

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

**Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission
Held at City Hall, 141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver, B.C.
in Conference Room A on Wednesday, November 4th, 2015**

MINUTES

- Present: M. Clark
D. Farley
M. Higgins
A. Jamieson
D. Marshall
P. McCann
M. Rahbar
T. Valente
B. Watt
Councillor Back
Councillor Bell
- Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2, Community Development
D. Johnson, Planner 2, Community Development
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk
- Guests: Rene Rose, Polygon Development 304 Ltd.
Lorne Wolinsky, Polygon Development 304 Ltd.
Nigel Baldwin, Nigel Baldwin Architects
Colin Shrubbs, DYS Architecture
Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership
Troy Glasner, E3ecogroup
- Absent: M. Robinson
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A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held October 14th, 2015

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held October 14th, 2015 be adopted as amended.

Carried Unanimously

2. Business Arising

A copy of the housing types slide was given to members.

It was noted that D. Farley and P. McCann had declared a conflict of interest for the project to be reviewed and would be joining the meeting following the completion of the project review.

T. Valente entered the meeting at 6.09 p.m.

3. 119-131 West Esplanade/120 Carrie Cates Court (OCP Amendment and Rezoning Application)

D. Johnson outlined the project. The application is to build an 11 storey residential tower with 110 residential units over one level of commercial on the West Esplanade side and two stories of commercial on the Carrie Cates Court side.

The Official Community Plan (OCP) designates the site as Mixed Use with an FSR of 2.6 and a height of 23 metres. The site is also designated as a Special Study Area which may include consideration towards density transfer and building height.

The applicant is seeking an amendment to the OCP to support a building height of 37.4 metres.

The commercial podium is oriented to the western side of the site to open up the eastern edge of the site creating a 40 foot wide pedestrian mews that would connect Carrie Cates Court with West Esplanade.

Staff asked for comments from the Commission on the site design and tower orientation and height, the density transfer, the public amenity space and the public realm.

Lorne Wolinsky, Development Manager, Polygon Development 304 Ltd., introduced the delegation and spoke to the project. It is a key site on a major transit node with waterfront access and shopping nearby. The OCP supports the density on the site; the challenge is how to deliver the density which is why extra height is being sought. Mitigating view loss, shadowing and impacts on other buildings near the site were also taken into account.

Nigel Baldwin, Nigel Baldwin Architects, outlined the proposal:

- It is an assembled parcel of just under 40,000 sq. ft.
- There is a strong tradition of north-south oriented slabs in the area which allows views from the north; combined with a low podium it casts the least shadow on West Esplanade.
- The building to the west is not attractive at the grade level with raw concrete and parkade entrances.
- Loading access at Lonsdale Quay to the south has to be taken into account.
- Service access to the building will be from Rogers Avenue as it is not a good pedestrian street.
- The building is set back due to a 16 foot north-south slope. It is three feet below the flood plain level.

- It is hoped that the development will improve the Spirit Trail which runs across the building frontage on Carrie Cates Court. Setting back the building allows space for landscaping between the trail and the building.
- There will be 31,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 100 parking spaces for offsite uses including 16 stalls for the Polygon Gallery and 81 stalls replacing those at 120 Carrie Cates Court and 119 West Esplanade.
- A view corridor has been identified running down the mews to the waterfront; this constrains the placement of the residential building.
- On the east side of the mews is the rear of “restaurant row”.
- The mews is 40 feet wide and gives the restaurants to the east an opportunity to develop the rear of their properties.
- Corner cuts provide open public space.
- A view study was done from a number of suites in six buildings. People who are affected would retain 80% of their current view.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc., reviewed the landscape plan:

- The landscape expression borrows characteristics from Shipyards, Polygon Gallery, and Lonsdale Quay.
- The goal of the design is to make sure the mews is where people want to be, to add to the vibrancy of the area.
- Seat steps and long benches animate the Spirit Trail.

The Commission viewed the model and asked questions.

