

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 the Atrium Meeting Room on Wednesday, June 10th, 2015**

MINUTES

Present: D. Farley
M. Higgins
A. Jamieson
D. Marshall
P. McCann
M. Rahbar
M. Robinson
T. Valente
B. Watt
Councillor Bell

Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2, Community Development
D. Watson, Transportation Planner
M. Epp, City Planner
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

Guests: Paul Dorby, Bunt & Associates
Derek Lee, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects
Lisa Lock, Concert Properties
Jonathan Meads, Concert Properties
Mark Whitehead, HCMA Architecture + Design

Absent: M. Clark
Councillor Back

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held April 8th, 2015

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held April 8th, 2015 be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

2. Business Arising

Web links to information on the action items from the April 8th meeting were emailed to members.

3. Transportation Plan

D. Watson, Transportation Planner, gave a presentation on "Transportation in the City: Focus on Pedestrians." The City's Pedestrian Plan is included in the Long Term Transportation Plan. The Pedestrian Plan strives to increase walkability, improve pedestrian safety and provide healthier choices for people to move within the community. The Pedestrian Plan will be revised in 2016.

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

- Are there special crossings for bikes? **A:** Not at the moment.
- A recent study shows fatalities increase because people rush to beat countdown signals. **A:** We have not studied it.
- At the 16th and Lonsdale Avenue intersection, it would be helpful to have a pause after the pedestrian signal has finished before the Lonsdale signal goes green. **A:** There are different ways of setting traffic lights.
- Pedestrians are not meant to cross if they see the countdown number? **A:** They are not supposed to step into the road if the white man goes out.
- Has there been any consideration re lighting laneways? **A:** Generally no, but in some areas of Lower Lonsdale where there are businesses they have been lit at a pedestrian level scale.
- There needs to be more pedestrian-oriented lighting; people do not go out at night during the winter because it is too dark. **A:** The City is trying to put in both types of lighting, but there is more emphasis on street lighting.
- What are the challenges around putting light in laneways? **A:** The City focuses on improving lighting on the streets; there are not many requests for lighting in lanes.
- A lot of people would prefer to use lanes; they are used in the daytime but not at night. The City could do a pilot project. Lanes do not have names so service vehicles cannot access them. **A:** We have not looked at this for low density residential areas. We would get a lot of pushback from residents.
- It would also double the roads to be maintained. Service vehicle access is more a GPS problem than a street network problem. **A:** Service vehicles should be able to access lanes as the goal is for lanes to be six metres wide.
- Turning lanes into streets would be a cultural change.
- There are some lanes that have commercial backing on to them.
- What is the approximate spacing and cost of the standard fixtures? **A:** We would have to confirm the spacing; a standard street light is about \$7,500 if electricity is available. Pedestrian lighting is about \$5,000. Lights on Hydro poles are free.
- Does it matter if residents do not want a sidewalk? It is healthy to have sidewalks. **A:** The City will be building most future sidewalks from the capital plan.
- I am tired of "sidewalk closed" signs around construction sites. They are kept open in Vancouver. **A:** It has been discussed at Council; we try to maintain permeability for pedestrians.

- Developers should be paying when they close sidewalks. **A:** Sometimes there are site constraints. We are trying to limit the amount of time they are closed.
- Thank you for a good presentation and for the link to the plan.
- APC made a resolution last year that Lonsdale be considered differently from a main street by downgrading lanes of traffic etc. **A:** Lonsdale Avenue is a major arterial road for buses, trucks and pedestrians. There are arterials on either side to take bike traffic. There would be a lot of resident pushback if more traffic were diverted to Chesterfield or St. George's Avenues. It would change the function of the City.
- If you keep traffic moving, it reduces GHG's. **A:** The the signals on Marine Drive are coordinated. Once all the traffic signals are updated, we will be able to network them and coordinate them all. Transit vehicles can delay lights.
- What about bus pullouts? **A:** They are nearly gone; to improve transit reliability.
- Is there a plan to update the Transportation Plan, it is from 2008? **A:** Council did not rank it as a top priority. We do keep studying, and remodeled transportation when the Official Community Plan was being updated. We will be updating the Pedestrian Plan next year which is a key component.

4. 18 Fell Avenue (OCP Amendment)

M. Epp, City Planner introduced the project and explained that in a 2012 OCP Amendment, the waterfront at Harbourside was changed from Industrial to Mixed Use.

