

R E P O R T

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole Date: January 13, 2014

From: Beverly Grieve, File: 2605.01.2014
Director of Development Services

Subject: Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDATION

1. *THAT Council:*
 - a. *Endorse the Purpose, Terms of Reference, and Membership of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group outlined in this report; and*
 - b. *Direct staff to work towards an Open House event to launch the initiative, and to commence solicitation of Working Group members.*
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the meeting with the executive members of the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society and the Queen's Park Residents' Association. The report also seeks Council direction regarding the Terms of Reference for and the composition of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group.

BACKGROUND

On June 6, 2013, a demolition permit was issued for 221 Third Avenue. On June 24, 2013, Council received a delegation from representatives of the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society and the Queen's Park Residents' Association, identifying concerns about the loss of historic houses in Queen's Park.

City Council subsequently passed the following motion:

THAT City Staff prepare a work program for Council's consideration to initiate a dialogue with the Queen's Park Residents' Association and the New West Heritage Preservation Society regarding options to support heritage conservation values in the Queen's Park neighbourhood.

The work program was brought forward to Council on November 4, 2013, and was endorsed with the addition that the Chair of the Community Heritage Commission be a member of the working group.

ANALYSIS

Staff met with the executives of the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society (NWHPS) and the Queen's Park Residents' Association (QPRA) on December 11, 2013.

At the meeting, the executive members expressed support for the concept of a Working Group and looked forward to working with staff. Those present at the meeting articulated the goals of the Working Group as:

1. Identifying workable solution(s) to encourage (a) heritage retention, (b) reduction of demolition of heritage houses, and (c) reduction of unsympathetic changes and additions to heritage houses within the Queen's Park neighbourhood.
2. Education of the neighbourhood with regard to (a) the advantages of owning a heritage house, (b) heritage retention options, and (c) heritage legislation.
3. Sharing of information with other neighbourhoods.

Preliminary Tasks Outlined for the Working Group

The members of the executives reviewed the following list of potential tasks outlined in the November 4, 2013 report.

1. Compile information regarding the risks to the existing housing stock in Queens Park.
2. Identify the legal framework for potential City initiatives to encourage retention of houses in Queens Park.
3. Identify heritage retention options that are suitable for the Queen's Park neighbourhood.
4. Engage with residents in the neighbourhood to determine the level of support for the options.
5. Work with the City to implement option(s).
6. Work with the City to develop a monitoring program.

In addition to the above, the executive members suggested the following tasks:

- Item three above should be extended to considering other ideas generated by the Working Group and that have been tried elsewhere, such as special zoning around

City Hall in Vancouver, the Brentwood neighbourhood-specific zoning example, and the experience from Kelowna.

- With regards to the issue of demolition, the individuals present expressed an interest in bringing in guest speakers who have utilized unique heritage retention options in other areas as well as experts who can provide information to residents about the impact of heritage conservation initiatives on property values.
- Setting up a strong Internet and social network presence where ideas can be shared with Queen's Park residents as well as others who have an interest in neighbourhood-based heritage conservation.

Membership of the Working Group

The staff report brought to Committee of the Whole on November 4, 2013 suggested that membership of the working group be taken from the following groups with the goal of providing a balanced representation from the neighbourhood.

- QPRA
- NWHPS
- Community Heritage Commission
- Representation from other City Committees where suitable
- Builder with experience building in Queen's Park
- Real Estate agent with experience in Queen's Park
- Landscaper or person with an interest in the natural environment of Queen's Park
- Queen's Park resident(s)-at-large

Council directed that one position be given to the Chair of the Community Heritage Commission.

The NWHPS and the QPRA executive group members felt that their two groups should have a leadership role in the Working Group and agreed that the Chair of the Community Heritage Commission and some residents from the neighbourhood be included. The membership should be limited to 10 - 15 people. The executive groups expressed an interest in establishing the group as soon as possible. There was also an interest in the Working Group having influence over the methods of engagement with the residents in the neighbourhood (e.g. surveys, Open Houses, public meetings, newsletters).

The executive group members offered useful suggestions with regards to the composition of the Working Group. The fundamental purpose of the Working Group is to advise Council on City policy actions related to neighbourhood heritage conservation,

demolition policy, potential zoning changes and other matters that may arise through the process.

As such, it is important that the Working Group be seen by residents in the affected neighbourhood as being inclusive of the various perspectives held by residents and property owners. The Working Group will be advising Council on potential changes to rules and regulations affecting properties in the Queen's Park neighbourhood, and it is important that all residents and property owners feel that their views have been considered. The Working Group composition suggested below reflects the perspective that the membership, as much as possible, be representative of the circumstances of a variety of residents in the neighbourhood.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE QUEEN'S PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING GROUP

Purpose: The Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group will advise City Council on actions that could be considered to preserve the character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood.

