



**North Park Neighbourhood Association
February 2025 Monthly Meeting**

DATE: February 11th, 2025
TIME: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Community Room at [1025 Mason Street](#)
- or -
Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88416867584>
Phone in: 778-907-2071 (Meeting ID: 884 1686 7584)

6:30 pm Territorial acknowledgement, Opening Remarks and Introductions - NPNA

The North Park Neighbourhood Association acknowledges the homelands of the Lekwungen Speaking Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, on whose lands we are living, working, and collaborating.

Attendance / Introductions

Board members present: Kaitie Fillion,
Guests: Bri Godsmann (NPNA), Courtney Miller (NPNA), Jessica Murray (NPNA), Gary Pemberton, Compost Education Centre

Other:

This month's meeting will be about green space and food security in our neighbourhood. We'll open the meeting with a conversation about the results of the Crystal Pool referendum and next steps, and the remainder of the agenda will be reserved for an exploration of gardening and food security.

6:35 pm City of Victoria Update - Stephen Hammond

Each week, Councillor Stephen Hammond provides updates on the City of Victoria Council agenda and shares important information relevant to North Park. He then opens the floor for attendees to ask questions.

- The Crystal Pool Referendum was held on February 8th. Voters approved borrowing up to \$168.9 million for the proposed pool facility. The North location option was the most favoured, receiving over 60% of the votes.
- Although the location question was non-binding, City Council has committed to honouring the voters' choice, though the final decision on the pool's location is still pending before moving forward with the design phase.



Meeting Notes

- The Crystal Pool Referendum will eventually return to Council for a decision on what will be done at the proposed location and whether the North or South option will be chosen.
- Although the overall plan for the Crystal Pool site has been finalized, the specific elements have yet to be determined. These details are necessary to finalize the cost estimates.
- There was a discussion about the budget implications for Council, referencing the report presented on December 12th, 2024.
- A question was raised about what the City might need to cut from the budget to reduce overall costs due to the expense of the Crystal Pool. This is still under consideration.
- Councillor Stephen Hammond will be away and unable to attend the next meeting.

6:45 pm Land Use Update: Courtney Miller (NPNA)

1026/1028/1030 Empress Avenue

Project Overview: Bowcey Construction has submitted a Rezoning and Development Permit with Variances application to construct seven (7) new strata townhouse units at 1026/1028 and 1030 Empress Avenue. The project details are as follows:

- The development includes seven units: one (1) one-bedroom unit, five (5) two-bedroom units, and one (1) three-bedroom unit.
- Two of the units will be adaptable dwelling units to better accommodate the needs of future residents.
- A dedicated, secure bike room with an accessible path of travel is included.
- Although the civic address of the properties is on Empress Avenue, the new townhouses will be oriented toward Bay Street. All units will have at-grade access and are designed to be entered from Bay Street rather than Empress Avenue.
- The two existing residential houseplexes at 1028 and 1030 Empress Avenue will be retained.
- No on-site parking will be provided for the two existing house conversion buildings, in alignment with relaxed parking requirements for such conversions.

Project Update: On January 21, 2025, revised plans for 1026/1028 and 1030 Empress Avenue were resubmitted for staff review. Key changes include:

- On-site parking has been reduced from seven (7) stalls to one (1) accessible stall.
- The on-site parking stall has been relocated from the back of the townhouses (Empress Avenue side) to the front (Bay Street side) and is now accessed from Bay Street rather than Empress Avenue.
- Lot line adjustments have been made to fully orient the new townhomes along Bay Street, eliminating access from Empress Avenue and preserving the Empress Avenue frontage.
- The bike storage room capacity has increased from 13 to 16 spaces.



- Waste and recycling facilities have been relocated from the back of the townhouses (Empress Avenue side) to the front (Bay Street side).
- Additional greenspace and landscaping have been incorporated between the new townhouses and the existing buildings at 1028 and 1030 Empress Avenue.

1520 Blanshard Street (Downtown) CALUC Meeting

Project Overview: Reliance Properties is proposing a 35-storey mixed-use building at 1520 Blanshard Street, located just outside the North Park neighbourhood. The proposal features ground-floor retail, co-working space on the second floor, and residential units on the upper floors. The residential units include a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom options. The plan also outlines a large public plaza as part of the development.