In 2014 when Concert Properties applied for zoning for all four sites, the designation was specifically crafted site-by-site stipulating minimum Commercial FSR and the maximum residential FSR. A Development Permit Area was established for the whole site.

Concert has now applied to change one of the uses for Site D from a hotel with commercial ground floor to a seniors' facility. There will be no change in density.

Jonathan Meads, Development and Sustainability Manager, Concert Properties, told Commission members that Concert is wholly owned by pension funds. They do not run hotels but do have several retirement communities under the "Tapestry" brand name, so a seniors' facility is a better fit. The facility would generate the same level of employment but it would be more long term employment rather than seasonal as in a hotel.

Mark Whitehead, HCMA Architecture + Design, outlined the proposal:

- Concert Properties has applied to amend the CD-616 Zone for a change in use from the permitted "Hotel" use in CD-646 to a new category of "Seniors Assisted Living" use. The OCP amendment, if approved, would reduce the minimum commercial density provided for the whole project.
- The building heights will not change.
- The Harbourside construction phasing does not change.
- There are still five buildings but the layout has changed slightly. Buildings D4 and D5 remain the same; buildings D1, D2, and D3 do not.

- There is a revised site layout at the ground level with increased open space allowing more light into Harbourside Lane.
- There will be a substantial retail presence on Fell Avenue.
- The change to Seniors Assisted Living will allow seniors to age in place: it will be possible to move from building D3 (seniors' rental housing) to building D1 (seniors' assisted living). A covered bridge will connect the two buildings.

Derek Lee, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects, reviewed the landscape plan:

- The changes in buildings D2 and D4 create strong view corridors and enhance permeability to the laneway. The laneway becomes a space where neighbours can interact.
- Tapestry wants to fit in to the neighbourhood and will not be a gated community.
- There will be a series of pocket parks.
- Ground-oriented units enhance the pedestrian realm.
- The public realm will be animated through a series of storm water management measures e.g. pools. Water features near waterfront sites help connect people to the shoreline.
- The building edges on Fell Avenue will reinforce the vibrancy of the retail street.
- Kings Mill Walk is going through a separate public process but the Spirit Trail and foreshore will be connected.

Paul Dorby, Bunt & Associates, reviewed transportation:

- The mixed use helps balance traffic. The change in use will probably result in slightly less traffic, especially during the morning period.
- Discussions with TransLink to improve the frequency of bus service to the area are ongoing.
- They will continue to monitor traffic flow.
- The seniors' development will have a dedicated courtesy bus.
- Once the Spirit Trail is completed, there will be a good walking/biking connection to Lonsdale Quay.
- Fell Avenue will be expanded to three lanes.

Questions from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- Is Harbourside Lane public? **A:** It is a fully public-accessible Right of Way. Access through the pocket park is still to be determined; it is private property. We are looking at how to allow public access through it; we do not want it to be a gated community. There are physical barriers due to sea level rise and the perch benches.
- Are there any plans to improve Bewicke Avenue? **A:** It will be more of a greenway. There is a challenge with the trains. Currently 20% of traffic uses Bewicke and 80% Fell Avenue.
- Have you considered water taxis to downtown or access to the SeaBus? **A:** The Burrard Inlet is challenging because it is a shipping lane. Improvements to the connection to Lonsdale Quay are seen as more desirable. Seaspan has legal water lots in front of Harbourside; it would be difficult to moor other boats.
- How many residents of your seniors' residences have cars? **A:** 0.9 cars per suite in Ontario and 0.75 at Wesbrook, UBC. We provide a courtesy car and shuttle.

