

Varsity View Local Area Plan Meeting #5
Wednesday, April 14, 2010
Brunskill School Library
101 Wiggins Avenue South
7:00 pm

Attendees: Marianne Amos, Councillor Charlie Clark, Patricia Englund, Susan Hatfield, Patricia Mathias, Brenda O'Connor, Henry Tabel, Cathy Watts, Allan Woo, Curtis Mills, Paula Kotasek and Mark Emmons – Planners, Shirlene Palmer – Recording Secretary

1. Introduction, Review Agenda, Ground Rules

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Paula Kotasek introduced herself and Mark Emmons as the co-facilitators of tonight's meeting and welcomed everyone.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to discuss parking and residential parking permit program.

2. Varsity View Residential Parking Program (RPP)
Miles Jarvin, Parking Services Manager, Infrastructure Services Branch

As part of the Transportation Branch responsibility includes sign shop, sign erection, road shutdowns for parades among other things. They are also responsible for all aspects of parking such as enforcement, impound lots, issuing of tickets, fixing parking meters, etc.

Questions:

- **You do network with the University but do you also work with University Hospital? You can tell whether it is students or employees who are parking in most areas. Most parking on Elliott Street and some up Cumberland are usually not students but hospital employees.**

Miles noted this can be a challenge as there have been some residents that have sold their permits to family or friends to use for parking. With a new crop of drivers and students yearly it is a constant struggle.

Suggestion:

- In September with the new crop of drivers, the enforcement officers should go into the alleys as well as many people park in alleys which block off clear access and you have to phone to have something done.

Frequently asked questions:

Is the RPP working?

- It is rare to receive negative feedback and frequently receive positive comments from existing and former Varsity View residents.
- This program is implemented, and can be cancelled, by request of the residents. The City does not force RPP on an area; it is brought in due to residents requesting it.

- Our program is modeled after parking programs throughout North America. The City follows what other municipalities are doing as they are always looking for better solutions.
- Varsity View is very diverse as there is mix of businesses, Luther Tower, university, hospital, Ronald McDonald House, single family dwellings, apartments, converted single family homes to multi family, etc

Can it be expanded?

- Yes, submit a petition from adjacent RPP zone streets that have a 70% positive response rate to the question; “Do you want to join the Varsity View RPP and pay the established permit costs (\$25 annually)”.
- Report will then be sent to City Council for final approval.
- Varsity View was expanded in 2007 already but can be expanded further if residents wish.

Questions:

- **How does the 70% work exactly? And how do you go about getting it?**

Miles stated if you want a block added to the RPP, the residents are required to approach their neighbours to sign a petition to be added. The City can help by providing the wording or copies of the brochure explaining the RPP, but there is usually a better response if asked by a neighbour rather than a city worker. A block is considered both sides of the street and 70% yes is required, so 7 out of every 10 houses.

- **Is it only home owners?**

Miles stated all tenants are included as renters are also residents whose opinions need to be considered.

Parking Permit Numbers

- The number of permits issued have be steadily increase from 2003 to 2009
- Three types of permits:
 - Residential – sticker on vehicle of residents
 - Visitor – hangs on mirror
 - Temporary – only 30 days are allowed at a time, can be 1 for 30 days or 2 for 15 days, etc. As an example, this could be for a workman if doing renovations.

Operating Costs

- RPP is intended to be a cost recovery program
- The City realized if this program was to be successful, then enforcement is required. As Varsity View’s RPP is so large, there are 1.5 dedicated commissionaires to patrol the area.
- Miles noted the fine increase from \$6 to \$10, which accounts for some of the increased revenue of the program recently.

Questions:

- **Some of the expenses seem to be greater than the revenue, so why continue with this? It just seems to cost residents money for nothing.**

Miles acknowledged that the revenues collected from parking permit sales does not fully cover administrative costs of the program, but noted there would still be administrative costs incurred even if the parking permits were provided to residents at no cost because there would need to be a system to issue and track the permits. However, revenue from parking enforcement helps to keep the program from losing money.

- **Prior to the RPP, there were the one and two hour time limit zones and it seemed like the area was patrolled quite regularly, so where is the benefit?**

Miles does not believe there was ever a designated person to patrol only the Varsity View area, so the level of parking enforcement should have increased with the implementation of the RPP and assignment of 1.5 commissionaires to the program.

Comments:

- Does not feel it is only due to the increase in fines that revenue has increased. Feels there are many more students parking in the area. Has lived in house since 1978 and had no problems finding parking in the 70s, 80s & 90s, now at times he cannot find parking in front of house.
- Configuration of streets have also changed, some have more multi-person houses instead of single family as were in the past. Also some streets have more rentals, while other have more owners.

Questions:

- **Most people that park in the area are university students. Is it because there is not enough parking available or busing issues? This needs to be looked at.**

Miles noted it used to be cheaper to park illegally and take a chance on getting a ticket than to pay for a day of parking in the parkade.