Project Update: The CALUC meeting, hosted by the Downtown Residents Association (DRA) in partnership with the applicant Reliance Properties, took place on February 10th at the Hotel Rialto.

As the next step, the DRA will submit a letter to the mayor and council summarizing the feedback received from the public through emails, CALUC meeting, and the engagement platform linked to the development tracker.

Some of the key feedback highlighted during the meeting included:

- **Building Height:** Opinions were mixed—some attendees raised concerns, while others supported the proposed height.
- **Design:** Many disapproved of the initial renderings, emphasizing the need for a more unique design, mainly since this will be the tallest building in Victoria.
- **Traffic and Parking:** Concerns were raised about potential increases in traffic and parking availability.
- **Blasting:** Attendees questioned the extent of blasting required for underground parking and concern for the surrounding buildings.
- **Plaza Maintenance:** There were concerns about the long-term upkeep and maintenance responsibilities, as the building will be part of a strata.

7:00 pm: North Park Events and Updates - Bri Godsman (NPNA)

Indoor Microgreens and Sprouts Workshop

- Join the Compost Education Centre for a workshop on growing microgreens and sprouts. Learn about essential equipment, the differences between microgreens and sprouts, and how to grow these tender greens, including seed selection, timing, and care. We'll also cover their nutritional benefits and more!
- **Date:** Wednesday, February 12th, 7:30 p.m.



- Location: 1216 North Park Street (Compost Education Centre).

Knitting Night

- Learn the basics of knitting and start a fun new project or work on an existing one. Materials will be provided.
- Date: Monday, February 17th, 6:00 p.m.
- Location: 1701 Quadra Street (in our office).

Clay Play

- Create a fun trinket using air-dry clay. All supplies will be provided.
- Date: Monday, February 27th, 6:00 p.m.
- Location: 1701 Quadra Street (in our office)

Sign-up Information

[Please sign up on Eventbrite](#) so we can plan for the appropriate amount of supplies. Walk-ins are welcome, even if the event appears to be sold out.

7:15 pm: Guest speaker- Kayla Seifried- Compost Education Centre

The Victoria Compost and Conservation Education Society promotes composting, organic gardening, conservation, local food production, and urban sustainability. This is accomplished by being an educational and retail resource through our demonstration site, staff, volunteers, outreach, and workshops for children and adults throughout the Capital Regional District.

Mandate

The mandate of the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre is to encourage composting and conservation by:

- Providing public education programs to residents of Greater Victoria in composting, organic gardening, and conservation practices.
- Establishing a demonstration site where the public can observe and experience various aspects of composting, ecological gardening, and conservation.
- Operating a telephone hotline to answer general inquiries about composting, organic gardening, and conservation.
- Actively soliciting membership in the society.
- Engaging volunteers in all aspects of the society's activities.

Programs and Services

The Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre offers:



- Free educational literature on composting kitchen and yard waste, using compost, and troubleshooting common issues.
- Site tours, workshops, and presentations on composting and organic gardening.
- Educational programs for elementary schools.
- Educational programs for high schools.
- Community workshops.
- A compost bin showcase and organic demonstration gardens.
- A volunteer training program for compost educators.
- Community outreach initiatives.
- Compost Club membership, including a regular newsletter.
- Composters and other composting supplies are available for purchase.
- A straw bale demonstration building.
- A resource library.

7:30 pm Dowler Access Hub Update - Mark Wilson (SOLID Outreach Society)

Mark Wilson from the SOLID Outreach Society will provide an update on the Access Hub project at 2155 Dower Place.

Meeting Notes

- There are currently two referrals per day, serving around 10 people.
- Within a week or two, they will reach full capacity.
- The majority of the individuals will be those transitioning out of stabilization.
- Jones BBQ will provide food services.
- There is consideration to set up a warming site at Cook Street.
- Island Health provides numerous referrals, in addition to private facilities.
- The website needs to be updated to accurately reflect the services currently available and running smoothly.

7:45 pm Questions/Action Items

Questions for Kayla Seifreid (VIRCS), Gary Pemberton (City of Victoria), Mark Wilson (SOLID), NPNA Board and Staff.