



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

- 1. LOCATION:** ZOOM Video Conference – 7:00PM

The VDLC acknowledges that this meeting is being held on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and other First Nations people.

- 2. CHAIRPERSON:** 2nd Vice President Bal Shandhu
- 3. NOTICE OF VDLC POLICY ON HARASSMENT:** Circulated prior to meeting

- 4. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

M/S/C that the agenda of the March 16, 2021 Regular meeting be adopted.

- 5. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

M/S/C that the minutes of the February 16, 2021 Regular meeting be adopted.

- 6. CREDENTIALS:**

CUPE Local 394

Brett David Stone

HSA – BC Cancer Vancouver Chapter

Reanne Bowlby

HEU-VGH

Christine Shovar

Judith Haughton

TSSU

Alicia Massie

Hollis Schmidt

- 7. OBLIGATION OF NEW DELEGATES:** Pledge of New Delegates

- 8. GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Max Gardiner, Sustainable Communities Initiative

Thank you so much for having me here to speak about the Sustainable Communities Initiative or SCI as you'll hear me say tonight. The Sustainable Communities Initiative operates on the traditional, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. In my time tonight I'd like to share an overview of the SCI, the spotlight on current regional topics and if we have time any questions you may have.

What is the SCI? We were founded in 2004 by a group of unions seeking better engagement with and understanding of the governance structure, key issues, responsibilities and jurisdiction of Metro Vancouver, then the GVRD. At the SCI, my mission statement is “To ensure that working people and their families are included in the region’s definition of ‘sustainability’”. Today, the SCI has 5 partner unions who fund my work; BCGEU, BC Building Trades, CUPE BC, MoveUP and ILWU Canada. As well, the CLC Pacific Region provides support.

In covering the regions governance, my time is dedicated to monitoring, researching and reporting on our two regional juggernauts. The first is MetroVancouver and Translink. I also try and pay attention to other organizations of regional significance; Port of Vancouver, YVR, BC Ferries, BC Hydro and Fortis.

Some of the key issues going on at MetroVancouver and Translink; The Climate Action Committee at Metro Vancouver; the first draft of the Clean Air Plan is set for public engagement this spring. Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap is also going to public engagement.

The Liquid Waste Committee doesn't get a lot of press but it happens to be one of the largest costs for MetroVancouver both in capital and operations. There are going to be some major capital projects coming up in the near future. The IONA Island Waste Water Treatment Plant will cost billions but it will also create tens of thousands of jobs.

A lot of people are spending their time outside due to the pandemic and the Regional Parks Committee saw their largest increase in visits in 2020. Last year broke 2019's record by 38% with 16.5 million visits; January 2021 is already up 50% over January 2020. To help ease chronic parking issues, pay parking is being introduced at two parks next month. Revenues will go back into park maintenance.

The new Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy is moving towards approval in mid-2022 and the Social Equity and Regional Growth Management Study was released earlier this month.

The Water Committee will see even more multi-billion dollar capital projects to secure the region's drinking water supply. There is currently a tunnel boring machine underneath the Second Narrows Bridge. MetroVancouver staff are planning to bump up the ph levels this spring in the regions water supply.

Translink and the Mayor's Council. There is not much news regarding the Surrey Langley Skytrain. Bus priority rapid response projects continue to roll out. The Broadway subway construction is well on its way. Last week, the Mayor's Council asked the Feds for \$2.1 billion in the next budget from the newly announced Permanent Transit Fund.

That's the rocket report about everything that's been going on. Thank you to our partner unions. Thank you again for your time.

9. EDUCATIONAL: Nil

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Stephen von Sychowski reported on activities since the February 2021 meeting.

Political Action

Late last month there were a number of motions of interest at Vancouver City Council. The first was a motion in support of paid sick days which was brought forward by Jean Swanson. We supported the adoption of this motion in accordance with the recommendation we passed at our meeting last month. The motion was passed unanimously by City Council.

Another motion was on Social Impact Bonds (SIB's). This motion was brought forward by Councilor Bligh. SIB's involve engaging private business to provide public services with pre-determined standards that must be upheld in order to the private investor(s) to be repaid. While a lot of fancy language is used to make SIB's sound like a new and socially beneficial, benevolent method of paying for services the reality is that it is just another privatization scheme. I worked with affiliates and councilors around this issue and while we were not able to have the motion defeated outright the motion was amended substantially in a manner which took out the most problematic contents and largely reduce the motion to one calling for a staff report. This was a big improvement over the initial motion. We will continue to monitor that situation.

