian Church

Attendees:

Dominic Sorbara	SCC, President	
Thomas Bernacki	SCC, Secretary	
Roy Raghavan	SCC, executive member at large	
Jason Morse	SCC, executive member at large	
Jessica Aird	SCC, Vice President	
Rosemary Baptista	SCC, executive member at large	
Ed Castonguay	SCC, executive member at large	

Guests:

Vin Ruprai	Strathcona Resident	
Jamie Oakes	Strathcona Resident	

Meeting called to order at 7:08 PM.

Introductions

Executive members introduce themselves and their respective roles.

Vin introduces herself: been in the neighbourhood for 16 years. The happenings in Victoria Park and more importantly the responses on social media have her concerned; that is why she is at today's meeting.

Additional items to be added to agenda:

Food handling for events (will be item 7).

Rest of agenda unchanged.

Last meeting's minutes have one more week before finalization – still opportunity to send corrections/additions by email.

Item 1: Neighbourhood Watch

Rosemary provides an update regarding the Neighbourhood Watch (NW). The remaining NW members (Adam, Kevin) have dropped out. Rosemary is really the only individual left from the founding members.

Your Neighbourhood Association: serving the residents of Strathcona

She is concerned about the Facebook group that has started. The concern is that the NW group is not keeping its commitments in terms of staying in touch with Hamilton Police, among many other commitments that it would be following if it were operating according to the requirements of an official neighbourhood watch group. So the Facebook group has no legitimacy since it is not in fact a real neighbourhood watch group.

She has concerns that the group presents itself as legitimate when it is not, and therefore will have access to residents' addresses, etc. There are privacy concerns. Non-residents of the neighbourhood have been accepted, people from Toronto for instance. None of this is in keeping with the requirements. Rosemary is concerned that individuals made commitments, but really only Rosemary is left, the ball has been dropped.

Sgt. Gill is no longer in touch with the SCC, as the SCC had passed neighbourhood policing communication to the NW.

Discussion re: the history of the formation of the NW. The formation of the NW was assisted by the SCC, but the SCC and its executive membership explicitly stated that they do not have additional bandwidth to help run it or set it up. When the SCC received concerns from members and questions about a NW getting set up, the SCC agreed that it could be an item at the 2017 AGM. Attendees of the AGM were offered an opportunity to step forward to set up a NW. SCC would engage with NW members as appropriate but would not co-facilitate directly. At the executive meeting following the AGM, there was a formal handoff of police interfacing from SCC to NW.

Rosemary suggested that Dominic (SCC President) had some responsibility to ensure operation of the NW. Rest of the executive strongly disagrees – no members of the executive (save Rosemary) volunteered at the time of the setting up, they in fact explicitly said that they could not participate in operating the NW in addition to their role on the SCC. This included Dominic. SCC Executive greatly appreciates Rosemary's efforts in setting up and participating in NW, but Dominic has no part in the NW in any way. Executive members state that Dominic has no blame whatsoever and no responsibility in respect of the recent events of the NW.

Next steps discussed re: Facebook page. Rosemary wants it shut down due to its misleading name and privacy concerns. She is a page admin.

Roy, Jessica: anyone can set up a Facebook group. But if she's an admin she can probably take down this page.

Vin: Asks for clarification about the social media responses re: recent events at the park.

Executive explains, individuals posting their own pictures of happenings at the park. There were then very loud and confrontational responses on Facebook groups. In fact the NW Facebook group wasn't the culprit, it was other neighbourhood group (Strathcona Neighbours). Anyone in the group can post, discuss, etc., on neighbourhood happenings. Mostly benign, like garage sales, lost dogs, etc., but some recent posts have been fear-mongering about happenings in the park and neighbourhood spottings of "suspicious" behaviour.

Vin describes that it has caused a panic among the neighbours. In her experience the neighbourhood is safe, and so the social media discussions seem not in line with her experience. It seems to be only sowing fear.

Ed: What do we do to shut down the Facebook group?

Jason: suggests that Executive make a statement requesting that it be shut down. Rosemary could then try what she can to make it happen, with our formal support.

Jessica: suggestions – shut it down until further notice. Ask for new volunteers at the next AGM?

Rosemary: suggests – shut down the Facebook group. SCC to reconnect with Sgt. Gill. NW made commitments with Sgt. Gill and 2 other officers, and then didn't follow through.

Actions: Rosemary to close down NW Facebook page (if possible). Rosemary to re-connect SCC with Sgt. Gill.

Motion: That the SCC Executive discontinue their association with the Strathcona Neighbourhood Watch, as it has not kept its commitments to meet regularly with Hamilton Police Services and keep the SCC informed on its activities; that Kevin Romphf and Adam MacDonald no longer be invited to SCC Executive meetings as they have not attended in numerous months; and for the SCC to invite Sgt. Gill to the monthly SCC Executive meetings to ensure continued neighbourhood engagement with the Hamilton Police Services local crime manager.

Moved by: Tom

Seconded by: Dominic

Vote: All in favour (7-0)

Item 2: Screen on the Green de-brief

Jessica presents AV equipment list, and volunteer task list for SOTG, both on Google drive. These lists can be checklists for preparing for the next SOTG. Preparation should be started way earlier than we have this year – do it before summer, so we can get people before they leave for vacation.

Tom: need to add volunteer names of people who have assisted with event in past.

We should consider getting high school students to volunteer in the future.

Item 7: Food handling (moved ahead on agenda)

Rosemary's observation from the SOTG, need to be more careful about food handling. Request that there be better orientation for food handling at our next event. Designated roles, and clear expectations. Wear gloves, etc. No specific problems this year, but last year it was too disorganized.

Item 3: Election event

Jessica – Cable 14 debates are only available to cable subscribers. Should we hold an event?

Discussion – we should see what other neighbourhood associations are doing.

Jessica sent an email to Nikola to see if anyone else is holding an event. Will connect with us by email when she finds out more.

Item 4: Networking for volunteers

Deferred.

Item 5: AGM preparation

Date should be finalized after October 22 so we know who the new councillor will be and we can invite them.

Action: Tom will champion AGM, take care of organizational details and delegate jobs.

Discussion re: agenda for AGM:

- AGM business (minutes of last AGM, financial report, voting on executive positions)
- Introduce new councillor
- Then Sgt. Gill/Police presentation and Q&A

End of November is typical date. Suggested possibility of Monday, November 26 (this will be one week after our normal executive meeting). To be decided later. Tom will present plans for AGM prep at next executive meeting.

Other items to be discussed

None.

Deferred agenda items:

- Networking for volunteers
- Potholes (from July)

Next meeting:

Executive meeting planned for Monday, October 15, 2018. Nikola and Cindy confirmed (Councillor tentatively scheduled). Sgt. Gill to be invited.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 PM