Comments:

- Some students will park many blocks away e.g. 14th Street and then take the bus to the rest of the way to campus.

Questions:

- **Is the City working with the university to try to solve this problem?**

Miles stated it is difficult to do much more, with a new crop of students yearly it is a challenge to stop them from parking on streets, except for this program.

- **Why is parking allowed around President Murray Park? This park is very busy with kids and with all the traffic it can be dangerous. Would like to see it more and more difficult to park in area.**

Due to the fact that nobody lives on this side of the street and, therefore, impossible to meet the City of Saskatoon standard of 70% overall approval from residents on the block, it was just a holdover from before the program was introduced. Miles stated he would have to do more research if there is any other reason and review the guidelines.

Comments:

- Kids cannot cross at some sections of the street, so they must go through park and this makes it dangerous for kids with all the traffic.
- Parking has been wonderful on Temperance since RPP came in.
- Another area that has unlimited parking around the school is on Bottomley and Aird Streets.
- The playground in President Murray Park is always busy with kids. There are lots of kids. With students speeding, there needs to be no parking around park. This should really be a recommendation in the LAP.

Miles stated the LAP recommendations will be brought forward to his department from the LAP and further discussion can take place as to what is best for the neighbourhood.

Questions:

- **Is there anything that can be looked at temporarily such as speed bumps?**

Miles stated when Tom Der from Traffic comes to a future LAP meeting he can be asked. The City does have criteria as to what type of traffic calming can be implemented to address specific issues. Tom would know what would work best.

- **The RPP is a wonderful program, but one argument to making parking so difficult is that it gives added incentive to convert backyards into spots for parking rental. This would be a shame as we would lose greenspace; even if it is private green space. Can anything be done?**

There are guidelines for creating driveways and parking spaces on residential property. If you believe someone is illegally parking or selling parking spots you can contact Zoning Compliance Section at 975-2645 and they will come out and see if what is happening is legal or not.

Miles stated he always tells business owners and people in the older neighbourhoods with parking issues to create your own parking where possible and use your garages for vehicles not storage and most of your issues will go away. The flipside is there are residents that park on the street because they rent out their garages. Many residents can solve their problems by using their own parking spots on their own property.

- **If there are 6 students living in a household they should be able to obtain 6 parking permits not only the 2 allowed per household. This would help with parking illegally if they could all have permits.**

Miles stated every resident who lives in the house and has a vehicle registered to them is allowed a parking permit. It is only visitors parking permits that are limited to 2.

- **In regards to employee parking, why does Luther Towers have permits for employee parking around the building on both sides of the street?**

Miles stated this is a deal they have with the City prior to his being in current position. The deal dates back 10 or 12 years ago. They do pay for visitor parking permits, but

there is no parking close for them to park so they have to park far and walk back with a permit.

➤ **If something is grandfathered in can it be changed?**

Miles stated it depends on what commitments have been made to them. Miles would have to check into the details.

Comments:

- If parking is disallowed around park, then the RPP area should be expanded as I am just past the park and will then have parking issues around my house. It should be the City going from house to house getting signatures as I don't feel it is my job to do this. As well, many on my block are renters and not owners so not sure how this will work.

Miles stated the City has gone back to neighbourhoods several times and it works best if neighbours are talking to neighbours, not the City asking. This can be coordinated through your Community Association and work as a team. As noted before, renters are also residents and originally the program began with lots of renters in the area.

Questions:

➤ **When was the RPP zone most recently increased?**

Miles noted it was increased in 2007 along Saskatchewan Crescent.

Comments:

- With regards to Luther Towers, it would be positive if the City of Saskatoon approached them in regards to the new Eco bus pass program. As a city, we need to make it a healthy place for all. Special parking permits should not be given.

Questions:

- **Why don't we have a time frame where there is no parking allowed for anyone? Maybe this will help with alleviating the parking issues.**

The City's approach is still to make the streets open to the public and when you bring this type of restriction in they don't always achieve what they initially are set out to accomplish. Bedford Road does have a no parking zone from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm which makes it really easy to enforce, but it is a really rough and tough way to do things.

Comments:

- The "No Parking Sign" on the corner of 15th and Wiggins (south side) is missing. (NOTE: This issue has now been passed along to Traffic Services to look into.)

Summary from flip chart

- Parking in the lanes is a problem
- Parking around President Murray Park and Brunskill Scholl is currently allowed (not under RPP)
- Public "for sale" parking in the back yards of residential lots occurs

- Employee Parking for Luther Towers is a problem
- If parking is disallowed around President Murray Park, then the zone should be expanded
- Eco-pass (bus passes) – put pressure on Luther Towers to use the bus.

Paula thanked Miles for attending the meeting.

A map of multi-residential sites was handed out to committee as a follow-up to a previous request by the LAP committee to better understand the locations of multi-family sites in Varsity View.