Questions from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- How high is “restaurant row” compared to the project? **A:** 43 feet compared to 75 feet
- How much is the density bonus? **A:** 1.18 FSR which will be achieved through a density transfer and amenity contribution.
- Where does the bonus come from? **A:** The donor site is 105 Carrie Cates Court.
- To Staff: Can the City impose rental for the bonus? **Staff:** No, but it is always to be considered. It is a market-based system to place a value on the density transfer. The values would have to be adjusted.
- Is there a drop-off zone on Carrie Cates Court? **Staff:** Not that I am aware of.
- Could the tower be shifted more to the centre? **A:** It can be moved; but every foot of movement has a big effect on two people’s views. We have put the building on the axis of the Spirit Trail. There is development potential for restaurant row but it will be hard to meet parking requirements to achieve it. **Staff:** The design takes the slope and the contour of the site into consideration.
- How about shifting the building to the western side of the site? **A:** I like the engagement of the tower with the mews; the mews is not shaded that much.
- To staff: If “restaurant row” redevelops where would the access for vehicles be? **Staff:** The mews will have some access for deliveries. It would have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There has been a move to reduce parking requirements in Lower Lonsdale. There could be offsite parking or other options.
- The mews addresses permeability; how did you arrive at the width? **A:** It was tighter to maximise retail frontage; then we were convinced that the view corridor

was important so we set the podium back. It could become a really attractive place to be. It is wide enough for vehicles with generous pedestrian routes on either side protected with bollards. We did not want to make it wider than 40 feet. It is a Granville Island type of friendly place.

- Are there 30 parking spaces more than required? **A:** We are meeting requirements; there are 41 spaces for the market, 40 for Seaspan, and 16 for Polygon Gallery. The commercial parking is per the bylaw. The residential parking is 1.2 stalls per unit plus .1 for visitor for a total of 10 visitor stalls. **Staff:** There is a reduction of 27 stalls for the inclusion of secured bike parking in accordance with the bylaw.
- You mention revitalizing the restaurants backing on to the mews; is there a co-investment opportunity? **A:** We are trying to be respectful. We would like to sit down with them to see what they are interested in doing. We do not want to push them.
- Have you considered an angled building, wider at the bottom, narrower at the top to minimize view impacts? **A:** Somebody's view gets changed every time you change the mass.
- I echo the concern about the density on the site. It is very busy with buses, drop-offs etc. Is there any provision for the residents? How will the circulation work for the market? **A:** We are happy to do a layby but it goes against the spirit of Carrie Cates Court.
- What about buses going up Rogers Avenue? **Staff:** It is a tight turn; they have to do a left turn on to West Esplanade which is tricky and dangerous. It is steeper than along Lonsdale Avenue.
- Is it possible to widen Rogers Avenue? **Staff:** That has not been on the table recently. TransLink is beyond our control. We continue to monitor it.
- I like the mews idea and am intrigued about the pedestrian access; would it be good to have a link between the building and the ICBC walkway? **A:** We considered it but it is very awkward and we were strongly discouraged. The City wants people on grade on Esplanade.

Comments from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- I have to agree that the corner of Rogers Avenue and Carrie Cates Court is not very nice with a view of Lonsdale Quay garbage; maybe there could be landscaping to screen it.
- People use the current parking lot all the time.
- I like the building. I am neutral about whether to shift the building to satisfy more of the people who have concerns.
- I do not see a benefit in the density transfer; it makes it harder for people to design the building and makes it longer, bulkier.
- The public amenity space is great; I like the views.
- Emphasize the mews; it is very exciting.
- There is a 13 storey building where pedestrians are walking; usually the building is set back.
- There need to be more traffic studies and more evaluation of the bonus and density because of the amount of activity happening in that location.
- My major concern is the permeability.
- A lot of effort has gone into minimizing the impact on the neighbours.
- Density should be close to major transit hubs.

- Recognize the concern about the drop offs; you will not want anyone pulling across the Spirit Trail. Perhaps the layby should be by the parking entrance.
- Rain coverage around the building is good.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed OCP Amendment and Rezoning Application for 119-131 West Esplanade/120 Carrie Cates Court and recommends approval in principle.

The Commission looks forward to future details on the feasibility of a passenger drop-off area to serve the residential building.

