

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, April 12th, 2017

---

**MINUTES**

---

Present: A. Boston  
D. Farley  
M. Higgins  
S. Huber  
B. Hundal  
D. Marshall  
T. Valente  
R. Vesely  
Councillor Back  
Councillor Bell

Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2  
E. Adin, Deputy Director, Community Development  
M. Epp, City Planner  
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

Guests: None

Absent: A. Cameron  
B. Watt

---

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

**1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. Business Arising**

Susan Kimm-Jones was thanked for her service on the occasion of her retirement.

### 3. Staff Update

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

### 4. Tree Preservation Strategy

M. Epp, City Planner, described the proposed tree preservation strategy and described three options:

1. Non-regulatory.
2. The current practice with tree cutting permits required in certain circumstances.
3. The implementation of a full tree cutting permit program with established exemptions.

Option 3 would require increased staff; the District of North Vancouver has one full time employee dedicated to supporting their tree protection bylaw and mediating on competing private interests with regard to views and access to light.

Option 1 would incur lower staff costs and more resources could be expended on street trees and other programs such as a yard tree giveaway.

The City has a Street Tree Master Plan which has the goal of planting 200 street trees per year. North Vancouver City has less street trees per capita than other municipalities. There is a benefit/cost ratio of 5/1 per tree planted.

Approaches differ in more urban municipalities when compared to municipalities with large lots and rural and agricultural land. More flexible practices are required in dense municipalities. 14 of 22 municipalities have tree bylaws.

The City does not currently have a tree permit process for private property unless there is a covenant on it. A tree inventory is required for a development application and a development permit is required in streamside areas to remove trees from hazard areas, steep slopes etc.

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

- Perhaps have an incentive for people to plant trees on private property. Have a positive program rather than one with penalties. Option 3 is costly.
- Option 3 involves too much effort and labour to administer. Voluntary tree planting is interesting. Have front ended guidelines and make sure the species fits the purpose; otherwise there could be problems due to roots, height etc. **Staff:** The issue is to get people to plant more conifers; the program could be tailored.
- Option 3 is very restrictive. I like #1 with a giveaway program.
- Would Option #2 cover most of the City not just large developments e.g. duplexes. **Staff:** It would cover everything except single family homes unless there is a hazard condition.
- It would be nice to have larger trees; just have a permit program for larger trees to protect them.

- Could Street Tree Program increase the number of trees up from 200 trees planted per year? **Staff:** Sometimes the program is just replacing trees so there is no net gain. Moodyville has no street trees so there will be a massive gain which is above the 200.
  - I think a tree bylaw is necessary. People come to the North Shore because of trees and mountains. The District of North Vancouver had concerns that lots would be completely cleared of trees as it saves money; under the District of North Vancouver Bylaw developers have to have a good reason to remove a tree. If they need to remove a large tree they have to plant more. The District has a trained arborist to evaluate safety. Reasonable reasons for tree removal include roots interfering with drains, hazardous conditions etc.
  - What would be useful at the front of the policy would be a set of principles e.g. the positive cost of having trees, allowing people to experience aesthetic enjoyment, protecting habitat, energy and biodiversity benefits. I am not against some regulations for any redevelopment when trees are at great risk; there should be a bylaw for single family homes, multi family. Really large second growth trees are needed; it is a loss to the City to lose them. It is a matter of balancing the administrative burden; it would be onerous to have one full time person dedicated to it. We need education for developers and home owners; trees are often planted in the wrong place for long term growth.
  - Deciduous trees are good for light in the winter and prevent heat in the summer on the south side of buildings.
  - It depends on the situation; some people have a fear of large trees coming down in heavy winds. There should be a balance; we need to keep greenery.
  - I like the non-regulatory approach but we need some regulations to protect large trees.
  - Topping of trees is really bad, they should be spiral pruned.
  - The root ball of large trees is huge; it is unfair to penalize the home owner who has large trees against a neighbour who has no trees.
  - If you do want to take a tree down, provide funds to replace trees and share the cost.
  - Dealing with trees adds a lot of cost to building new homes. You can spend \$30-40,000 trying to keep them alive.
  - With the move to passive house, controlling the placement of trees can be a more sustainable approach.
- M. Epp thanked the Commission for their input which will help in the future work on formalizing the policy.

## 5. 2017 Work Plan

S. Smith reviewed the proposed 2017 APC Work Plan.

Topics already scheduled for 2017 include: Living City Grants and Awards (May), Sustainable City Awards (March), OCP Monitoring Strategy, Duplex Special Study, Harry Jerome Redevelopment, Community Well-Being Strategy, Food Policy, and Changing Demographics.

