

2038 NINTH AVENUE TEMPORARY ACTIVATION

Date:	June 16, 2022	Start time:	7:00pm
Location:	Zoom Meeting	End time:	8:00pm
Minutes prepared by:	Nell Gasiewicz		

Attendance	
Present	
Wendee Lang – <i>City of New Westminster, Climate Action, Planning and Development (CAPD)</i>	
Nell Gasiewicz – <i>City of New Westminster, Parks and Recreation (Parks)</i>	
Connaught Heights Residents' Association	

Purpose	
<i>To hear and document residents' ideas for temporary open space activation on the lot at 2038 Ninth Street.</i>	
Minutes & Action Items	
<p>1) Wendee Lang summarized the history of the site and advised that there is currently no permanent plan for the site.</p>	
<p>2) Nell Gasiewicz provided an overview of the site relative to the Parks and Recreation Departments' capital planning as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There are no funds in the current five-year capital budget allocated for any improvements on this site and, therefore, there is no planning, engagement or design associated with this site in Parks staff's current work plans. b) However, Parks staff were advised that there is a desire from residents for amenities on this site, which was expressed at a past Residents' Association meeting and there has been success in partnering with the community to provide low-impact, low-cost amenities, such as the pollinator meadow on BC-Hydro owned land. c) There are opportunities for Parks for partnership with the community to apply for small grants and implement temporary amenities at 2038 Ninth Avenue. d) After documenting participant ideas, Nell would report back to the Residents' Association with potential feasible improvements and funding opportunities. 	
<p>3) A number of priorities emerged from variety of ideas to activate the 2038 Ninth Ave. site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community gathering space; b) A space to sit and relax; c) Green space, preferably with trees; d) Consideration and acknowledgement of First Nations uses, preferably through engagement with the Nations; and e) A place for kids and families. 	
<p>4) Specific ideas for amenities to activate the space identified by meeting participants included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Benches; b) Native species planting and an area to sit under some trees; c) Butterfly garden; d) Continued mowing, not another meadow; e) Meaningful recognition and engagement of First Nations: f) interpretive elements; g) naming the site; h) planting indigenous species; i) involve the City's Indigenous Relations Advisor j) Something leafy, tree planting; k) A pathway through the space; 	

- l) A gazebo or roofed meeting place (more than just a bench);
- m) Take advantage of the west coast views;
- n) A stage;
- o) Space for dogs: people walk their dogs through the site;
- p) Repurposed picnic tables painted by community members;
- q) Quiet, leisurely area to relax and visit with one another;
- r) A place for children to play catch;
- s) Community gathering area – to continue community gatherings that began earlier in the Covid-19 pandemic (residents are planning a community gathering for later in the summer); and
- t) Levelling the land.

- 5) Several participants expressed a number of larger needs that are beyond the scope of a temporary activation at 2038 Ninth Avenue. This input is documented here and will be brought to senior Planning and Parks staff.
- a) Participants expressed a desire for a place to “come together as a community.”
 - b) There was some concern that the intent of the expansion of the school as a facility for community use had been lost.
 - c) Several participants expressed discontent at the lack of a programmed community facility in the Connaught Heights neighbourhood to replace the community building that was removed from this site in the 1970’s. Participants said that, although the Connaught Heights School expansion was intended as a community facility, this had been lost over the years. There was some discussion on this point: one participant stated that the school gym is available for bookings, another felt that the rates are too high to be viable for community meetings, and another stated they had been in touch with school staff and had made progress towards a workable solution to provide the Residents’ Association a meeting space.
 - d) Several participants expressed a feeling that Connaught Heights has been “left behind” and that it has a lower level of amenities than other New Westminster neighbourhoods. Some participants stated that there was an unmet promise on the City’s part to replace the former community building at 2038 Ninth Avenue. Various participants identified amenities they would like to see in a new City-run, programmed building, including meeting space, washrooms, kitchen, and outdoor space.
 - e) A couple participants stated that they would prefer to wait a couple years and “do it properly,” i.e. build a community centre, rather than a temporary activation.
 - f) Staff informed attendees of the meeting that these suggestions, as they were not temporary in nature, were beyond the scope of the meeting and that is currently no plan for a permanent structure at this site.

- 6) Next Steps:
- a) Parks staff will report to the Connaught Heights Residents’ Association with guiding principles and feasible temporary activation options based on resident ideas, as well as opportunities for third-party funding. Meeting date to be determined.
 - b) Parks and CAPD staff to submit feedback to senior staff.