

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, October 12th, 2011

MINUTES

Present: B. Curtis (Chair)
J. Jensen
P. McCann
D. Olson
B. Phillips
J. Plato
M. Rahbar
M. Robinson
Councillor Heywood

Staff: S. Smith, Planner, Community Development
G. Penway, Deputy Director, Community Development
D. Mitic, Assistant City Engineer, Transportation
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

Guests: **506 East 19th Street**
Charles Moorhead, C. Moorhead Architect
Cesare Gentile, Sylvaner Gentile, Owners
272-274 East 5th Street
Dierdre Spencer, Terra Firma Design Ltd.
Melanie Richardson, Owner

Absent: H. Goodland
M. Tasi

A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1. **Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held September 14th 2011**

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held September 14th, 2011 be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

There was a short discussion whether APC's role in amenity discussions had been resolved. Staff noted that it is a key topic for the group to discuss and would be a future agenda topic.

2. Business Arising

This was moved to the end of the meeting to allow time for the discussion on Terms of Reference for the proposed Integrated Transportation Committee.

3. Proposed Transportation Committee Terms of Reference

D. Mitic reviewed the draft Terms of Reference for the proposed Transportation Committee and asked members for their comments. The name Sustainable Transportation Committee was changed to The Integrated Transportation Committee. The Joint Bicycle Advisory Committee (JBAC) was heavily involved in formulating the Terms of Reference. The proposed areas of responsibility are far ranging including promoting an energy efficient, affordable and safe transportation network that supports a variety of transportation choices, providing advice on other levels of government's transportation plans which might affect the City's Transportation Plan, considering the impact of large developments, and promoting active modes of transportation.

Members' and questions comments included:

Will the committee be functional in time to give input on the changes to the Low Level Road? Staff: The hope is to activate the ITC (Integrated Transportation Committee) in time for the January 2012 appointment process as the City needs a strong focus on transportation issues as JBAC has been disbanded.

The City really lacks a context for the changes to the Low Level Road because there is not a committee to review them; should there be a link between the Council Translink representative and the ITC? Staff: The City is maintaining contact with the City representatives on the former "JBAC" working group. The Low Level Road could also be referred to the APC if need be as APC currently deals with transportation issues as well.

What does "active transportation" mean? Staff: Mainly walking and cycling.

Is the industry involved in the movement of goods across the City represented? It might be also worthwhile to look for a port representative as they drive a lot of traffic.

I do not think that educating the public is the role of committees rather it should be advising on educating the public, not producing the education. Staff: Some groups have more of an advocacy role e.g. The Heritage Commission.

Staff: We had 40-50 Carson Graham students drop into the City and had a variety of input from them. The majority of their comments were about transportation and the challenges they face getting from a-b. Perhaps a youth representative or two on the committee would be good.

It was noted that Translink has included youth in their feedback process.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the draft Terms of Reference for the Integrated Transportation Committee and is encouraged by the direction they are taking. The Commission appreciates the opportunity to comment and hopes the Integrated Transportation Committee is operational in time to assist with issues such as the Low Level Road reconfiguration.

Carried unanimously

4. 506 East 19th Street (Heritage Alteration Permit and Rezoning)

S. Smith reviewed the staff memo. The application is to subdivide two 50 foot lots into three lots and retain the current heritage building which straddles the two lots. The applicant proposes to restore the heritage building and construct two single family homes with secondary suites on either side of the heritage building.

Charles Moorhead, C. Moorhead Architect, and Cesare Gentile presented the proposal:

- Staff suggested subdividing the lots and keeping the house where it is.
- The copper beech tree will be retained.
- There is the question of whether the two new houses should have suites; some neighbours are unhappy with the idea. The issue is how to densify gently.
- There is also an affordability issue of whether to build two large houses or three smaller houses with one or two suites.
- The heritage house dates from 1910 and is pretty much intact inside.
- The enclosed front veranda will be opened up; it is not clear if it was part of the original design.
- Another bedroom will be added upstairs and the bottom floor opened up.
- The original siding will be kept.
- The windows and doors are largely intact except for the basement windows which will be changed.
- The large fir tree will be felled and the front cleaned up. There is a large City boulevard at the front.
- The neighbourhood has many 30 foot lots.

Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- What material will be used for the basement windows? A: Wood.
- Do you have energy goals for the heritage home? A: It is difficult to do; we could put storm sashes on the inside.
- Does the material used support the sustainability statement? A: They are by-products not real wood so use wood chips etc.
- How much parking is there? A: There is a two-car garage per unit off the lane.
- How many suites? A: There are suites in all three units, but we might have to reduce the number of suites as there is a concern about density.
- Is there any reason from a planning perspective to have the 25 foot setback from the really long boulevard? A: We are trying to protect the old house by pushing the two new houses back and scaling them down.
- The back yards are so squeezed it is difficult to see how the different suites claim their space? A: The outdoor space for the upstairs units is on the side.

- How do you access the suite in the heritage house? A: From the back around the side under the bay window.
- How does the property fit with other houses on the street? A: About the same.
- I support the density. How big will the windows be in the basement suites? A: The front is open to the light; we will be using light wells at the back. They are tight to the ground. They are cellars by the City's definition rather than basements which would be counted in the square footage.
- It is an attractive project. Density should be by transportation, parks and schools.
- How will you provide the buffering between the three properties? A: With fences and landscaping; we aim to maximise the setbacks: six feet rather than five feet.
- What is the preliminary sense of the neighbourhood's reaction to the project? A: We suspect strong resistance; there are no 33 foot lots in the area and it is increasing from two dwelling units to six.
- How are the floor areas calculated? A: The basement of the heritage house is excluded. We are seeking a relaxation for the heritage house bow window.
- Cost of the two lots? A: \$1.7 million. The smaller units will probably sell for \$1.1-1.2, larger houses on the two 50 foot lots would sell for about \$2 million.
- Is there an issue with the number of stories? A: The City does not restrict the number of stories as long as it fits in the height envelope and floor area.

Comments from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- The designation as a cellar is serious shame; I would like to see the two houses be the same height as the heritage house. Would they have the same relationship to the exterior? The cellar is not all that liveable with high windows in the back bedrooms; I would push for a relaxation on FSR requirements.
- I like the project overall. It is great to keep the heritage home and add density
- There is an opportunity to raise the cellar floor elevation that still results in the cellar floor exemption; this can be accomplished by adjusting the average finished grade at the perimeter of the structure as defined in the zoning bylaw.
- I would support as much light into the basement as possible and support a total Energuid target of 84 for the whole project.
- On the westerly building there is a long skylight but the east side is running into the building face; it will leak.
- I am supportive but it will be perceived as a tripling of density; the heritage house could be knocked down.
- This is a great opportunity for single parent families. You should find a way to get more light into the cellar to have more liveable space.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the Heritage Alteration Permit and Rezoning Application for 506 East 19th Street and recommends approval of the project subject to:

- Staff working with the applicant to increase the light and liveability of the secondary suites in the new units;
- The average energy target across the three homes be Energuid 84;

FURTHER the Commission commends the applicant on the retention of the heritage building, the style of the new buildings and the inclusion of secondary suites.

The Commission also supports the relaxation for the bay window in the heritage home, and suggests the heritage home be designated.

The Commission commends the applicant for a thorough presentation.

Carried unanimously

5. 272-274 East 5th Street (Rezoning Application)

S. Smith reviewed the staff memo on the project which is for a rezoning amendment to convert the existing duplex into a four-unit market rental building. No alterations to the exterior or landscaping are proposed. The existing Gross Floor Area would remain at 4,078 square feet.

Deirdre Spencer, Terra Firma Design Ltd., and Melanie Richardson, owner, presented the proposal to the Commission:

- This is an existing duplex. The two units were added some time ago. The new owner has recently discovered that the suites are not legal.
- The proposal is that the building be legalized in its current form.
- It is well-maintained with parking.
- The suites would be kept as rental units.
- It is a nice looking building that fits in well with the streetscape.
- It makes sense to keep the building rather than building a new one.
- The upper suites are 1300 square feet, the basement suites are 614 square feet.

Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- What is the rental revenue? A: The upstairs suites are rented for \$1,950, the garden suites are rented for \$900 and \$742, which include utilities.
- Are they long-term renters? A: One tenant has lived there for about five years; other tenants have lived there since we took possession two years ago.
- Is there any desire in the long term for splitting up the rental units as a strata? A: It is one owner, one building; all the units are completely separate.
- What is the density? Staff: The block is Level 4 (1.0 FSR) in the OCP so the level of density is not out of keeping.
- What is the fire rating of the suites? A: The building inspector has said we should upgrade the electrical, add a meter.
- Are there other rentals in the area? A: Yes. Two buildings down is an apartment block.
- When was it built? A: It was built in 1950 and renovated in 1993.
- Did you use a lawyer when you purchased the property? A: Yes.
- Have building inspections been carried out on all the suites? A: Yes, we have to do a couple of minor upgrades.
- Did you know the suites were illegal? A: We had no idea until we received a letter from the City about four months after buying the property.
- Question to staff: What would be the impact of granting the zoning to this project? Staff: It is in a level 4 area so it is expected that there would be a higher density in the area. Higher land use OCP designation would be a rationale as would the four rental units.

- What are the feelings in the neighbourhood? A: Only one person attended the open house: someone from the townhouse to the east who wanted to confirm that it would stay the same.
- Question to staff: Is there any way to address the issue without setting a precedent? Staff: Issues like this are dealt with on a case by case basis.

Comments from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- If it was rezoned they could not add more units there.
- It is in an area with density in terms of context and the suites have been there for a while.
- It is well-maintained by the appearance of the garden.
- They could probably rebuild what is already there and lose the affordability of the rental suites.
- Staff: Just to clarify that the process is to turn it into a four-unit market rental building.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 272-274 East 5th Street and recommends approval of the conversion to a four unit market rental building, recognizing the Level 4 land use designation in the area, and with the provision of separate metering for all four suites and that building code compliance is met.

Carried unanimously

D. Olson left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

6. CityShaping – Land Use Workshop

S. Smith updated the group on the CityShaping OCP update process. Phase 1 is concluded and a summary report is being produced for the end of the month. Almost 1,000 people answered the issues and priorities survey, over 160 youth filled out a CityFest survey, and input was also received from Grade 10 Carson Graham students, and two co-hosted community events. Staff are now discussing critical issues that need to be addressed; what issues do we know we will have to deal with e.g. climate change, plus those from the community. Phase 2 will run until mid-march. This will be a targeted and deep approach with topic-based workshops, for example on transportation, focus groups, a community workbook in an effort to connect with hard-to-reach groups in the City.

G. Penway gave the group a broad overview of issues to consider when thinking about land use:

- Land use is a synthesis resulting in a built form. Plans generally last about 10 years. The Commission needs to understand how issues such as housing cost and affordability (the #1 issue), transportation and employment, coming out of Phase 1 of the OCP process will be included in the new OCP.
- Land use will affect the liveability and health of your community.

- The recent Walk 21 Conference discussed walkability in different communities around the world.
- Land use in the Official Community Plan has to show how it fits into the regional plan. In the past there was not a great need to interface with other municipalities but now one needs to show the context around it. For example different levels of government are focussed on transportation. The draft concept for transportation for 2040 shows the Lynn Valley via Lonsdale transit route as a frequent transit route. This route is currently one of the top two in the region in ridership second only to the UBC / Broadway route. The east-west Marine Drive corridor from Ambleside through the City to Maplewood will unite all North Shore municipalities.
- Little thought has been given to the east-west connection in the past and the implications for population and employment growth. We want to build towards something that is further out than 10 years. The last OCP had a population capacity of 64,000; the next generation plan should accommodate population and capacity.
- The 100 year vision suggests how the City can move into the future. We need to be contemplating a good future for the City in the long term.
- The City needs to consider how to deliver affordable housing, generate employment, long term transportation requirements, how to bring GHG down, how to deal with liveability and amenities e.g. park space in conjunction with density. In Phase 2 of the OCP process there will be papers speaking specifically to some of these issues.
- We are working towards a modified version of the land use map which will not be prescriptive but offer possible options. There needs to be transitions between buildings e.g. heights and we need to plan how to fit 10-20,000 more people into the City.
- The APC needs to spend more time on the OCP and not review smaller projects.

Questions and Comments from the APC included, but were not limited to:

I support the idea of nodes; liveability in the town centre is fine, but outlying areas need connectedness back to the town centre and out to nature with opportunities for employment, live work institutions, as well as reflecting culture, history, different characters.

District heating; we could use natural energy generated from industry, sewage plant to run buses.