S. Smith asked members to think of ideas for speakers, workshops and a walking tour.

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

- What is the purpose of workshops? **A:** Going into more detail on a topic which might generate a policy.
- Speakers, workshops, and tours assist members to be better informed. The Commission's priority is what Council refers to them but the Commission, within their mandate, can also propose topics through staff to Council for consideration.
- Perhaps a walking tour and speakers about Harry Jerome: including what worked for other municipalities and what did not e.g. the West Van pool, Delbrook Recreation Centre; plans for rinks, pools, and statistics concerning use. Also could the redevelopment be financed by space that could be rented out to complement the services offered? Leasing may also be a viable option rather than selling the land.
- I would be interested in a workshop on affordable housing; still unsure about what it is. **Staff:** The Housing Action Plan did come before the Commission in the fall – staff would be happy to provide another session on the topic.
- **Staff:** Are you interested in an information session on storage? Or an overview of the current parking standards e.g. secured bicycle storage? **A:** Yes.
- Perhaps also a combined workshop with Integrated Transportation Committee on the link between development and transportation.
- Can you include the items from 2016 which were not covered? **A:** Yes.
- 

**Action:** Staff to compile sticky notes and report back at the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**6. Density Bonus and Community Benefit Policy**

E. Adin, Deputy Director, Community Development, outlined the proposed changes to the Density Bonus and Community Benefit Policy.

There has been a lot of debate over the years about how to collect and track community benefits from development. Finding the right balance to encourage community benefits from development is difficult.

Density bonusing was first formalized in the 1992 Official Community Plan. There was an initial cap on density bonuses of 10% which saw little uptake. The first significant density bonus was approved in 1997. The cap was lifted in 1998 and the Legion obtained a density bonus of 90%.

A review process in 2004-2005, which was initiated by concerns on certainty and clarity, led to no changes.

A 2012-2015 review in parallel with the Official Community Plan update led to the current policy.

Community Amenity Contributions are generally collected through policy and bylaws using the principle of density bonusing; they used to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. There is more of an emphasis on cash contributions.

2016 achievements included: secured community benefits e.g. 275 new market rental units, 15 lower income rental units, green building requirements, restoration of the Eades Residence, a new location for the museum \$3.85 million in cash, \$2 million in kind, public art.

The proposed updated rates are a result of a third party review. They include cash contribution increases and eliminating the difference between the City centre and outside areas to encourage density close to transit and amenities, changes to the secured rental housing option which reflect the Housing Action Plan.

The proposed changes also add clarity to the existing practice; one or more criteria have to be met in the development proposal: adjacency or close proximity, preferable built form, or a significant public benefit.

No changes are proposed to heritage conservation bonusing.

Protection for six months is proposed for in-stream applications. No protection for preliminary discussions.

Staff asked members for suggestions on creating more employment generating use. There is a goal of a 1 to 1 ratio between employed adults and jobs; the City is close to it, but it is hard to keep it.

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

- How does the \$190 contribution figure compare to other municipalities? \$190 seems low. We are leaving a lot of money on the table. **A:** The cost of density varies within the region. We are competing against the buying price, I have heard \$220; \$170 is the lowest. Municipalities are not meant to be selling density; part of the benefit is to realize the vision of the Official Community Plan (OCP). We are supposed to get assistance from the developer to help mitigate the impact of the development on the community.
- I would like to see some comparisons with other municipalities.
- I would rather see all cash than things like a daycare, low cost market rental
- How will going to one rate promote development in transit areas? **A:** The City set height limits in Moodyville which can result in broader squatter buildings. It makes more sense to get additional density in tower form in the City Centre rather than large, wide six storey buildings.
- The money from developers goes into the sale price; we shoot ourselves in the foot for affordability by raising this rate. **A:** Impacts on sale price are incredibly complicated. Sales prices tend to be set regionally or sub-regionally, not based on local fees and contributions. Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) are a drop in the sea compared to other costs incurred by the developer. It would be important to ensure CAC rates do not have an adverse impact on affordability across the region and that they do not work against the vision of growing the community in line with the OCP.
- I agree with the categories.
- There is a huge opportunity to animate lanes with pedestrians, lower end entry level commercial e.g. the entire laneway from City Hall to the School District should

be animated with more uses. Get people out of cars for short trips; most people make short trips.

