



VISION: We will be a vibrant, dependable and clean city where services are delivered innovatively and effectively.

MISSION: To provide effective operations of the city through collaboration of members, management and staff.

City Hall, Hamilton
Residents Advisory Committee
6 April 2017
4:00pm

Present: Councillor Carlton Johnson (Chair)
Rt. Wor. Charles R. Gosling, JP
Councillor Henry Ming
Councillor George Scott, JP
Councillor RoseAnn Edwards
Sarah Thompson, Associate Member
Dr. Michael Bradshaw, Associate Member
Tracy Marshall, Associate Member
Erica Smith, Associate Member

In Attendance: Ed Benevides, Secretary
Danilee Trott, Event Project Manager

-
1. **Confirmation of Notice** - The Secretary confirmed that the notices of the meeting and the agenda were sent out according to the meeting guidelines.
 2. **Role of the Chairman** - Councillor Carlton Johnson assumed the role as the Chairman.
 3. **Open Meeting** - Councillor Carlton Johnson opened the meeting at 4:03pm.
 4. **Apologies** - the Secretary confirmed that no apologies had been received.

5. **Public Participation:**

There is no public participation/presentation.

6. **Correspondence:**

(i) **Take Note Article: "Financially Insecure Residents Can Cost Cities Millions"** which was included in the Members' information packets. Mrs. Smith advised that it is a summary on options for cities on how to address residents and consideration of services for residents who are in lower/middle income. It is an opinion piece speaking to shoring up the economic or financial viability of residents contributing to city coffers.

If there are residents challenged financially, there is a correlation on how it could cost cities millions of dollars. It gives some examples of cities from around the world and gives some recommendations on what cities could consider in trying to address these issues. There is an ongoing challenge with vagrancy, homelessness and anti-social behavior in North-East Hamilton. Generally, there is difficulty engaging residents from that sector because when people have other considerations, e.g. how to feed themselves, how to stay in their homes, etc., they are not going to have consideration of beautification, it is all about self-preservation. There is a fair number of rentals as opposed to home ownership. People that own property would definitely take more interest in their surrounding area.

The Mayor commented that from that article, whether the Residents Advisory Committee wanted to suggest what the CoH should be looking at, e.g. an increase in the rental market in the City, should the CoH be more interested in increasing the residential ownership component. He asked what key factors would help bridge any potential disconnect.

Mrs. Smith said she forwarded the article because she felt it was an area for discussion around the table since the Committee had been provided with the "Laying the Groundwork for Change" document and other documents.

Councillor Johnson asked if there is any data to show the breakdown of non-payment of CoH's taxes in that sector and if there are any other causes of concern. The Mayor said if the CoH has the information, then it can be determined if there are any concerns or not. The Secretary said there are some points in the report that do not apply to the CoH, e.g. health and security services, etc. The challenge is that the City has the problems but does not necessarily have the remit or the authority or the finances to be able to deal with them. The biggest rate issues are generally not residents but some of the commercial ones are problematic. The Mayor said there was a change made at the beginning of last year in that previously rates were split between the owner and the occupier but are now taken on purely by the owner, making the owner responsible 100%. It would be interesting, once a bit of history has been gathered maybe from the next return of the billing in July, would then be able to make a determination.

Mrs. Smith said a survey was done regarding the socio-economic indicators in North-East Hamilton versus the rest of Bermuda. At that time, there was a huge disparity in income levels, education, employment, property ownership and property values between that part of the City and the rest of Bermuda. Part of the remit of the Economic Empowerment Zone (EEZ) has been to try and close that gap as much as possible. By doing that, assist with improving the area, the individual person and businesses. They are in the process of re-doing that survey.

ACTION: Associate Member, Mrs. Erica Smith to share the data received from the survey with the Members of the Residents Advisory Committee.

The Secretary commented that the CoH could use the social media that they have available to assist in any way that is needed, e.g. Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

7. Minutes of Previous Committee Meeting dated 2 March 2017

Proposed: Councillor H. Ming

Seconded: Councillor G. Scott

The Minutes were accepted as read.

8. Matters arising from the Minutes dated 2 March 2017:

(i) **Forward to the Residents Advisory Committee the Government Acts that pertain to addressing vacant, derelict buildings and land:** The Secretary confirmed that the documents were received and forwarded to all Members very promptly after the meeting.