Higher density requires higher amenities e.g. recreation facilities. The City could be found quite wanting in this area. Private exercise rooms in towers are not the answer. Staff: The City is limited by funding sources e.g. DCC's fund parks but not recreation centres. We need to look at what is being provided for kids living in the town centre, have a discussion about the issue and let the policy drive the outcome.

Vancouver Coastal Health has provided a workshop about providing seven to eight elements for liveability; nodes have to have all seven and need to bring people to the community centre. They are real criteria that you can measure your land use by e.g. is there childcare, etc. How would this be funded?

Staff: The City has received about \$12 million of community benefit from the latest large developments plus infrastructure upgrades. The Operations Centre, which will be built at no cost to the taxpayer, will add up to about \$30 million.

APC does not see the plan for community amenities for example is the museum high on the priority list? We need a plan of where we want to go with amenities and a report showing the value of what the City has already received.

We should be trying to match the amenity with the liveable context. The Lower Lonsdale community amenity list was created some years ago; we should target other areas and create a vision for developers. Some amenities might be community wide e.g. Harry Jerome. It has to be taken from what the city needs and what the neighbourhood needs.

There is a recreation centre and elementary school deficit in Lower Lonsdale. On a future agenda we could discuss the concept that there should be a minor mode of recreation within two km and major recreation centre within five km of where people live.

Staff: We are working on a document on 30 years of community amenities. Much of the discussion on community amenities is about how you fund them. At this point we do not know how they will be funded in the future.

There is a desire to get APC more involved but given the proposed reorganization it is not always clear what is coming to APC. I am not sure how we will reduce the workload if everyone wants to be involved.

Staff: We could use approach that if a project is consistent with the Official Community Plan and with the guidelines it does not need to be reviewed by APC; or perhaps only units over 10. This would give APC more time to focus on policy issues during the CityShaping.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT to allow for more time to focus on policy issues during the CityShaping process, the Advisory Planning Commission requests not to review projects which are less than 10 units in size, are consistent with the Official Community Plan and any related design guidelines, and which will be reviewed by the Advisory Design Panel.

Carried unanimously

G. Penway's presentation was very informative. Members felt that the presentation or one similar, could be made annually to assist the APC to remain focussed on relevant planning issues and to adopt constructive resolutions on projects and policy.

7. Staff Update

129-141 West 2nd Street: The Public Hearing was on September 19th. Second and Third readings were passed unanimously. Final Adoption was on October 3rd.

1835 Lonsdale Avenue: Demolition of this property was approved at the September 19th Council meeting. The Applicant was encouraged to apply for a rezoning application to include one additional floor with four rental units above the three commercial floors. (The current building has four rental units).

250-252 East 10th Street (Rezoning, Heritage Designation and Strata Conversion): This was given First Reading 5-2 at the September 19th Council meeting. The Public Hearing will be on November 7th.

1250 Lonsdale Avenue: This received Final Adoption on October 3rd.

M4 Zoning Minor Modification in Lower Lonsdale: A delegation to Council requested an amendment to allow the sale of retail or servicing of household or personal goods and to increase Accessory Retail Use to 30% of the Gross Floor Area of the Building. A decision was deferred to full Council.

Civic Association of Iranian Canadians: A delegation spoke to Council about the purpose of the group which is to encourage the Iranian community to actively participate in elections at all levels of government. The Civic Engagement Task Force was referenced by Council and staff were directed to liaise with the group.

Permissive Tax Exemptions: Council deferred making a decision on a permissive tax exemption for the Lions Gate Christian Academy located at Harbourside until full Council.

Memorandum of Understanding re Participation of Vancouver Coastal Health in the OCP: Council voted unanimously to authorize the Director of Community Development to sign the MOU which will focus on health and the built environment.

Public Art Grant: A Community Public Art Grant was approved for the North Shore Streamkeepers to create a mural in Heywood Park.

Frank Ducote is working Low Density Development Design Guidelines. Would APC like him to come to the November meeting? It was decided the guidelines would be a discussion item and not a presentation.

S. Smith suggested November 5th for a walking tour. It was decided to postpone the walking tour in favour of spending time on policy planning.

Volunteers were solicited to do a CityShaping video. John Jensen volunteered.

8. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, November 9th 2011.

Chair