Terms of Reference:

The Working Group will:

1. Identify and review workable solutions, for the consideration of Council, to encourage within the Queen's Park neighbourhood:
 - heritage retention,
 - a reduction in the demolition of heritage houses, and
 - methods to encourage sympathetic changes and additions to heritage houses
2. Undertake education actions with residents in the neighbourhood with regards to:
 - the advantages of owning a heritage house,
 - heritage retention options, and
 - heritage legislation.
3. Engage with residents in the neighbourhood to determine the level of support for suggested options; and
4. Develop an implementation and monitoring program for the recommended actions.

Membership of Working Group:

The Working Group will include:

- The Chair of the Community Heritage Commission
- Two members recommended by the QPRA executive
- Two members recommended by the NWHPS executive
- Six Queen's Park residents and property owners selected by Council

The Queens Park residents and property owners will be selected from interested individuals who represent a variety of circumstances; for example, different age of houses, property sizes, interest in natural environment and potentially those with real estate or development experience.

All members of the Working Group will be confirmed by Council. At the first meeting, the Working Group shall identify a Chair and a Vice-Chair.

The Role of Staff:

The Working Group will be supported by the Heritage Planner and Planning Assistant. Other City staff will be included as necessary (for example, Development Planners, Building Division staff, City Solicitor). Staff will:

1. Organize meetings, develop agendas, take and distribute meeting notes, invite speakers and guests;
2. Undertake research and tasks, including the following:
 - Compile a neighbourhood profile including general information regarding the size of lots, the age of the housing stock, the state of repair, assessed values etc.
 - Research and identify a wide range of heritage retention options that are suitable for the Queen's Park neighbourhood.
 - Compile information regarding the risks to the existing housing stock in Queens Park.
 - Identify the legal framework for potential City initiatives to encourage retention of houses in Queen's Park.
 - Where requested and feasible, respond to information requests from the Working Group.
3. Organize and implement public consultation events and opportunities such as Open Houses, questionnaires, newsletters.
4. Create and maintain a Webpage on the program, with links to other relevant Internet resources.
5. Provide ongoing information on the results of the program to Council through the submission of reports and meeting notes.

Meeting Frequency

The Working Group will meet monthly. In addition, it is recognized that there will be a need for larger public meetings such as Open Houses to share information with residents and property owners in the neighbourhood. It is anticipated that the Working Group would complete the work program within 12-18 months.

NEXT STEPS

If Council endorses the Purpose, Terms of Reference, and Membership of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group outlined in this report, then staff recommends that an Open House be scheduled in early February to introduce the program and provide information on the wide range of options that may be considered by the Working Group.

The purpose of the Open House would be to obtain early feedback on the range of options, ask participants to suggest other ideas and solicit membership in the Working Group. The executives of the QPRA and NWPS would be asked to nominate members and a mail-out would be sent to all residents and property owners in the area to inform them of the Open House, provide summary information and solicit membership in the Working Group.

As well, at the December meeting with the executives of the QPRA and NWPS, a number of research tasks were identified. Staff has commenced working on these tasks with the objective that some of this information will be available at the first Open House.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the work will be completed by staff within the Development Services Division. Consultants may be required to complete specialized work. Staff has included funds in the 2014 Operating Budget to allow purchase of consulting services.

OPTIONS

Council has the following options for consideration:

- 1) That Council:
 - a. Endorse the Purpose, Terms of Reference, and Membership of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group outlined in this report; and
 - b. Direct staff to work towards an Open House event to launch the initiative, and to commence solicitation of Working Group members; or


- 2) Direct staff to work with the executives of the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society and the Queen's Park Residents' Association to develop a membership for the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group that includes more members selected from their executives; or
- 3) Direct staff to proceed with the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group work plan and membership as outlined in the November 4, 2013 report; or
- 4) Given staff other direction.

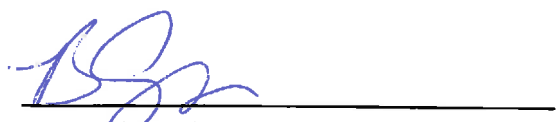
Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION


City staff met with executive members of the QPRA and the NWPS and received valuable feedback on the establishment and operation of the Queen's Park Working Group. Many of the suggested changes have been incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference and suggested membership included in this report for Council consideration. The City and the executives of the Queen's Park Residents' Association and the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society look forward to working together with other members on the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Working Group.

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Approved for Presentation to Council


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