

Dean_final Fernwood Council Liaison Report

By Dean Fortin

Finally, with cautious optimism, it looks like we have started on a road to resolving a major issue in Fernwood – the mis-management of the apartments at 2120 Ridge Road and 2111 Spring Street, and the negative effect they have had on the community. Recently, City Council moved to a business licence hearing, threatening to remove the owner's ability to run the apartments. This led to a last minute arrangement for Brown Brothers to take over the management of the two buildings and undertake to fix the problems. The Community has formed a working group to provide Brown Brothers with information and assistance to making the arrangement succeed. Members of the Fernwood Safety Committee have been active in moving this matter forward and are to be commended for their persistence and diligence.

Recently, community concerns around safety and illegal activity around the Johnson Manor also came to my attention. The facility had been running with little incidents for the past three years, but recently, in the past year, activity around and in the residences was becoming alarming. I was happy to be able to facilitate a meeting of the local neighbours, Safety Committee members, city staff, and representatives from Cool Aid. We highlighted the issues and concerns, and Cool Aid was able to act on the neighbours' information and take steps to correct the behaviours of some of the tenants and their visitors. It appears that problems have abated and will continue to improve.

I am happy to announce that, working with Fernwood Community Association members and representatives of the Housing Coop on Gladstone, we were able to compliment the upgrades they undertook by contributing to the resurfacing of the alley and parking spaces around the FCA building. It looks great, the pervious surfacing helps reduce storm water contamination, and it makes for good neighbour relations.

I was recently elected the Chair of the CRD Housing Trust commission. November marked the launch of the CRD Affordable Housing Trust Fund, whereby we “opened for business” and are now accepting applications for the funds. It was great to have representatives from the Fernwood Community Centre at the launch and highlighted as one of the potential recipients of funds for renovating the suites at the Cornerstone building. I will look forward to seeing the proposal through the system.

It has been my great pleasure to work with residents in the Fernwood community and to represent your interests at the City of Victoria council chambers over the past three years. There have been many great things accomplished, from Chamber Street improvements, the Stevenson Park upgrades, passing a Problem Property Bylaw, securing Alexander Park as the dogs off-leash site, greening the traffic circles in Fernwood, hosting a community forum with the senior police officers, and much more. None of this could have been accomplished without the involvement and commitment of many community members. I live in the Fernwood area, and being Council liaison has enriched my

understanding and experience of the community. As always, it is the people that enrich a community.

I have now been reassigned to the Quadra Hillside and the North Park communities as council liaison. I am looking forward to working on behalf of those neighbourhoods, but it is with a sad heart I leave Fernwood in my official liaison capacity. As a Fernwood resident, I plan to attend as many community festivals and celebrations as possible, and to continue to support the hopes and dreams of the community at the council table. See you in the neighbourhood.