The Mayor commented on Section 38 within the Municipalities Act and the CoH's ability to create Ordinances. The City is empowered to do Ordinances regarding the issue of derelict buildings, etc. What is needed, is a true interest with the City residents to aggressively go after some of these buildings that have been allowed to fall apart. He said that he is willing to stick his neck out if he goes down that route but would like to have the support of the residents.

Ms. Thompson expressed her support because if one lives next to a building that is falling apart, then their property value decreases. She commented on the property behind her that has been vacant since a hurricane a couple of years ago. The roof is falling in and the walls are starting to buckle out. The next issue is that someone is going to start living in that derelict building. Butterfield & Vallis have bought part of Brooklyn Hill and they are starting to demolish. People were starting to squat in some of those buildings. Derelict buildings also lead to the infestation of vermin, etc.

Councillor Johnson said the first step is to possibly contact the owners of these derelict buildings and if that is not possible, then the Committee might have to come up with an incentive to get private enterprise to take over the buildings through some authority, put in on the market for rental so that the monies can be recouped and then at some point turn it back over to the owner.

Councillor Ming reiterated what the Mayor had proposed that he would need some assurance from the residents (outside the ones that are on the Committee) that this is the right way to go, before looking at incentives, etc.

The Mayor said if he could receive some letters from people that have derelict buildings in their neighbourhood asking what the CoH is doing in that regard. The letters should also state the financial and economic impact on their ownership and the problems that arise because of squatting, vagrants, mosquitos, rodents, etc. That would give him the ammunition to start the way forward to have discussions with the Minister. If this truly has value for the community, he would be willing to go out and push for it. There was further discussion on this issue.

Councillor Johnson asked if there is a way to put a question in the CoH's newsletter regarding the derelict buildings, etc. for some feedback. The Event Project Manager asked if the specific wording could be forwarded to her. It was noted that the newsletter is produced twice a month.

Councillor Ming said there are two (2) things to look at: (i) the residents expressing their concerns; and then (ii) looking for some form of information regarding the residents displeasure with the current situations and that they will assist the CoH as much as possible to address. The Secretary commented that this would be for any derelict structures within the City - residential and commercial.

Mrs. Smith asked if another question could be if the residents have any suggestions on how to deal with the issue. The Mayor said if there is enough public input in the beginning, that would enable the CoH to step forward acknowledging their concerns and identify certain properties. Also, would have to ensure that the owners and neighbours are asked simultaneously for suggestions for the way forward.

ACTION: The Event Project Manager will forward an electronic copy of the next CoH newsletter to the Resident Advisory Committee Members.

There was continued dialogue on who receives the newsletter. Currently all Council and Committee Members should receive the newsletter.

ACTION: The Event Project Manager will have the Communications Manager check into who receives the newsletter.

Dr. Bradshaw joined the meeting at 4:25pm.

9. Status Update:

(i) **Events:** The Event Project Manager advised that the Project and Rentals Coordinator, Tamara Bradshaw sent out the Events Calendar for the month of April. The calendar shows an overview of the events that are happening in April:

- **International Town Crier Competition:** The first Town Criers arrived today. They will be starting to arrive over the next few weeks. The competition runs from the 19 -21 April 2017 and invites have been sent out. If any members are planning to attend the competitions, to advise and seating can be arranged. An invitation for the Prizegiving/Dinner has also been sent out and the RSVP's are needed as soon as possible to firm up the catering.
- **Art Project:** Washington Properties, even after the submissions had been extended and went back out to RFP, were still not satisfied with the applications that were received. They decided to part ways with the CoH and are going to move on their own to do Washington Lane. The Event Project Manager met with Ms. Marshall, Ms. Thompson and Mrs. Smith and offered the opportunity for those submissions to be used in different areas that they identified. The areas will be presented at the next Infrastructure Committee meeting for approval.
- **America's Cup and Tall Ships:** Emails will be sent advising the details of all the events with dates and times, venue, etc.

FYI - On Sunday, 8 April 2017 there is the International Triathlon Union (ITU) and the City will be gridlocked. There will be no access in and out of the City except via North Shore. This is the first of what will be happening annually as a part of the bid that Government won that Bermuda has up until 2020 to host the ITU.

