



FALL 2023

News for the Varsity View and Grosvenor Park Neighbourhoods

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

—Jon Naylor, President, VVCA
President@vvcasaskatoon.com

Greetings, it is still summer and the neighborhood is blooming. A big shout out (thank-you) to all who took the time to make their front yards so attractive. Notable community events since my last message include community clean up. As usual, we removed nearly three dumpster loads of fire hazard, rodent motels and general unsightliness. A special note of appreciation to Fredy and Diane, and of course Barb, for doing a lot of the organization, the Church of Latter Day Saints for generously al-



lowing the use of their parking lot as an assembly area and all who took the time to move junk.

We had a healthy turnout for our Spring programming. Thanks again to Barb and all the instructors who take the time to add healthy and enjoyable activities to our community. All programmes are wonderful additions to our community. I would like to give a special acknowledgement of the work that Tammy does for the City's basketball programmes.



Our rink gave excellent service over winter and another season rapidly approaches (ugh!). This is only possible because Fredy, Mahdi, Carlos, Renee and several others arrive as early as 6:30 am to shovel snow and clear the rink so that community members can enjoy the skating. Volunteers to help out this winter would be greatly appreciated; the hours are flexible and many hands make light work.

A special thank you to the community garden for inviting our family to their annual pot luck. Fun entertainment and wonderful to see productive gardens helping with food security, feeding the needy, providing habitat for Monarch butterflies and simply giving neighbors a chance to enjoy the outdoors.

As usual, the city put on a variety of training sessions for community association members. I attended the President's workshop, an event that still stands out for its helpful advice on governance and managing community groups.

One notable neighborhood civic improvement is nearly completed. The pocket park outside D'Lish has been rebuilt and looks fantastic. Trent Watts has rebuilt the community library box to complement the development. We hope that the park will be named in honor of Cathy Watts, a tireless advocate for a more sustainable city. Planning is also underway for the renovation of Albert Community Centre. We can expect some disruption to events at the Centre.

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President's message continued

Civics

Councillors have likely been pre-occupied grappling with recommendations for substantial tax increases. The release of final plans for corridor growth along College appear to be delayed. At present I have no credible guidance on the amount and extent of density to be added to our neighborhood. The Arena proposal may have suffered a blow when a business association suggested it, and other major capital projects, be put on hold till taxation could be bought under control. Does council

believe that large capital projects are accomplished without the use of taxpayer dollars?

Sidewalks

There has been no progress to get level sidewalks without icy depressions for driveways. The official line is currently that level sidewalks with rolled curbs provide no pedestrian safety advantage over traditional sidewalks. Is it a random coincidence that rolled curbs are the standard in new neighborhoods? An administrative concern seems to be that they might encourage parking on front lawns. I must admit, I see cars parked on the grass every time I venture into new neighborhoods (not really). Forgive the sarcasm but level sidewalks just seem like an obvious safety improvement. Also, having one city wide standard would simplify administration and construction.

Bike Lanes

Well, this is a very sad story. We are all shocked and saddened by the death of mother, educator and international athlete Natasha Fox, who was hit by a truck while cycling at the intersection of Wiggins and College. At an emotional city council meeting, a motion was approved for a safety audit of the intersection and for more detailed recommendations on cyclist-driver interactions in Saskatchewan's Driver Handbook.

In a related story, city administration is recommending a 30 kph speed limit on the multi use section of 14th Street from Clarence to Cumberland. This multiuse road illustrates the problems associated with adding bike lanes to historic neighborhoods. Politically, council gets credit for installing a bike lane, Varsity View's first. Politicians also score points for doing this without spending any money on capital improvements to benefit cyclists. The little concrete sidewalks extensions that you see jutting out into 14th Street at major intersections? They are put there as pedestrian refuges, not to help cyclists. So, a new bike lane at minimal

cost. The problem, as one citizen stated in the question period following the Aden Bowman town hall, is that some cyclists feel safer on adjacent roadways. A 30 kph speed limit will rectify this problem. Overall, cyclists and motorists would prefer physically separate cycle and car paths. This will require both sides of the debate to come together to reach a consensus, as well as discussions about the creative use of public infrastructure like back alleys.

Flooding

Climate change and additional housing density have increased the risk of flooding. The University has agreed the City can use its land at Cumberland and 14th to build a dry pond to reduce this risk. These landscaped catchment basins fill during extreme rainfall and then drain dry as the sewer system can handle the backlog.

Climate Change

A useful list of resources on heating and emissions. To see a city heat map go to <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/info/2022/07/ilots-chaleur-villes-inegalites-injustice-changements-climatiques/en>. You can type in your postcode and see data for your area. To see how your house fares, visit <https://heat.myheat.ca/saskatoon/>. It is based on 2019 data. To see if you are getting more money back that you pay in carbon tax, visit <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/cbc-federal-carbon-tax-calculator-2023-24-year-65-dollars-per-tonne-1.6891467>

The Future

Watch out for updates on the College Corridor plan. Sign up for Fall Programmes at Brunskill School September 7 and 12. Please volunteer, the rink group would really appreciate more helpers. If you are interested in running community wide social events, anything from organizing a best yard award to a movie in the park (yes, please start small), please contact me.

