

All Candidates Forum

November 2008

Sponsored by:

The James Bay Community School Society
The James Bay Neighbourhood Association

All candidates standing for Victoria City Council were invited to participate in an All Candidates Forum. As a requirement of participation, candidates were to complete/submit a survey. This document is an abbreviated version of the document distributed at the forum. Following are the responses of the Mayor and councilors who were elected and currently sit on Council (as of 2009).

Mayor Fortin - What experience do you have that equates to being a mayor of a city?

FORTIN

Career Experience: current Executive Director, Burnside Gorge Community Centre (17th year); former Executive Director, Victoria Association for Street Kids now known as the Youth Empowerment Society; practised family and criminal law, including young offenders.

As city Councillor: member, Finance and Personnel committee; liaison to Social Planning Advisory committee; Deputy liaison to Environment Advisory committee; Neighbourhood liaison for North Park and Quadra Hillside.

As CRD Director: Chair of the CRD Housing Trust; Vice-chair of the CRD Housing Corporation; Board member of the Greater Victoria Water Board and CREST; member, Environment, Parks and Liquid Waste committees.

Community volunteer work: Member, Victoria City Police Board 2001-2002; Member, Victoria Steering Committee on Homelessness; Senior Girls' basketball coach, Esquimalt and Oak Bay senior secondary schools; Boys' and Girls' Rugby coach, Burnside Elementary School; past member, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Violence Towards Women, Children and the Elderly. Accomplishments with community partners: established Burnside Gorge Youth Centre; created a neighbourhood house and family centre in Burnside; helped establish Burnside Community School; project leader of a partnership between local businesses, residents, and three levels of government to clean up Cecilia Creek; created the Homeless Family Outreach program.

Work with youth at risk: established job training projects; provided drug and alcohol counselling; assisted in street youth literacy program.

Education: BA in Urban Geography; Bachelor of Laws; Masters in Education (Counselling).

Councillor Statements on qualifications and achievements.

CHANDLER

- I'm now an experienced city councillor which will allow me to be even more effective on your behalf as I work for you in a second term.
- I have been actively representing the voices of families, youth and seniors, as well as low and middle income residents, and those that who are commonly underrepresented and sometimes marginalized in our community and I have been doing so with integrity and commitment.
- I understand sustainability as a way of being in the world responsibly, not as a word to be added to a sentence for political effect.
- I see families, in their many forms, as something to celebrate, and I look forward to influencing family-friendly, age-friendly community planning.

- My biggest achievement has been spearheading the work that has led to the City of Victoria Sustainability Framework – an overarching, city-wide tool that will allow our city and our neighbourhoods to be planned and serviced with a genuine commitment to social, environmental and fiscal responsibility – a balance that has been missing from City Hall.

COLEMAN

I think the biggest achievement of Council is the setting in place of the Coalition to End Homelessness. It is a necessary first step in finding the solutions to an over-arching societal issue.

I believe my biggest achievement, as the Council liaison to the James Bay neighbourhood, has been the work with the James Bay community to develop a new community facility that will not only embrace the services of The James Bay Community Project, the James Bay New Horizons Centre & programming from the James Bay Community School, but also create much needed housing for seniors & young families. In fact, the true recognition of the tremendous work done by the neighbourhood reps is evidenced in the unanimous endorsement of the concept by Council... and the seed funding by CMHC to develop a full plan that can be shared with the neighbourhood. I should be re-elected to carry on this work.

HUNTER

I should be elected because I am a life long fighter for social and environmental sustainability, both as a former MP and as a long-term worker with organizations like Oxfam, the Sierra Legal Defense Fund, and the David Suzuki Foundation. I am a current executive volunteer with the Canadian Multiple Sclerosis Society. I believe Victoria is an amazing place with even more potential.

LUCAS

I'm running for Victoria city council because of a deep caring and love for this city and its people, and a desire to commit my intellectual and physical energy into addressing some of our community's current challenges. I believe that Victoria has the potential to be a world leader in sustainable development, social justice, and citizen engagement, but we have been falling short of these achievable goals for far too long. We deserve policies that will create a safe and vibrant downtown core, improve public transportation, ensure good value for money on major infrastructure projects like sewage treatment, and allow and encourage real citizen engagement in our local government.