- There is a category missing: pedestrianization around new developments. The City has done good work in Lower Lonsdale to support it. **A:** The category B bonus is only available in some areas of the City. We can consider keeping variable rates; it could be a stepped process, \$110 to \$190 is a big jump. We have received feedback; members of public are saying that there needs to be amenities provided more locally that can immediately benefit the neighbourhood e.g. a pedestrian greenway, pocket park. There is consideration to looking for local benefits for neighbourhoods in addition to cash contributions for City-wide amenities.
- I would prefer cash going to the City so they can regulate things and determine priorities for spending. **A:** Currently we have negotiated developers providing the significant upgrade to Moodyville Park; often developers find economies of scale if there is something adjoining and close by, they can do it quicker and cheaper. Staff demands excellence from them.
- Why can't we charge everything to the developers? **A:** Prices are market-based; developers work on a 15% to 20% return.
- Every municipality is charging developers for density; it must be driving the prices up.
- There needs to be an opportunity for Council to make decisions re cash. It is nice to help the neighbourhood, it makes the development easier, but cash can help the whole community. Different situations require different approaches; we need flexibility.
- Lots of things affect affordability especially the processing time because of carrying costs.
- There is a disconnect with the green necklace between Victoria Park and Grand Boulevard; hypothetically, perhaps remove some single family houses and move density elsewhere. **A:** That would probably be a combination of a transfer and bonus. Nothing fetters Council's decision making ability. The current and proposed Density Bonus and Community Benefits Policy are guidelines that apply in most situations. Council can do something else entirely in extraordinary situations.

E. Adin thanked members for their input.

*There was a short break at 8:15 p.m.*

*The meeting reconvened at 8:20 p.m.*

## **7. 2014 OCP Annual Report**

S. Smith presented the draft monitoring strategy featuring the 2014 OCP Annual Report.

The purpose is to measure progress towards the goals and object of the OCP and to help identify whether resources and effort are moving in the right direction.

This will be done in the form of an annual report with a one page snapshot showing the annual indicators. It is anticipated the baseline report will be produced in spring 2018. The snapshot summary will be included in the City's required Annual Municipal Report. The results will be reviewed and discussed internally and presented to Council for information and to present any recommendations.

Criteria for indicators was that they need to be measurable, reliable, accessible, available annually, within the City's influence, specific to the City, measure real progress over the life of the plan to 2024, and be few in number.

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

- What about tracking commercial space versus jobs? Measuring jobs does not tell you what is happening in light industrial space. The correlation between size of space and jobs is important. Info Canada is a good place to go to for information by neighbourhood. Also, 7% of the workforce works out of their home but may not have a licence in the City if they don't work in the City. **A:** We are trying to track the number of jobs in the City so the indicator initially focussed on jobs. As we do not currently track the number of jobs we are changing our annual business licence process to require an annual update on the number of employees. We can, however, track both space and number of jobs to provide a more complete picture.
- Regarding housing form we could track the number of three bedrooms. The OCP speaks to increasing diversity in buildings.
- How about bus ridership? **A:** We will have the mode split every five years; it is available through the census. It could be done annually with data from TransLink.
- I would like to see transit use by bus and SeaBus separated. It is important if the rational is to put density on bus lines. We need to see that people are using buses otherwise density is not effective.
- What about the ratio between owners and renters; what is the City's goal? **A:** The City used to be 70% renters to 30% owners, more recently it was about 50% 50%. We are tracking tenure and purpose built rental in the report. The City is trying to provide a range of housing opportunities. We do not want to lose rental but are not trying to prevent ownership either. The City does aim to meet the housing demand estimates for building new rental units that have been established by Metro Vancouver.
- Who is the audience for this? This seems to be a high level overview. **A:** The audience is the public, staff and Council.
- Why do we not include Walkscore as a measure? **A:** The feedback we had is that the City is so compact that it has very good walkscores.
- There is a big range of walkscores in the City from 20s to nearly 100.
- You should get TransLink to get detailed data by neighbourhood to see if the decisions the City is making are working. We should get an oversample from TransLink for bus routes for all trips. Census data only tracks commute trips. We need trip diaries; TransLink is willing to do it.  
There is a break-out on market and non-market; what about social, subsidized housing? They should be added as a separate category. Also, we need an indicator of how long we have subsidized housing e.g. for longer than 5 years. We need to see that steps being taken are working.
- Is there a goal for increased park space? Or access to park space? Measurements for neighbourhoods would be good e.g. parks by neighbourhoods.
- The measurements could be clustered to compare against other communities.
- Re emergency preparedness, another measure could be space for citizens in emergency facilities e.g. Harry Jerome, North Shore Neighbourhood House, places for people to go to after a disaster.

**8. Other Business**

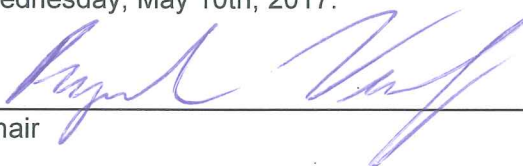
Members will review the initial ideas generated for the APC Work Plan for 2017 at the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**9. Information Items**

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, May 10th, 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chair