ACTION: The Event Project Manager to forward a copy of the road closures for the ITU.

The Event Project Manager commented on the Calendar of Events put forward by the Residents Advisory Committee. The Art Project was discussed earlier in the meeting. She confirmed the Christmas request, i.e. the decorating of the Christmas tree on the corner of Court and Dundonald Streets will involve the Dellwood School and the \$500.00 budget request can come out the Events' Christmas budget. The only outstanding event that would require a budget (\$5K) would be the picnic/gathering for the residents. It was discussed to change the date from 1 July to sometime closer to Labour Day.

The Mayor said the challenge would be in terms of funding as it is not part of the current budget. In the past with Dale Butler's residents group, the CoH supported his event with barricades and potted plants, etc. to beautify the street when they wanted to close off their section of Angle Street. Mr. Butler and his group also went out to the businesses to secure sponsorship from them. The Mayor suggested looking at that as being a means of getting some of the support for the event.

(ii) **Printing of Resident Informational Magnet:** The Secretary confirmed that the Council approved the recommendation from the Finance Committee and now just waiting on the Minister's approval. Once his approval is received regarding the \$2,500.00 request for funding, then the monies will be available to move forward with the printing of the magnet.

The Mayor commented on the flyer for the residents. The Event Project Manager said the changes were discussed in the meeting she had the Associate Members. The Mayor said one of the main things is that this is a CoH Residents Advisory Committee. The CoH has gone out their way to ensure that Members of the Committee have a vote and have the ability to create motions and to second them. This is not a group that comes in to meet the City every month. He wants to get past not doing anything. He would like to be chewing off subjects like derelict properties, etc. That would have a much more day-to-day meaning for the residents than a "picnic/gathering".

Ms. Marshall queried one of the changes under: "What is The Group's Purpose? Is a zoning matter affecting your property? The Mayor commented that one of the nice things about living in the City is that zoning laws have no application at all. Ms. Marshall said she was trying to get across what happens when someone wants to build a commercial entity next to or near your property. The Secretary will assist with the proper wording and it has to do with the Hamilton Plan even though it is a Department of Planning issue. There really should be some ownership by the CoH of the Planning authority for the City. Either the Secretary or the City Engineer should be a resource to help address these issues on behalf of the residents. Dialogue continued on the Department of Planning process. The Secretary continued by saying that the residents can express concerns so that at least the Planning Board are made aware that those concerns exist.

Ms. Thompson commented on the disseminating of the flyer once the changes have been made, possibly sending them out with the tax statements, etc. The intention of the flyer was to provide the information to the residents. She apologized for any miscommunication that was had as it relates to the current information on the flyer. Going forward when information like this is circulated, if there are changes to be made, to advise the Committee as soon as possible to assist with better dialogue and communication with the business owners and the residents.

The Mayor left the meeting at 4:45pm.

10. Recommendations for Review:

There are no recommendations for review.

11. Any Other Business:

(i) **Safety and Security re: Anti-Social Behaviour:** Ms. Marshall said this was discussed in their meeting held earlier in the week and brought this matter up out of frustration. She was reminded that the CoH does not have any policing powers. She also questioned whether the CCTV cameras are being monitored, etc. When the Committee had their KBB clean-up on 18 March, the older persons were very protective of the younger children from others that were displaying anti-social behavior, e.g. bad language, etc.

Councillor Johnson commented on the trash being discarded at the top of Ewing Street/Till's Hill at the expense of the CoH having to go and collect. The CoH had asked prior if the police could assist in finding out who was doing the dumping of the trash. The Secretary said the CoH wanted the cameras to look into a particular area and the police said that they would look into what times the cameras could be re-directed. The cameras were being used in a different direction to cover certain activities. A response was never received from them regarding a time when the cameras could be re-directed. The CoH is still planning to place their own cameras in that location at some point. It has become more of a challenge than originally thought, i.e. sorting out some of the boundaries in that area. Once the car parks are expanded, will be looking at having more cameras. Due to budgetary reasons, the CoH has not been able to install their cameras. The only cameras that are being monitored are by the CCTV with the police.