CITY UPDATE: WARD 6 COUNCILLOR CYNTHIA BLOCK

I hope you have been enjoying a wonderful summer, along with some relaxation time. Council has been busy with special budget meetings to address the projected gap for the upcoming 2024-2025 multi-year budget.



Budget

By the time you read this newsletter I am hoping the projected property tax increase will be well within a normal range, and I remain committed to making the necessary cuts to get us there. My motion to have an independent audit of the staff-to-management ratio at the City of Saskatoon was passed unanimously and will be completed in time for November deliberations where the final budget will be passed. A reminder that the City of Saskatoon is NOT in a deficit situation, but there are 3 main pressures as we head into the next multi-year budget process:

1. Significantly higher-than-normal inflationary pressures
2. Reduced leisure centre revenue, parking, transit
3. Removal of one-time Covid funding (\$10 million)

Similar situations are impacting municipal budgets across the country. Note that Saskatoon continues to have among the lowest property taxes per capita. You can find more information here:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/2024-25%20Multi%20Year%20Budget%20Info%20Guide.pdf>

Please reach out if you have questions. cynthia.block@saskatoon.ca

Downtown Event and Entertainment District

The Downtown Event and Entertainment District (DEED) project has not been approved, and a reminder that halting it would neither save money, nor reduce property tax. Council has directed NO property tax impact for capital or operating expenses for an event centre and public plaza. Unless or until this is achieved, I don't see how the DEED can move forward.

Council is awaiting a full funding strategy before a decision is made. Partnerships and tools such as Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) and ticket surcharges are crucial for the plan to work. In my view, DEED is a city-building initiative – not something “nice to have”. Anchors and public realm

improvements, similar to River Landing, are part of an over-arching plan to drive density to the core where infrastructure and services already exist, helping Saskatoon to become more efficient, less expensive and more sustainable. However, there is another piece that requires some unpacking.

Status of SaskTel Centre Building

Without a plan to re-build SaskTel Centre, the facility will require at least 100 million dollars in retrofits, renovations, and technical upgrades, according to a 2018 report. I am not aware of any other level of government or private partner willing to support this, and I want to avoid a property tax impact. Note that a renovation of this magnitude would also require the building to be closed, forcing existing tenants such as the Blades and Rush to re-locate for up to two years.

The current SaskTel Centre building is in great shape and well-maintained. However, it lacks the structural, technical and space requirements of a new generation of shows and attendees. The large concerts and events are what keeps SaskTel Centre profitable. Here are some of the main building issues:

- Loading Docks - Not enough; high costs of labour and time
- Building Height – Shows becoming increasingly require higher rigging (not possible in current facility)
- Concession space - Needs to be tripled to accommodate demand
- Kitchen space – No space to create menu options to meet demand
- Bathrooms – Not enough; porta-potties need to be brought in for big events
- Dressing Rooms – not enough (*many artists require a “green room”)
- No space on concourse to do “meet & greet” events

The next step is to review the options, including a funding strategy for a new facility downtown. I anticipate learning more in early 2024.

Traffic Safety Audit - Wiggins and College Drive

My motions to review the intersection were passed unanimously by Council, following the tragic death of Natasha Fox, who was struck by a vehicle as she tried to cross College Drive on a bicycle. The third-party, independent audit is underway, and our administration is re-visiting the Active Transportation Plan with options for potential new rapid deployment tools. I anticipate more information in the coming months.

VVCA FALL 2023 Programs In-Person Registration

7-8:30 PM on Thursday, Sept. 7th and Tuesday, Sept. 12th at Brunskill School Small Gym

Another Summer has come and gone!! It is that time again to start thinking on what to do now that the routines are getting back into place!

A few changes in some programs are taking place, Yoga is moving to Wednesday nights, Tae Kwon Do will offer two beginner classes with different age groups twice a week. The Art For Adults program will be two hours each session. We have a new Art For Children instructor and she has some great new ideas and new crafts.

The registration nights are Thursday September 7th, & Tuesday September 12th at 7-8:30pm in the small gym at Brunskill School. We accept cash, cheques made out to VVCA, or etransfers pay@vvcaskatoon.com

Dates and/or times may change so please print your email clearly when signing up for programs. If you are unable to attend registration nights you may contact indoor coordinator Barb Giles at blgiles@sasktel.net to register.