- There are less cars than with a hotel? **A:** There are more challenges providing visitor parking than resident parking.
- The hotel was going to provide conference space. Are you doing anything? **A:** I cannot speak to the hotel programming. We do try to create space at Tapestry. Wesbrook has facilities available for rent for banquets etc.
- What access to hospitals will there be? **A:** The residents will have no additional rights over anyone else. Tapestry does have a standard level of nursing. Everyone in the rental building and Tapestry gets panic service. We can react very quickly.
- Is the facility full care assisted living? **A:** It is assisted living. We provide a menu of services and adapt them as people age in place. Most people take weekly cleaning and laundry as standard and upgrade to daily medical care as needed.
- Have you had any discussions with the business community re the change in use? **A:** The Chamber of Commerce was involved. There is still a significant amount of commercial and office space.
- What about commercial units to support the residents? **A:** Phase 1 to the west of Fell Avenue will be built first; it has 50,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. We have been working on a retail plan to shape the community. The retail will bring value to the community. We are putting retail spaces first in our planning. **Staff:** Concert have the right to phase development as they wish, but all amenities have to be delivered as scheduled.
- You will have to have low rents for the retail. **A:** We will have to subsidize the retail space at first to attract people to the community.
- What about employment? **A:** It is 75 positions compared to 72 for the hotel.
- There is vague use of the word “consider” under the community amenities section. **A:** We are developing streetscape guidelines with the City and then will start detailed design of the streetscape. You will see the details when the project comes back to APC. The City is working with the community on the park process to improve Kings Mill Walk which will relate to our Development Permit.
- Seniors are more active, what about bike parking? **A:** There is a lot of bike parking. **Staff:** The Zoning Bylaw does not distinguish between seniors or others; they would have to request a variance.
- There should be a one third reduction in bike parking because of the seniors. **A:** The bike lockers are empty in our other buildings.
- Will you have storage for people downsizing? **A:** We have a limited amount of space in the parkade; we are focusing on large storage rooms within the suites.

Comments from the Commission included but were not limited to:

- I think the new idea is much better than a hotel.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed Official Community Plan amendment and Rezoning Application for 18 Fell Avenue and recommends approval of the change in use.

The Commission looks forward to additional details at the Development Permit stage.

The Commission commends the applicant on an excellent presentation.

Carried unanimously

*There was a short break at 7:55 p.m.
The meeting reconvened at 8:10 p.m.*

5. Density Bonus Policy Update

M. Epp, City Planner gave the Commission an overview of the Density Bonus Policy which was approved by Council in May.

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

- What are the plans for the density bonus cash contributions from new development? **A:** The policy lists possibilities such as enhancing existing parks. Project sheets will be prioritized by Council.
- What will happen with the housing fund? **A:** It will be used at Council's discretion. There is currently \$1.2 million currently which is not enough to develop City housing projects; the funds will be used to leverage non-market housing.
- How will non-market housing work? **A:** There is a lot of interest in doing rental buildings but the City will lose affordability over time as older housing stock is replaced. There is a clause that some units will be non-market rates; it will be examined under the Housing Action Plan.
- The cash reserve goes into specific funds? **A:** Yes.
- It would be good to have rental housing for families with 2-3 bedrooms. **A:** Unit mix will be outside this policy. It will be handled through the Housing Action Plan.
- I would love to see larger family units. We are often told "market does not want them". **A:** The last three development projects were changed to include more three-bedroom units.
- Have developers given feedback? **A:** The figures have been public since 2014. It is a significant policy. We did consult. It is more onerous and will result in larger cash contributions but it levels the playing field and gives them clarity.
- How are below-market rental rates set? **A:** There is no consistent answer. It is hard to get below market rental units. The City cannot police the agreements. Our preference is that units go to a body with a commitment through a covenant to deliver at an affordable rate. They are deeply discounted units; rent is set at 30% of income.
- It is a really good summary.
- Can the reserve fund can be used to upgrade older rental buildings. **A:** Yes, to improve energy efficiency for instance.

- What is 1.6 FSR vs 2.6 with bonus for rental based on? **A:** What we have observed in the City of North Vancouver. Building rental units is more marginal than condo units business.
- Will you be adjusting the policy with the market over time? **A:** Yes.

Don Farley left the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

6. Staff Update

S. Smith reviewed relevant planning development, project and policy items from the previous Council meetings, and gave an update on the East 3rd/Moodyville area design process. The first public event will be an open house on guiding principles on June 29th. Design guidelines will be drafted over the summer and presented at workshops in the fall. It is hoped to have the Public Hearing early in 2016. Rezoning applications in the subject area will not be accepted until the design guidelines are in effect.

Action: Staff to email Shipyards Lot 5 report and the most recent Spirit Trail report.

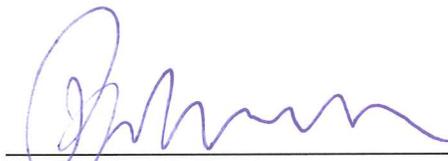
7. Information Items

The Housing Action Plan process has started; there will be a series of opportunities for learning about housing types. Information will be emailed to Commission members.

8. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, July 8th, 2015.



Chair