We expect and deserve so much better from City Hall than the dearth of leadership, creative-thinking, and determination that has plagued our city council for far too long, and as a city Councillor I look forward to working each and every day to ensure that our great city finally reaches its full potential, and that our community health and happiness is paramount in all municipal policies and practice.

LUTON

I have extensive experience in the community working on local issues and have a record of accomplishment on key transportation issues. That work has given me more insight into how local government works and how best to advance practical solutions for many of the challenges that face us.

I understand the need for non-partisan cooperation, engagement with the community and the building of partnerships that we will need to deal with issues like homelessness, housing, sewage

treatment, cultural renewal, and economic development, and the imperatives of dealing with climate change and shifting transportation choices to sustainable models.

MADOFF

5 term councillor. Representing the wishes of James Bay around development and heritage issues.

THORNTON-JOE

I believe I should be re-elected because I hope my track record on Council has shown that I am a committed and conscientious worker. As an independent councilor, I have endeavoured to be a hard worker, to listen to the concerns of others, and to make decisions to the best of my abilities. I feel that I still have much to accomplish and would like this opportunity.

Although there are many achievements that I have been proud to be a part of, my biggest achievements would be as Chair of the Steering Committee for the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addiction and as a member on the newly formed Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness.

YOUNG

As Chair of Finance I have advocated for responsible spending and fair tax rates. I have also supported planning for future rapid transit and bicycle transportation routes. As a council, we have seen the growth of downtown living space and have addressed the long-standing issue of secondary suites.

- a) Explain your understanding of how recreation and leisure services are currently delivered in the community of James Bay.***
b) In these times of financial uncertainty, how will you ensure the City of Victoria provides adequate support for the James Bay community service centres?
c) Define 'adequate support'.

MAYOR FORTIN

a) As the executive director of the Burnside Gorge Community Centre and two term councillor, I have an intimate knowledge of recreation services in James Bay. I am a strong advocate of community-centered services, operated by local groups.

b) I will continue to support funding including the cost of living increases. Further, we are uniquely positioned in James Bay to create renewed facilities especially one that incorporates James Bay New Horizons, James Bay Community School, and James Bay Community Project working in collaboration.

c) see above

COUNCILLORS

CHANDLER

a) The James Bay Community has several long standing recreation, leisure and community resources – The JB Community Project, the JB Silver Threads, the JB Community School, South Park School, the Community Market, the Community Gardens, and Beacon Hill Park. Currently

there is a movement afoot to create a cooperative model of service delivery in the neighborhood that would build on the success of the Community Project in offering a variety of services to a diverse community and also decrease overlap in services and spending by combining assets and resources to meet common objectives.

b) I think that JB is a model in terms of how community based services can be provided in a collaborative and sustainable way. And although I believe that all communities deserve similar supports and resources, I do think that James Bay should be recognized for the leadership and vision it has provided, especially since in these uncertain times it will be this type of creativity that will succeed.

c).I think that 'adequate support' means 'as defined by the community' support. James Bay has a lot of human, historical and organizational assets within its community and if the City could nurture this by supporting the initiatives coming from the grassroots level the outcomes will be great!

COLEMAN

a) Presently, baseline funding (in terms of both cash & services support) from the City flows to the James Bay New Horizons Centre and the James Bay Community School for operations. Community programme funding may be available for programmes delivered by community organisations. Limited "Neighbourhood Development" grants may also be available for projects in the community that are supported by community groups. Parks development and renewal initiatives are delivered in conjunction with the City's Parks Department. Further programmes are available to the citizens of James Bay on a City-wide (or even region-wide) basis but are delivered outside of the James Bay neighbourhood.... the Central Library is an example.

b) The funds that presently flow to James Bay community service centres are, largely, in the City's core budget and therefore are stable. There are also some neighbourhood grants of a discretionary nature that are more problematic. I believe that the greatest community benefits are often outcomes of these types of investments & would work to increase these opportunities (even in times of financial uncertainty!)

c) Those categories of support (be they grants of cash, services allocated, co-operative planning support, permissive tax exemptions etc) that not only allow community service centres to carry on their present mandates, but also allow for growth in making communities better & safer for everyone.