Finally, there was a staff report proposing new rules limiting the use of amplification devices downtown and providing for fines. The purpose of this was intended to be to address the homophobic bigot who was "preaching" on the sidewalk frequently last year. However, the negative implications for protest and picket lines are obvious. Many community members, including from the LGBTQI2S+ community and from labour spoke out against the recommendation and it was ultimately sent back to staff to be further reviewed.

While those were largely good news stories, it was less so on the Federal scene where we say Bill C-213: An Act to Enact the Canada Pharmacare Act defeated by a coalition of Liberal and Conservative MP's. Here in our District every NDP MP voted in favour and the only other MP to support the bill was Jody Wilson-Raybould, who cited the commitments that she and her former Liberal colleagues made when originally running for election. Unfortunately, the Liberal MP's did not feel the same duty to uphold their promise and voted against the bill. The fight for pharmacare continues but it is clear that a long with so many other things this is not a reform that will be likely to be implemented by a Liberal government unless immense pressure can be brought to bear.

Our Political Action Committee continued its meetings with progressive groups this month, adding Team Kennedy, OneCity, and the Vancouver Green Party to its list of groups met with this quarter. A meeting with COPE will be happening shortly to conclude this round. The committee continues to work on endorsement strategy and sees a difficult path ahead but is up to the task.

Labour Education

The Labour Education program continues to go exceptionally, with a number of courses sold out this month and all of them at least registering respectfully. We have had no cancellations or postponements this year to date and things are looking positive for the remainder of the Winter/Spring Session. Please continue to share.

Included in this is our Labour Economics Series, which has had about 30 participants per session and has been very interesting to be part of. The rest of the sessions should be very good as well, and we will look at another series of evening sessions on some other topic in the Fall.

Finally, we are working on adding a course on note taking – details tba soon.

Day of Mourning

The Day of Mourning is coming up on April 28. Everything is on track for the usual event, in a virtual format similar to last year.

YVR Joint Union Committee

This committee has continued to meet and met once again this month with YVR leadership about issues of concern to affiliates and other items. Delegates may have seen recent news about the establishment of a vaccination centre at River Rock. We were also involved in discussions around non-medical staffing of that facility thanks to our relationship with YVR leadership.

DTES Joint Union Committee

On March 30 the committee will meet with Attorney General David Eby, MLA Melanie Mark, and representatives of BC Housing to discuss housing plans for the DTES and broader region.

United Way

A series of meetings between United Way and labour representatives took place this month to announce the integration process currently being worked on by several United Way organizations in BC. Labour continues to work on areas of concern with United Way in the hopes of ensuring that this process is a positive one for labour engagement and for impacted workers.

Labour – Climate Forum

There will be a forum on climate change and the labour movement on April 10th. Details and registration information will come shortly. This is being organized by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.

Events Attended / Dates of Note

February 17 – Political Action Committee / Team Kennedy meeting
February 18 – YVR JUC / CEO & VP HR meeting
February 18 – BC Employment Standards Coalition
February 19 – United Way Community Investment & Relations Committee
February 22-24 – Labour Education: Duty to Accommodate
February 23 – United Way Joint Board Integration Committee
February 23 – United Way of the Lower Mainland Board of Directors
February 24 – Labour Education: Economic Reconstruction After COVID
February 25 – Unite Here! Local 40 re: campaigns
February 25 – Political Action Committee / OneCity meeting
February 26 – Labour Education: Bullying & Harassment
March 1 – Political Action Committee / Green Party of Vancouver meeting
March 1 – CUPE 15 meeting re: childcare
March 1 – WELLS, Facilitator/Participant Experience Working Group
March 2 – Living Wage for Families Campaign Municipal Working Group
March 2 – United Way/Labour meeting re: possible integration
March 3 – WELLS directors meeting
March 3 – United Way/Labour meeting re: possible integration
March 4 – United Way/Labour meeting re: possible integration
March 4 – BC Federation of Labour, provincial election debrief

