



2015 Annual General Meeting (held January 7, 2016)

CHAIR'S REPORT

2015 saw the SPAN membership continuing to refine its role in the community beyond sponsorship of the "Nelson at its Best" poverty reduction project. Membership did not grow this year; however, there is a core group of about 8 – 10 very interested members who want to see SPAN continue to play a role in ensuring a healthy, safe, and thriving community for all. We held off on doing some strategic planning until we could explore what our continued role might/should be in light of our existing capacity and resources.

The following is a list of our activities and accomplishments for 2015:

- ❖ SPAN appointed a member to the City of Nelson's Advisory Planning Committee for a second term to bring a social issues lens to the work of this committee
- ❖ Following the municipal election in fall 2014, SPAN worked with its new City Council rep in exploring how a social planning organization like SPAN can work more closely with City Council in the area of the social development monitoring/planning and in achieving some of the healthy community goals articulated in the City's Path to 2040. Over the course of the year, we continued these discussions, identified the potential value of a social development officer role within the City (much like the Cultural Development Officer), and conducted an environmental scan of other BC communities demonstrating how their local governments monitor community social, health, and well-being. This research was shared with Council as they moved into their fall 2015 budget planning session, however, they need more information before they feel able to make any decisions. We learned that there are several progressive mayors in BC who have begun to use a 'community health and well-being' lens in all their cities' issue deliberations. In 2016 SPAN will be looking into inviting one or more of these mayors to visit Nelson to perhaps inspire our community along a similar path and to help us explore what role SPAN might play in this regard.
- ❖ SPAN members identified that Nelson might make better use of its volunteer capacity if the process of becoming a volunteer was more clear and coordinated. A sub-committee was struck to work with other community organizations (particularly the Nelson Women's Centre who relies heavily on volunteers) to explore the concept of an *on-line volunteer centre*. The sub-committee had a 4th year Nursing Student conduct an environmental scan of other communities' efforts in this area. The student presented her findings to SPAN. A community forum is planned for early 2016 to engage the broader community around this need.
- ❖ SPAN participated in the lead up to the Federal election by developing and distributing Fact Sheets and preparing questions for the all-candidates' forums.
- ❖ The SPAN Board adopted a Code of Conduct for its Board members and any employees.
- ❖ SPAN maintained its website and Facebook page.

- ❖ The “Nelson at its Best” poverty reduction project completed its first very successful year of what is to be a multi-year project. The Steering Committee and consultants did a wonderful job of engaging the broader community in dialogue about poverty and talking about why reducing poverty in the community makes not only good sense for individual health/well-being but economic good sense. A website was developed and is being used as an educational and engagement tool (www.bestnelson.org). The group managed to secure funding for year two of the project from CBT, and work is now underway in identifying 2 – 3 specific areas of focus for year two. The project is well-regarded and supported by the Mayor and Council. The Nelson project participates in the Columbia Basin poverty reduction network as well as the Vibrant Communities Canada: Cities Reducing Poverty (Tamarack Institute) network and is a member of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

As Chair, I have continued to enjoy our members’ very rich discussions about promising/best practices that center around community health and well-being. Aside from the specific activities noted above, members have shared events and stories throughout the year about the multitude of initiatives ongoing in our community that focus on improving the lives of all who live here in small and large ways. It is a remarkable community that way!

While the limited capacity and resources of SPAN continue to be its perennial challenge, we are committed to continuing to collaborate with local government and other sectors of our community to ensure that this community’s social, health, economic, and environmental well-being is being monitored and continually improved.

And finally, I wish to thank the members of the SPAN Board for their dedication to community social planning and to the broader membership for continuing to support the work of SPAN. I look forward to the year ahead!

Respectfully submitted,
Rona Park
Board Chair