(ii) Various Discussion Topics:

- **Anti-Social Behaviour** - Mrs. Smith said the CoH, the staff and the Mayor have had on-going discussions with the police. She asked if there is an opportunity to have the police come to the CoH and present to the Committee on what their strategy is for safety within the City and a possible way for residents, etc. to partner on a particular initiative. They may have multitudes of initiatives that they see happening in other cities that they would like to see implemented in Bermuda but also have a lack of resources. In Bermuda, there are different agencies and Government that are responsible for things in the country but that does not negate the Committee and others from taking ownership. She firmly believes that if something has to be addressed, it can be regardless of any barriers.

- **Trash** - The prospective is about education but also about engagement. Mrs. Smith commented on the Mayor's comment regarding the Committee dealing with more substantive matters. In addition to substantive matters, there has to be a relationship with the stakeholders of the constituents because without that nothing will happen. Some may have seen the KBB clean-up as of no value or of little importance. She believes that exercise made a world of difference and if the Committee continues in that vein, eventually peoples' behaviors will be modified. The little things that are done do make a difference incrementally. Even though there are still some challenges in that area, compared to ten (10) years ago, changes have been made. The challenges that the CoH faces are the same challenges experienced in any city. The challenges that Government has are similar to Governments around the world. Dialogue continued on incentives.

Ms. Thompson said that she has been a proponent for the wheelie bins. She said the Secretary had advised that they were on order. The Secretary said the wheelie bins have been received but he is waiting for the Garbage Ordinance Amendment to be approved by Government before they can be distributed. At this point in time, other than the Government's Litter Act, the CoH has nothing in place to address the situation. Mrs. Smith commented on a possible process of receiving complaints with detailed information and on behalf of the CoH, that information can be forwarded on to the Minister indicating that, as part of their legislation, they have the ability to address the matter. She asked if this type of process was feasible until the CoH had the ability to legally address this matter.

The Secretary said the CoH tried that process initially with parking to no avail; to date there is no Parking Ordinance. He advised that the CoH could try to work on that process, i.e. the number of complaints and the data on the photos would have a date and time stamp. Hopefully the Garbage Ordinance will be on the agenda and before the House when they are back in session. Once approval is received, then the CoH will be able to track who is doing what and be able to charge accordingly.

- **Specific Beautification** - Mrs. Smith said they tried to have hanging baskets at one time but the maintenance was an issue. She suggested having hanging baskets with artificial plants. There are several cities around the world that use that as an alternative to real plants or flowers. The Secretary said the CoH has investigated further in this regard and have found that there are pots that have an inner chamber which eliminates having to water the plants and flowers as much. He has asked the Parks Superintendent to look into those and possibly get businesses to sponsor. The material that they are made from is recycled raw material. They are designed in such a way that there would be no mosquito issue.

- **Placemaking Seminar and Workshops** - These were done through the Department of Planning and there was a fair number of CoH staff and Council Members present. Mrs. Smith wanted to ascertain the next steps with regards to utilising the information received in the seminar and workshops.

- **City Transportation** - Mrs. Smith commented that at one point there were discussions had with PTB and the City with regards to transportation in North-East Hamilton. The Secretary said that the CoH had worked out some routes and forwarded the cost to PTB but have not received any response to date. There are some challenges on some of the routes. They were looking to change some of the routes both from the west and the east to be able to pick up a couple of areas through North-East and South-East Hamilton.

One area that cannot be used is Victoria Street until parking is taken off one (1) side. The Secretary commented that they can revisit the old information to see if it is still current. Councillor Johnson commented that the only solution that would be quicker would be if PTB had a designated smaller vehicle. The Secretary said he received a phone call from the mini buses stating that the Government is engaging the Mini Bus Association to take on a lot of the effort of the buses. The Event Project Manager advised that PTB have taken the pink and blue buses off the sightseeing routes (8 buses) to put them back into circulation because they are short of buses. Most of the mini buses are for tourist movement and for shuttling services.

Councillor Ming left the meeting at 5:00pm.

ACTION: The Secretary to check further in transportation possibilities for the North-East Hamilton area and report back in the next Residents Advisory Committee meeting.

The Event Project Manager said if the Committee was minded moving forward in this regard, now would be an appropriate time to address this matter because so much temporary parking will be lost on Front Street for a period and Bull's Head will become full. There will be more of a demand for shuttling services. Now would be a suitable time to bring this discussion before the Government.

There were no further matters to be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.