3. Neighbourhood Safety Action Plan

Mark handed out the Draft Varsity View Local Area Plan Neighbourhood Safety Action Plan.

He stated from the last meeting he developed some of the perceived safety issues and put together this draft to look at together and help guide the next steps.

There were 4 steps identified in the Neighbourhood Safety Action Plan:

1. The Neighbourhood Planning Staff is in the process of gathering additional information on all the neighbourhood parks throughout Varsity View from internal and external sources to identify whether these perceived issues are known to be ongoing concerns.
2. Neighbourhood Planning Staff will conduct initial site assessments on some areas noted by LAP Committee such as lane to west of northeast corner of neighbourhood as well as some other. This will help with decision on how best to proceed in addressing the issues at each location.

The staff will go out and assess those locations because there may be obvious improvements that can be recommended. Some issues may not be as visible once university is out for the summer, so more than one visit may be necessary, meaning Spring and possibly again in September. It is also noted that nicer weather tends to create more opportunities for illegitimate usage of parks.

Two Safety Audit walk-about with the LAP committee and local residents are being proposed.

3. President Murray Park – a Safety Audit by the LAP committee and Neighbourhood Planning Staff. The safety audit will identify specific safety concerns, opportunities for crime to occur and resident’s perception of safety.
4. Raoul Wallenberg Park, Albert Park, and Albert Rec Unit Park – a Safety Audit by the LAP committee and Neighbourhood Planning Staff. The safety audit will identify specific safety concerns, opportunities for crime to occur and residents’ perception of safety.

Everyone on the Safety Audit walk-about will be brought into the areas of perceived issues to assess the sites with their own eyes. We’ll also schedule the walks to occur near sundown to take advantage of seeing the areas in full daylight and after the sun has set. This is because some areas may feel safe during the day and feel quite different at night. The thoughts and opinions of each person taking part in the Safety Audit will be recorded individually on a survey form. Instead of sitting and looking at a map trying to recall and understand where the issues are, this is more hands on.

Albert Rec Unit Park is not within the boundaries of Varsity View, but since it was not reviewed as part of the Nutana Local Area Plan, we will include it in our Safety Audits because concerns were raised at the Varsity View LAP Committee Neighbourhood Safety meeting.

Mark stated these two audits could be done within the same week or else space them out a bit with a week or two between them. Is everyone willing to come out one or two evenings?

It was agreed the committee would come out and would prefer a week or two between the two Safety Audits. The committee also agreed to encourage family members and friends to join the Safety Audit and share their opinions.

Comments:

- When a date has been set would like more of the neighbourhood to come out and see with fresh eyes.

Mark stated that once dates have been set, the immediate area around the park being audited will be flyer'd to inform people and invite them to the Safety Audit. He stated audits would likely start in the evening light and finish when it was dark to be able to allow everyone to see whether the look and feel of the area changes when the sun goes down.

- Reminder that university is out soon and there are certain seasons that the park is used for illegitimate things.
- The warmer it is, the more people use the park for good or bad.
- It is important to book the dates soon, so that people can put them into their calendar ahead of time.

Questions:

- **Does this audit bring forward only simple structural changes or can recommendations be written for quicker access to police or response time?**

Mark stated the survey is focused more on the built environment and how it impacts perceptions. You could recommend that an emergency call box be established in the park, if you believed that would help, as opposed to requesting that police come through the park ten times a day.

- **The area directly behind Brunskill School, can we make recommendations or not because it is school property?**

This area can be added to look at during the President Murray Park Safety Audit. Even though it is school property, the City can work with Brunskill School if there are major concerns raised and proposals to address these issues.

Comments:

- Committee member noted that her husband is a “graffiti buster” he has a kit and goes around neighbourhood removing graffiti as much as he can so these audits may not show how much graffiti there really is.

Mark noted it is important for him to come on the audits to share his knowledge of the area because he could likely confirm if graffiti is new or old. He could also tell us about problem areas and help us know the difference between a location with graffiti that has been tagged 6 times in the last 6 months or only once and never removed.

Questions:

- **Who is responsible to clean up graffiti on Canada Post Boxes? What about trash cans?**

Just as the utility companies are responsible for cleaning up graffiti on their own utility boxes, Canada Post is responsible for their boxes. Trash cans are the responsibility of the homeowner, as it belongs to the current owner of the property.

Mark stated the area around Kinsmen Children Centre and Brunskill School will be added to the planned President Murray Park Safety Audit. Dates will be selected for possibly late-May for President Murray Park and around the first week in June for the other parks. Discussion will follow these audits to look at if any follow-up walk-about are required to see the area at a different time of year.

4. Closing Remarks

Paula thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and stated information about the Safety Audits will be sent out as soon as they have been scheduled.

- 5. Next Meeting:** **Wednesday, May 12, 2010**
 7:00 – 9:00 pm
 Brunskill School
 Topic: College Quarter

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 pm