The Commission encourages consideration and further discussions with the businesses in “restaurant row” to the east of the project regarding existing and future treatment at the rear of their property including garbage, loading, parking and patio spaces.

The Commission commends the applicant for the rain coverage surrounding the site.

Carried Unanimously

There was a short break at 7:50 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

D. Farley, P. McCann joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Councillor Back left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

4. Housing Action Plan

W. Tse, Planner 1, presented the proposed Housing Action Plan to the Commission and asked for comments on appropriateness, effectiveness and general support.

The Plan establishes goals and strategies to address community housing needs and aligns with the OCP goals and objectives and other City priorities. It also fulfils Metro Vancouver’s housing plan requirement.

The plan will look at the whole housing continuum. The City needs 30 low income rentals per year but currently is only attaining five. It is a challenging goal.

The draft Plan was presented to Council on November 2nd. It is now being presented to stakeholders and will return for consideration in January 2016.

Key housing challenges are: appropriate and affordable housing stock for low to moderate income families, family-friendly housing with three or more bedrooms, seniors and age-friendly housing, affordable rental housing, homelessness and transitioning out of shelters, aging social housing, infrastructure and expiring operating agreements.

A number of preliminary housing alternatives have been selected for consideration by APC tonight:

- A Family-friendly Housing Policy (recently adopted by the City of New Westminster) would require a minimum percentage of units to be three or more bedrooms in new multi-unit residential development.
- The removal of the owner occupancy requirement for secondary suites which is common but difficult to enforce. There is a trend moving away from the requirement which can be legally challenged. This creates an opportunity for more family-friendly rental housing.
- A Non-market Housing Regeneration Policy; the existing affordable housing stock is changing. There is an opportunity to support housing societies with regenerating their portfolio.
- Flexible configurations for two accessory units on Residential Level 1 lots which would increase accessory units on single family lots in multiple configurations.

Questions and comments from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- Why is the freehold alternative left off the list? **A:** Fee simple townhouses will be included in the Housing Action Plan. There is nothing to prevent developers building them. We have to think about how to enable them e.g. incentives like pre-made legal agreements. It needs further research.
- It takes a long time to get alternative forms of housing e.g. fourplexes, triplexes, approved; it discourages applicants. The next step to help developers is missing.
- In Montreal there is a lot of renovation of four or five plexes. I think it is going to happen here. Is renovation and stratifying fourplexes a category? People will renovate rather than demolish. **A:** They have to bring the building up to the current Building Code which can be challenging. We can see if we can make the process easier. We have involved staff from other departments to see if we can make the process more efficient. Stratifying would be a way of making a cheap one-bedroom unit. It can be a challenge as we look at the OCP land use map.
- Is this a standalone plan? **A:** Yes, taking direction from the OCP.
- It is another level of red tape? **A:** These actions for affordable housing are informed by the OCP where housing was seen as very important by residents. We are looking at incentives to create more affordable housing. We are also consulting with stakeholders such as UDI.
- Would anything have to change in the OCP? **A:** We are trying to stay in the context of the OCP land use map.
- What can be changed to facilitate the process and reduce bureaucracy? **A:** We try to fast track non-market housing; we may be looking at the more affordable projects. We have a small Planning Department and have to work with the resources we have.
- The longer the projects last, the more expensive they become. **A:** We are trying to balance that and simplify the process. It is a challenge.
- We often get requests from developers with considerations that will result in more affordable housing. Is it worth giving anything? It does not guarantee the pricing. **A:** We can only implement the plan by giving bonuses. We can only control the outcome through covenants.
- It is really important that we have more three-bedroom units.