HUNTER

a) Have been to and used the JB New Horizons, Community School/Centre and visited JB Community Health Project. They are a model of how community recreation and services should be delivered.

b) I will fight to maintain and enhance services.

c) Ongoing and enhanced levels.

LUCAS

a) James Bay is one of our region's most involved, innovative and self-directed neighbourhoods, and this is reflected in your community-based recreational and leisure services and activities, including the JB Community Project, the JB Silver Threads, the JB Community School, South Park School, the Community Market, the Community Gardens, and Beacon Hill Park. Unlike services

delivered by the other levels of government, James Bay's approach is to offer services by the community, for the community, and it is a cutting-edge model that is well deserving of the praise it has earned over the years, and that could serve as a model for other neighbourhoods in Greater Victoria.

b) James Bay's service delivery model is high impact and cost-effective, and as a councillor I would ensure that it has the funds and resources necessary to continue to lead the region in community-based health, leisure and social services. It is not the time to cut these services; rather it is time to point to James Bay as a model of how progressive service delivery can be come at the local level.

c) I define adequate support as continued infrastructure funding, with additional financial opportunities for innovative projects, and expansion of current services as needed.

LUTON

a) Delivered at the community level with programs and facilities at the Community School and at New Horizons. There are also many parks and green space in the community that host organized sports and recreational events, and invite people to pursue healthy lifestyles on their own.

b) Maintaining services will be important for the city and financial efficiencies will need to be pursued to ensure key services are maintained. Neighbourhood support must be maintained or enhanced, particularly in areas where growing populations of seniors will demand access to local, accessible and diverse leisure and recreational opportunities.

c) Funding will need to keep pace with inflation, and recreation renewal plans will need to ensure local access.

MADOFF

a) The James Bay Community Project and School, JB New Horizons and the Community Health Centre are widely respected as leaders in providing health, recreation and seniors services. Maintenance and growth of funding are priorities and need to be focuses of attention in these times of economic uncertainty.

b) see (a)

c) Adequate support is defined as maintaining and where possible increasing funding for existing and emerging programs

THORNTON-JOE

I must preface my comments that as I have not been the Council liaison to this neighbourhood or, the council liaison to Parks and Recreation, so my knowledge is limited in comparison to others. However, I do know that James Bay has a community whose recreation and leisure services reaches out to all their citizens. From the James Bay New Horizons, the partnership between the James Bay Community School and the Community Centre, the Community Project, the Neighbourhood Association, and the James Bay Beacon newsletter, their members ensure that there is a rich synergy, and work together and move forward in ways that best serves the community as a whole.

b) As all community service centres are important to the citizens of Victoria, ongoing support is not only envisioned but is something that as a Councillor I would advocate for.

c) Adequate support is best defined by community members. As a member of Council my desire is always to exceed 'adequate support' but we must work to the best of our abilities without neglecting our responsibilities to the public purse.

YOUNG

a) Recreation services in the City are delivered with a combination of neighbourhood and community school facilities and centralized facilities that cannot be provided in each community such as the swimming pool, central library and skating rink. Playing fields are used by people from the entire region, and in turn are spread across the region.

b) Given our budget constraints we must constantly measure the benefits versus the costs of all our services. Services provided in neighbourhoods are more accessible to residents, require less travel, and can be more responsive to local needs, and as long as they are well used and efficiently delivered they are an important part of our system that should be supported.

James Bay residents face significant and increasing noise and air pollution related to aircraft and vehicular (especially bus) traffic. The Quebec/Erie/Dallas corridor can have up to 6000 vehicles per day and there are up to 200 aircraft movements daily. What will you do to improve the livability of the James Bay environment for residents? Specifically address these noise and effluent issues.

MAYOR FORTIN

Noise and effluent Issues

- looking to make sure air quality assessments are conducted,
- making sure that health and well being of residents in air quality studies are taken in consideration, and
- requiring and encouraging floatplane operators to employ newer aircraft that generate lower emissions.