March 4 – YVR Joint Union Committee
March 5 – Meeting re: living wage in Metro Vancouver
March 6 – United Way Campaign Cabinet Labour Committee
March 6 – VDLC Political Action Committee
March 6 – VDLC Women’s Committee International Women’s Day event
March 9 – Labour Education: WCB Level 1
March 9 – United Way Joint Board Integration Committee
March 9 – Trade Unions for Energy Democracy planning meeting
March 9 – VDLC Anti-Racism Committee
March 9 – VDLC Young Workers Committee
March 10 – Labour Education: WCB Level 2
March 10 – Labour Economics: Land Economics
March 11 – VDLC Executive Board
March 12 – BC Federation of Labour Executive Council
March 12 – Broadway Plan briefing
March 15 – Labour Education: Effective Representation in High-Conflict Situations
March 16 – Webinar, The Theory and Practice of Workers’ Voice in Canada
March 16 – Regular Meeting

M/S/C to adopt President’s report.

11. TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer Stefan Nielsen reported on financials since the February 2021 meeting.

M/S/C to adopt the Treasurer’s Report.

12. CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS REPORT:

Ron Stipp reported on the Canadian Labour Congress since the February 2021 meeting.

I’d like to start off with a bit of a sad announcement. You may have heard that former Member of Parliament and MLA Ian Waddell passed away a day and a half ago. Ian was the MP for Vancouver-Kingsway from 1979 for quite some time. Also, MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview and Minister of Tourism under the Glen Clark government. He was a friend of labour and was a magnificent member of parliament. This was sudden and shocking for a lot of people who knew Ian.

To start off on Bill C-213 which is the Pharmacare bill. I’m glad someone mentioned the fact the MP for Vancouver Center who has spoken up many times in favour of Pharmacare voted against this. We’ve heard the Liberal government talk for 24 years about implementing some kind of Pharmacare program and when the time came to vote for it they voted against it. Don’t be surprised when you hear in the next election campaign that they promise it one more time. Think about how much that promise is worth.

That leads to the federal election. We’re looking at an election in the near future we believe. It hasn’t been called yet. The federal budget has been delayed; it will not be presented until the middle or late April. This tends to be the catalyst for calling the election. We think there may be a call in early May for an election in mid to late June. The other possibility is that

they ride this out and call an election in September/October. We may as well get ready. The election for all intents and purposes is on. There are a number of target seats that we need to take a closer look at and through the labour council and motivating affiliates we will ensure that we will have a good campaign. Our campaign is to elect more New Democrats across the country. You may have noticed some ads from the Conservatives on both sides that talks about “Aaron” that claims to represent working class people. You know what this is; it’s a very interesting campaign that they’re doing.

We will be doing a major get out and vote strategy. We have about 6 to 700,000 thousand people in our database to motivate. We’ll need every affiliate to motivate and get out and vote to ensure we get more NDP elected.

There’s a very interesting piece of legislation in the House of Commons right now. There are changes proposed to the election act because of the pandemic to extend voting rights. The proposal is to have 3 voting days; either Thursday, Friday and Saturday or Saturday, Sunday and Monday to have open polling places those days and to accept mail in ballots until the Tuesday after Election Day. It’s expanding the way we vote. The Conservatives are holding this up in the house. This may or may not pass. We’re hoping this day; the more people that vote the more democratic the process.

We just got word that the EI bill passed. It is extending some of the EI benefits, not to what we all want, but to just a little bit better which is what we need.

Our plan is to have a Harrison Winter School. A little bit scaled down, perhaps 50-60% and not to the extent that we have in the past.

Day of Mourning is coming up and we encourage the virtual event which is taking place. We are also thinking of a virtual Labour Day event as well. I don’t know if this Labour Day will be as it has been in the past with thousands of people. I suspect not simply due to the continuing pandemic.

The CLC Convention is coming up June 16 to 18th. Very important for all of us as it’s an election convention.

The Teamsters are no longer part of the CLC; they left the other day. You may have heard of some early sanctions against COPE and MoveUP. They have been removed and are now full members.

M/S/C to adopt the Canadian Labour Congress Report.

Moment of Silence for Brother Ian Waddell.

13. CORRESPONDENCE: Circulated prior to the meeting.

M/S/C that the correspondence be received and filed for the information of the delegates.

14. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Vancity Board of Directors Elections

BECAUSE Vancity Credit Union is holding elections for its Board of Directors this coming April; and

BECAUSE it is important to ensure progressive, worker-friendly members on Boards of Directors of member-run co-ops,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse Khelsilem for re-election to the Vancity Board of Directors and will communicate this endorsement to our delegates, affiliates, and contacts.

b) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Vaccines for All

BECAUSE the migrant and undocumented people are often working in essential jobs, and in industries with high rates of COVID-19 infections; and

BECAUSE despite this, many migrants don't have a health card or coverage, and those who are undocumented are often afraid of accessing healthcare in case their personal information might be shared with federal immigration enforcement; and

BECAUSE at the same time, migrant advocates indicate that some employers are already threatening to terminate workers who are not vaccinated,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse the Migrant Rights Network's "Vaccines for All" campaign, which calls on federal and provincial governments to ensure full access to the COVID-19 vaccine to all migrants regardless of immigration status and for vaccine provision to:

- Be free of charge; and
- Not require a health card or health card number; and
- Be accessible; and
- Not collect any ID or addresses, or information about immigration status, and develop alternative mechanisms for tracking vaccine doses. Health authorities must guarantee that any personal information that is collected will not be shared with immigration enforcement or police; and
- Not be coercive or mandatory; and

A comprehensive multi-lingual public education and outreach strategy, as well as training for healthcare providers, should be created. Relevant authorities must coordinate with and take leadership from migrant-led organizations to ensure that migrants can receive the COVID vaccine and testing in a safe, accessible, and dignified manner, no matter where they work or live, and without fear of punitive consequences.

c) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Trustee Appointment

BECAUSE there is currently a vacant Trustee position at the Vancouver and District Labour Council,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL appointed Debbie Mohabir of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 15, to serve as Trustee for the remainder of the current term.

15. REPORT OF UNIONS: Nil

Submitted in writing in order to be included on meeting minutes.

M/S/ to adopt the report of unions.

16. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: Nil

OTHER REPORTS: Nil

M/S/C to adopt reports of committees

17. REPORTS OF LABOUR COUNCIL APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES:

Agnes Jackman, BC FORUM

BC FORUM's publication of our Spring ADVOCATE is now published and available. Can be viewed on BC FORUM's website www.bcforum.ca along with past editions.

Supporting the BCGEU Campaign and petition on the call to end for profit care in BC www.seniorsdeservebetter.ca/no-profit-seniors as well as the HEU campaign "Make it Public: www.MakItPublic.ca. Also supporting campaigns by CUPE, PSAC and the Council of Canadians regarding Revera and pension funds being invested in for profit care.

Working with the CLC Pacific Region regarding mail out to BC FORUM members of election cards for Municipal Bi-elections held and being held - coming up March 27 Nelson, Castlegar Apr. 24, Mission Apr. 24 and Qualicum Beach May 15. BC FORUM is represented on the CLC Federal Working group by BC FORUM President Diane Wood.

Communicating out information on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing and working with the International Federation of Ageing. Also working with other organizations who are calling for a new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Continue to work with NDP MP Peter Julian regarding implementation of Universal Pharmacare along with NDP MP Scott Duvall on bankruptcy protection.

Our BC FORUM website is continually updated with COVID 19 information. Most recently the roll-out vaccination dates and how to make an appointment.

I represent BC FORUM on the Seniors' Care Working Group of the BC Health Coalition which meets by Zoom monthly. Currently this group is focusing on LTC issues, partnering with Canadians 4 LTC and other provincial health coalitions to get National Standards in LTC. A joint town hall was held on March 15th and a Day of Action will be held on April 27th with local visual demonstrations across the country and an online event. BC FORUM is a BC Health Coalition Partner.

M/S/C to adopt reports of labour council appointed representatives.

Swearing in of Debbie Mohabir as Trustee to the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

18. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Nil

19. ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS: Nil

20. NEW BUSINESS: Nil

21. NOTICE OF MOTION: Nil

22. GOOD AND WELFARE: Nil

23. MEETING ADJOURNED: *M/S/C to adjourn at 8:41 pm.*

24. NEXT MEETING: **TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021** at 7:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference.
Please visit website for event listings and more – www.vdlc.ca