- How is North Vancouver doing compared to the rest of Metro? **A:** We are doing quite well. The City is recognized as a leader in terms of housing policy but the targets are still hard to achieve. Metro is looking at the numbers to see if they should be more realistic. We are in the top five in terms of rental stock. We are seeing more market rental being built but not so much affordable rental. It is a balancing act. It is now about \$3 per foot to build market rental.
- People who hold on to rental buildings double their money over 10 years; it is more profitable than building condos. **A:** We are trying to work out what percentage of units should be below market rates.
- There is no mention of co-op housing; it is a good solution. **A:** They were built when senior government had funding for co-ops. We are trying to work with co-ops as the operating agreements expire to see what can be done to help them.
- Co-op members used to have to own shares; it seemed to succeed. Once that was removed, the buildings were not treated so well. The City might have to appoint a non-profit society to instruct people on how to manage a co-op.
- What is our relationship with the District? **A:** They have their own housing demands to meet. Lot of seniors from the District move to the City. There is a lot of movement on the North Shore.
- What about townhouses? **A:** There will be new stock in the Moodyville area.
- It would be good to bank City land.
- I cannot see any solution unless the City can use its lands. **A:** We have ways of leveraging city lands. 20% of any community amenity contribution goes into the Affordable Housing Fund.
- When you meet with rental owners, ask them what it takes to get them to stay in business; maybe they need some incentives.

Matt Clark left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

5. Moodyville Design Guidelines Overview

S. Smith, Planner 2 gave an overview of the proposed Moodyville draft Zoning and Development Permit Guidelines.

Questions and comments from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- I lived on a street 25 feet wide which worked well to slow traffic.
- Is urban agriculture in the guidelines? Where do they go and what about community energy? **A:** Urban agriculture is mentioned in the guidelines; it is encouraged but not required. It is a guiding principle. LEC can require connection but have to plan to be providing service; we need to clarify where they will be connecting. We want to raise the bar for those LEC choose not to connect to. We will be pushing the envelope. It will be tied to the Zoning Bylaw so will be required for extra density.
- I do not see much recreational land, playgrounds etc. except for Moodyville Park. **A:** Council asked us to create the zoning and guidelines. Improvements to parkland has to continue but will not be resolved by these guidelines.
- Is live-work a new zoning? **A:** No. There are not many units currently. There are some on East Esplanade.
- How does the City enforce live-work units? **A:** Zoning permits it. It is taxed at a different rate. We are trying to encourage it.

- Is a transportation corridor the right place to have live-work units? **A:** They tend to be smaller or service-related e.g. hairdressers, florists, artists to service the neighbourhood.
- Pedestrian mews will be important; it is an opportunity to put in active transportation. A commuter route for cycling needs to be established. **A:** There is a Bicycle Masterplan. There is a bike route on East 4th Street but cyclists tend to use East 3rd Street. We do have some ideas of optimal connections but have to wait for development to come forward.
- The guidelines are very thorough.
- Pre-zoning is good for homeowners; they know what to expect when they sell.
- I liked the heritage buildings, major trees; there should be a map in to show where they are.
- The tree retention comment should have a number e.g. if you replace a major tree you should replace it with a certain number and size of trees.
- I liked the heat island effect comment; the percentage of non-hard landscaping should be established.
- I have a problem with basements; they should be included in the FAR if they are of a liveable height. **A:** It is in the Zoning Bylaw.
- You end up with window wells. **A:** there will not be many basements in stacked townhouses. There will be underground parking for most of the buildings and no cellars.
- Now is the time to straighten out the curve on St. David's Avenue and East 3rd Street and define what kind of curve should it have. **A:** The guidelines will not apply to the bus barn site. It will have specific guidelines when it comes forward for redevelopment.
- What about pocket parks? **A:** We will deal with them as consolidated developments come forward.
- It would be good to have connections similar to Jack Loucks Park.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the draft Moodyville Zoning and Development Permit Guidelines and recommends approval in principle with the following comments:

- Consideration of recreational land;
- Further consideration of how to incorporate urban farming;
- Inclusion of a map of heritage buildings in the area;
- Inclusion of replacement ratio for tree retention / replacement e.g. 10 cm trees (2 for 1);
- A concept for the straightening of the curve at East 3rd Street at St. David's Avenue;
- Exploration of opportunities for pocket parks and pedestrian connections;
- Consideration of AAA Bike routes within the study area;
- Investigation of incentives for encouraging fee simple row houses

The Commission commends staff for the thoroughness of the presentation.

Carried Unanimously

6. Staff Update

S. Smith reviewed relevant planning development, project and policy items from the previous Council meetings

7. Information Items

No information items.

8. Other Business

Members were reminded that the December meeting will be on December 2nd.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015.



Chair