In regards to noise levels,

- conduct new noise studies,
- implement noise reduction measures and noise monitoring systems,
- use modern aircraft that are quieter and less polluting.
- not permit noise levels over 90 dBA,
- restrict /prohibit floatplane operations,
- reduce or cap the number of flights, and
- limit any future expansion.

COUNCILLORS

CHANDLER

I think that the City has a responsibility to ensure the impact of tourism does not destroy the very thing that people come here to experience some of which is clearly our natural resources and our unique neighborhoods. Issues of noise, effluent and transportation are all related to our overall capacity, not just our fiscal capacity, but also our social and environmental capacity. We also need to include quality of life and long term sustainability as a part of our measurement tools when assessing the benefits of tourism in our communities.

COLEMAN

I would continue to work with the James Bay Transportation Committee as we develop strategies to:

- a) bring more bus companies into compliance with the standards of ACOR emissions testing;
- b) move the Provincial government to re-instate vehicle inspection testing (with benefits felt in areas of both noise reduction & emissions curtailment);
- c) continue with the work of the Task Force in addressing the emissions & noise levels associated with the Harbour Aerodrome.

Finally, I would push for greater funding to speed up the implementation of the Harbour Pathway system that offers greater pedestrian recreation & access through James Bay to Downtown.

HUNTER

Ensure Federal government monitors and enforces federal responsibility over marine airports, and that local law enforcement monitors and enforces traffic regulations on City streets

LUCAS

I believe that community concerns over noise, air and water pollution caused by high traffic, cruise ships, and floatplanes need to be better addressed by our city council, Harbour Authority, and CRD. Reviews of current air, land and sea traffic levels need to take a triple-bottom line approach which would place as much weight on environmental impacts, social costs, and the voice of residents as it does on the businesses that currently benefit from our inner harbour's beauty and accessibility.

LUTON

Victoria's transportation infrastructure is failing us. The consequence is excessive noise, loss of air quality, congestion, and the misuse of valuable harbour real estate. Accelerating harbour pathway plans and local projects to fill in gaps in the pedestrian network can help. Expanding the cycling network can also help providing choices for people who want to enjoy the neighbourhood by means of active transportation.

Moving forward on LRT and other transit alternatives like an Ogden Point to downtown streetcar line could also help shift some of the tourism traffic to reduce impacts of increasing motor vehicle and bus traffic.

We need to bring the stakeholders together, and that includes residents, to consider the challenges we face in ground transportation related to the tourism industry and the growing concern with increasing air traffic. The focus needs to shift to findings solutions that meet competing needs rather than strategies to sneak deals past City Hall.

MADOFF

Looking to make sure air quality assessments are conducted making sure that health and well being of residents in air quality studies are taken into consideration. Also, encouraging floatplane operators to employ newer aircraft that generate lower emissions.

THORNTON-JOE

There have been meetings held, and these concerns are being discussed. We must consider these concerns and balance the livability for the residents with the need to protect our working

harbour, our tourism sector and transportation issues. We must set standards that protect the health of our citizens and the environment, and as well protect our overall economy.

YOUNG

I would like to see a rapid transit system on the North-South core of the downtown (preferably light rail, but possibly a rapid bus way for an interim period). This system should extend to the main job/population centers in James Bay, and if feasible extend to Ogden Point. This would provide an alternative route for cruise ship passengers as well as James Bay residents and workers – one light rapid transit line can replace many private vehicles. The problem of cruise ship air pollution/noise is being felt in many ports and we are seeing shipping lines improve their vessels in response.

State two specific, creative ideas you have for the future of Victoria – and how they will be realized.

MAYOR FORTIN

1. Look at the legislative district as a cultural district - Art Gallery on Apex site, renewed Belleville Terminal, look at having a solution to the sewage treatment and recovery project.
2. Renew Centennial Square, anchored by relocation and expansion of public library to the corner site.

