

West Jasper Place Sherwood Drainage Task Force
Minutes of Meeting #1
November 25, 2015 at West Jasper Place/Sherwood Community Hall

Present:

- Sherina Dhala, resident, West Jasper Place
- Sandro Marrocco, resident, West Jasper Place
- Wendy Woodruff, resident, West Jasper Place
- Peter Doell, resident, West Jasper Place
- Hanna Nash, resident, West Jasper Place
- Clem Yong, Director, Project Delivery, Drainage Services, City of Edmonton
- Todd Wyman, Director, Drainage Planning, City of Edmonton
- Godfrey Huybregts, City of Edmonton consultant and Task Force Coordinator
- Leslie Beard, Communications Manager, Finance and Utilities, City of Edmonton

Regrets:

- Karl Holba, resident, West Jasper Place
- Shirley Thompson, resident, West Jasper Place
- Mary-Ann McLennan, resident, West Jasper Place
- Johnnothan Cruz, owner, Holy Angels Day Care
- Andrew Knack, Councillor, Ward 1

1. Introductions & Attendance

Following introductions, Mr. Huybregts noted the West Jasper Sherwood Community League Board has declined an invitation to be part of the Task Force but that the offer would remain open. Those in attendance agreed the Task Force should proceed even without the Community League Board's involvement and that the Board should not have undue influence over the Task Force.

2. Agenda

The agenda was approved with no changes.

3. Task Force Terms of Reference

A draft prepared by Mr. Huybregts was reviewed and discussed. In addition to a number of wording and phrasing changes, the group wanted more details added to the background section. They also wanted the purpose to reflect that a Task Force duty, among other things, was to hold the City accountable for monitoring and responding to issues arising from the sewer projects.

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Feedback also resulted in changes to the Task Force membership structure. The number of members from the West Jasper Sherwood Community League Board was reduced from four to two. The requirement to have an equal number of Board members on the Task Force from West Jasper Place and Sherwood was eliminated as the current Board does not have any Sherwood representation. To increase transparency, the membership section will note the Task Force coordinator/facilitator is contracted by the City of Edmonton.

Based on the verbal and written feedback provided, Mr. Huybregts will draft a revised Terms of Reference for the group's consideration.

4. Update on Odour Control, Gas Monitoring and Health Concerns

Mr. Wyman provided an overview of Drainage Service's current city-wide efforts to track and identify the source and cause of sewer odours in various neighbourhoods. He noted that reporting by residents via 311 every time they smell an odour is valuable in building an accurate picture of location, frequency and likely cause.

When residents from West Jasper Place or Sherwood identify the neighbourhood they are from when making an odour call to 311, this will connect them directly to Drainage Operations staff. They will gather the necessary information and, if necessary, immediately dispatch an available odour inspector to investigate.

Task Force members noted that it is unlikely someone will call 311 every time they smell an odour if the odour is a consistent and frequent occurrence (3-4 times a week). Mr. Wyman emphasized this data is important though because it enables the City to develop and implement effective controls and preventative measures based on evidence and experience.

The City's installation of air depressurizing structures in sewer shafts is an example of an odour control strategy used across the city. Drainage Services' on-going research includes supporting a University of Alberta study on how air moves within sewer systems. This study will provide more insight on how odours caused by air flow may be managed better.

In response to residents' concerns, Drainage Services is hiring a third party consultant to study what sewer gases are present in West Jasper Place, their concentration levels and the possible impact on human health. Testing will occur close to suspected sources and in the tunnel shaft and main trunk at 99 Avenue and 151 Street.

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A similar study was done in 1998 at one location within West Jasper Place. Data collected will be compared to that earlier study. At the request of the Task Force, Mr. Wyman committed to sending the group the 1998 study, the scope of work for the consultant and a work schedule, once the job is awarded (expected in two weeks).

The City is working on uploading to the City's website, in real time, gas readings every 15 minutes. The readings will be from a monitor located above ground southeast of the shaft at 151 Street & 99 Avenue. This is expected to occur in the next few weeks. The Task Force recommended also posting equipment specifications and calibrations.

5. Project Construction

Mr. Yong provided an update on sewer construction work at 151 Street between 99 and 100 Avenues. Drainage Services is currently working on the construction of a shaft at 100 Avenue. This work is expected to be completed by February 2016. A sewage bypass line running on the west side of 151 Street is planned to start construction on December 7. The shaft and bypass line will allow workers to safely rehabilitate the trunk sewer with liners. The relining and rehabilitation work is expected to be completed in June 2016. The Task Force asked a number of clarifying questions regarding project details.

Mr. Yong noted the City, if required, ~~may hold an open house in the spring to provide~~ another detailed construction update and discuss the next phase(s) of the work. He also committed, in response to an inquiry, to research whether the sewer main at 99 Avenue and 151 Street contained a weir, and if so, was it taken out. However, Mr. Yong did state that to the best of his knowledge, the existing trunk sewer did not contain a weir, but a drop structure.

6. Communications

The Task Force noted that the City's communication efforts have improved since August but has issued contradictory or unclear information concerning the condition of sewer infrastructure, community risk, the rehabilitation process, project timing and other details. This has led to mistrust and confusion. They recommended:

- City staff 'get on the same page' regarding messaging and information.
- Keep information simple and easy to understand.
- Produce 3-D or simple step-by-step illustrations of the system and what the work is trying to accomplish.
- Post Go-Pro or CCTV images of the existing infrastructure so people can see the condition of the sewers for themselves.

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- Continue the biweekly bulletins as long as they continue to have substantive information.

7. Information Sharing

Task Force members said one of their expectations was timely responses to their inquiries and, in cases that require more time, a timeline for when a response could be expected. On behalf of the City, Mr. Wyman committed to doing so. He also noted City representatives on the Task Force would communicate issues of concern to other departments if the matter could not be resolved or responded to by Drainage Services.

The Task Force was comfortable sharing minutes with the West Jasper Sherwood Community League and residents but other material (working drafts) and communications (e.g. email exchanges) should be restricted to the Task Force. Broader distribution of certain materials should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

8. Next meeting

The next meeting was set for January 21, 2016 from 7-9 pm. Mr. Huybregts will try to secure the West Jasper Sherwood Community League hall again.