PROGRAM	AGE	LOCATION	TIME	DAY	START & END DATE	COST
ALL AGES						
Tae Kwon Do - beginner	4-6	Brunskill Main Gym	6:00-6:30 PM	M&W	Sept. 18-Nov. 22	\$85
Tae Kwon Do - beginner	7-adult	Brunskill Main Gym	6:30-7:15 PM	M&W	Sept. 18-Dec. 6	\$85
Tae Kwon Do - Intermediate	8-adult	Brunskill Main Gym	7:15-8:30 PM	M&W	Sept. 18-Dec. 6	\$125
Tae Kwon Do - Advanced	10-adult	Brunskill Main Gym	7:15-9:30 PM	M&W	Sept. 18-Dec. 6	\$150
Art for Children	6-12 years	Brunskill Art Room	6:30-7:30 PM	TH	Sept. 21-Nov. 23	\$50
ADULT						
Art for Adults	Adult	Brunskill Art Room	7-9 PM	W	Sept. 20-Nov.22	\$150
Badminton (racquet required)	Adult	Brunskill Main Gym	8:00-10:00 PM	TU	Sept. 19-Nov. 28	\$45
Badminton (racquet required)	Adult	Brunskill Main Gym	8:00-10:00 PM	TH	Sept. 21 - Nov. 23	\$45
Conversational Spanish - beginner	Adult	Brunskill Library	6:00-7:00 PM	TU	Sept. 19-Nov. 28	\$110
Conversational Spanish - intermediate	Adult	Brunskill Library	7:05-8:05 PM	TU	Sept. 19-Nov. 28	\$110
Yoga multi-level	Adult	Brunskill MPR	6:30-8 PM	W	Sept. 20-Nov. 22	\$110

Full program descriptions available on the VVCA website programs page - vvcaskatoon.com/programs

Minor Sports Registration

Saskatoon Minor Basketball

Registration for 2023-24 Fall/Winter Saskatoon Minor Basketball league is now open. Programs include an introductory program for grades 1-2 aged children and community league for youth from grades 3-12. For detailed information or to register, please visit the the SMBA website www.smbayxe.ca.

Fall Indoor Soccer

Registration for fall indoor soccer for Under 5, Under 7 and Under 9 can be done online only through the RAMP website. Registrations close August 31, 2023.

<https://www.rampregistrations.com/login?v3=05b52f47e1>



Join the newspaper delivery team

We are looking for families/individuals who have a few hours to deliver this newsletter in your community. There are five areas available and each area requires a 4-5 hour time commitment three times per year.

It's a great way to get some exercise. The honorarium provided means it can also be a fundraising opportunity for community groups.

For more information, please email tammyharkema@sasktel.net



New soccer coordinator needed

The VVCA is in need of a new soccer coordinator. Come on out and meet some people in the neighbourhood, and help with making the community as great as it already is! We need your help! Contact info@vvcasaskatoon.com

Bylaw review

VVCA Bylaws need a revamp. If you have a passion for non-profit governance, email info@vvcasaskatoon.com

Rink Volunteers

Do you have a few hours to help the VVCA look after our great rink at Brunskill School? We need help with routine maintenance, rink cleaning and the odd special project. If interested contact Fredy McDougall at fredy@sasktel.net



VVCA MEETINGS

The Varsity View Community Association meets third Wednesday of every month (excluding summer).

Meetings are at Brunskill School.

Everyone welcome.

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A Safe Spot Means a Lot: a letter from SEIU-West to residents of Varsity View and Grosvenor Park

Earlier this spring the SEIU-West made a presentation to the VVCA regarding ongoing parking issues in our community. Below is a letter from SEIU to residents of Varsity View and Grosvenor Park summarizing that message:

A Safe Spot Means a Lot. At SEIU-West we represent thousands of healthcare workers, including many of those who are parked on your street right now. Each of you are familiar with the parking issues in this community and are equally familiar with the sight of healthcare workers walking between the hospital and their car before and after their shift. It's natural to feel frustrated and annoyed when you can't park in front of your own home and it's easy to direct that frustration at the person who parked there. We get it. Our members want to go to work. You want to park at home. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could find a solution that meets everyone's needs?

Our members often work shifts, beginning early in the day before public transit is available. We've talked to the SHA about improving evening parking options at the hospital, and better options for cyclists. We've talked to the city about

public transit. Ultimately, we simply need more parking spaces. Safety is the number one concern among our members, from long walks in cold weather, to being followed and harassed as they walk to and from work. They simply want to get to work safely.

We all rely on healthcare workers when we need to go to the hospital. Knowing that they don't want to work at RUH because they can't safely park is concerning. This problem can be solved, and we are asking for your support. We are calling on the SHA to implement a Park & Ride Shuttle service for hospital staff by fall of this year. We've been meeting with them for close to two years and frankly, we need to see some action from them.

We want our members to have safe parking, but we also want you to be able to invite friends and family over and know that they can park in front of your house.



Click code for more information on "A Safe Spot Means a Lot" campaign



Help keep your community safe

Security Camera Registry

The Security Camera Registry is a completely voluntary program where community members (individuals or businesses) can register their security camera(s) with the Saskatoon Police Services.

If you register your camera(s) with the Security Camera Registry, you may be contacted by the SPS to request footage you may have available, if a crime is being investigated in your area. It is up to you if you provide any footage to the SPS and you are under no obligation to do so.

Help us keep your neighbourhood safe by registering your camera(s) at <https://saskatoonpolice.ca/scr/form>.

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Corner of 8th St. & Cumberland Ave.



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www.varsitydentalsaskatoon.ca

NEXT NEWSLETTER -

Winter 2023-24

The Winter 2023-24 issue will be distributed to the Varsity View and Grosvenor Park neighbourhoods in December/January. To submit news/events or to book an ad, email newsletter@vvcasaskatoon.com. Ad booking deadline is November 30, 2023.