COUNCILLORS

CHANDLER

1. An Office of Sustainability at City Hall that would be a resource internally to our council and staff, but also externally to our residents and neighborhoods' as we all learn how to live more responsibly and respectfully. This office would also focus on the concept of 'participatory planning' and 'community engagement' since both of these are key to living sustainably.
2. Age-Friendly Victoria! A healthy community is a diverse community and I think as a council we need to acknowledge and nurture the intergenerational resource we have in our seniors and our families with children. The World Health Organization has developed Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide for Municipalities that looks at the unique needs that seniors and families, as well as the contributions that they make to our community. I would like to see council adopt this tool as a guiding document as we review our Official Community Plan and develop our sustainability framework since it touches on important areas like transportation, housing, recreation, civic engagement, the use and accessibility of public spaces as well as respect and social inclusion.

COLEMAN

1. I have suggested the concept of a Capital Regional District levy, matched by senior levels of government, as one of the possible solutions to the regional issue of Homelessness & Affordable Housing. Similar to the levy of 1999 that assessed a yearly fee of \$10 per average household for parkland acquisition, it is an "out of the box" concept that would allow the CRD to emulate the initiative of Calgary's Commission to End Homelessness – provincial and federal governments match municipal contributions based on:

- the development of a concrete plan to comprehensively address the critical issue of homelessness;
- the identification of strategic benchmarks of success;
- the commitment to annually report on the outcomes of each initiative.

As an example, a \$20 per average household (based on assessment) fee over a ten-year term would generate \$100 million with senior government participation.

2. I have suggested that the City should designate one staff position to the task of identifying and attracting alternative sources of funding. This may manifest itself in following up on new project funding from senior levels of government, but could also require developing partnered opportunities with foundations, national and international not-for-profit agencies & the private sector.

HUNTER

1. Community consultation and action on Legislative precinct grounds development.
2. Community consultation on Hydro lands development north of Capital Iron.

LUCAS

1. I have long been a supporter of a permanent downtown food and artisan market like Vancouver's Granville Island in order to highlight our local agriculture, food and wine production, protect our Agricultural Land Reserve by supporting local farmers, and greatly improve regional food security. I have already begun discussions about this project with various regional food groups, including CR-FAIR, Food Roots, and the Island Chef Collaborative, and as Councillor I will work to put forth a Request for Proposals to solicit ideas that can make this a reality for our community, and put in place incentives and policies to ease the financial costs and regulatory process.
2. In order to add to our ability to address homelessness in Victoria, I will work with council to implement a 10% levy on new developments in Victoria that will go towards the city's Affordable Housing and Homelessness Fund. This will increase our capacity and local resources to end homelessness, and will ensure that developers who wish to profit from our regions high property values also invest in our community's social health and overall prosperity.

LUTON

1. "Complete streets" – For the past 70 years our transportation solutions have tilted towards helping people get around town by car. We need to shift that strategy to a balanced approach that respects the needs of people who walk, cycle and take public transit.
2. "Sidewalks for seniors" – in this most walkable city, we need to be planning well into the future to accommodate an aging population that will rely more often on scooters and other mobility aids. It means more space and complete facilities so that seniors can get out and enjoy their neighbourhoods safely and comfortably.

MADOFF

1. Community consultations leading to improvements to Legislative Precincts to enhance James Bay.
2. Development of old BC Hydro property at north end of Victoria with social, tourism focus.

THORNTON-JOE

1. Although I embrace creative ideas, why invent new ideas when we can "steal" ideas from others that have been successful? I want to continue to serve on the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness because I believe this issue is important not only for the City but for the region, province and nationally. We need to make working on solutions our number one priority.
2. The future of Victoria is going to depend less on specific creative ideas, than on the ability of Mayor and Council members to work together and with other levels of government to bring forth concrete solutions.
3. Two years ago I started researching Community Courts. I brought the idea to the Downtown Victoria Business Association and it has been our desire to work towards having one in Victoria. I believe citizens want to see consequences to actions, and I believe having a community court would solve many of the concerns we currently see. This is something that I would like to continue to move forward.

YOUNG

1. In addition to the rapid transit system as I've discussed, I would like to see our inner harbour waterfront parking lots developed for marine use as a priority, and for people-friendly uses thereafter.
2. I would like to see a separate bicycle/skateboard/rollerblade path along the south shore of James Bay and Fairfield.