

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, February 14th, 2018**

MINUTES

Present: T. Valente
R. Vesely
M. Higgins
B. Hundal
D. Marshall
A. Boston

Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2
R. Fish, Committee Clerk
S. Galloway, Manager, Planning
W. Tse, Planner 1
A. Yu, Planning Technician 2

Absent: S. Huber
A. Cameron
B. Watt
D. Farley
Councillor Back
Councillor Bell

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:06PM

It was regularly moved and seconded to announce elections for Chair and Vice Chair at the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 14th, 2018 when all members are present.

R. Vesely remained Chair for the meeting.

S. Galloway, Manager of Planning was introduced to the Committee and a round of introductions by Committee members followed.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held January 10th, 2018**

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held January 10th, 2018 be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

2. **Staff Update**

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

Action: Add the following item to the agenda for the meeting of March 14th, 2018: Discussion of the criteria that dictates which projects come to APC or not.

It was suggested to have a joint meeting with ITC about the Integrated North Shore Transportation Plan

The Volunteer Appreciation Reception will be on April 12th.

3. **Procedures Review**

S. Smith gave an overview of the procedures and terms of reference for the Advisory Planning Commission.

The following topics were reviewed and discussed: advisory body procedures, roles of Committee members voting, terms of reference, conflict of interest, quorum and attendance and public attendance, as well as the importance of drafting resolutions to contain the important points from discussions. How APC communicates, effective meetings and the process for making resolutions were also discussed.

It was noted the 2018 Work Plan will include items referred by Council, OCP implementation, awards and grants and development applications.

4. **Zoning Bylaw Livability Review**

W. Tse and A. Yu gave a presentation on the Zoning Bylaw Livability Review:

- The initiative is part of the implementation of the Housing Action Plan, which was endorsed by Council in October 2016.
- Proposed amendments to zoning bylaw and current review procedures to improve livability of the City's ground oriented housing forms.
- Ensuring more diverse and appropriate housing options.
- Changes would apply to areas designated levels 1-2, which occupy a substantial proportion of the City.
- Currently in the early stages of getting public feedback.
- Going to Council in March to seek further action on how to proceed.

- In May or June we will return to Council with the proposed amendments and a Public Hearing.
- Proposed Amendments
 - Minimum Lot Size:
 - Proposing a smaller minimum lot size to reflect the decreasing number of people living in households.
 - Proposed 4,400sqft requirement for RS-1 with a minimum of 3,600sqft for RS-2.
 - Fulfill original Housing Action Plan objective to increase attainable home ownership.
 - What is the current minimum width? **A:** No minimum frontage or width is required. The most common is a 50ft frontage, 140ft width, smaller lots typically have a 33ft frontage.
 - Is there no cellar? **A:** Still permitted to have a cellar.
 - Speaking to the affordability crisis, with going to 3,600sqft, you can't split 50ft lots into two. Have we changed anything to increase affordability? **A:** We don't currently include a frontage. Keeping to that might give more flexibility, if we put it in, it does restrict us more. We are hoping to get more feedback from other departments as well.
 - If we go down to a 25ft lot, we should move to rowhousing.
 - Look at opportunities for incentivising rather than splitting lots. Have 3 units and 4 units in a row house to diversify the housing stock.
 - Rowhousing is not a strata so it's still independent houses.
 - 147ft deep lots get very long, it may need to take on a variety of forms.
 - Specify a minimum lot width as you may get weird proposals for a 7ft wide lot. **A:** A lot would still need to meet the minimum lot square footage.
 - Height Envelope:
 - Suggest permit a taller height envelope to enable basement level suites to be raised out of the ground as much as possible.
 - Match up with the RT-1A zone for a height envelope top of plate maximum of 17ft opposed to 15ft. Maximum roof height of 33ft as opposed to 30ft.
 - What is the 17ft? **A:** Our height envelope works from the four corners of the lot, we go up 15ft currently, and then go in at a 45 degree angle to a maximum of 30ft. The suggestion is to go from the four corners, up 17ft at a 45 degree angle to a maximum of 33ft.
 - So you're raising the height from the center of the house 3ft, but the sides only 2ft? **A:** Yes.
 - Suggest to match Vancouver, 34ft for more consistency along lower mainland.
 - It is common practice to have buildings with windows below ground with a wolfs mouth with a grate.
 - You are going to switch it from 4 corners to 2 corners, which 2 corners? Suggest to leave it at 4. **A:** We are aiming to simplify the calculation. Many building permits that come in

need revisions. We have suggested to average the front and back to create two datum points to work off of. Each point across the front and back of the property would be averaged.

- It comes out the same anyways? **A:** Yes, we were hoping we can streamline the building permit process. We are working with applicants to go through the process and trying to find ways to make it easier to get more buildings built in a timely fashion.
 - From Staff: Do you like the height increase? **A:** Yes.
 - It should be another foot and match Vancouver. It would work well with the sewers.
 - We currently have a height exception for green roofs for solar collectors but don't allow it for a passive house. We are proposing to allow it to be permitted as a height exception.
 - Note that every 6 inches is about another 6 trucks which brings more traffic.
- Liveable Suites and Coach Houses:
 - Different definitions for cellar versus basement. Basement is defined as a level that's between 1 and 5ft below average grade whereas a cellar is more sunken in at more than 5ft below average grade.
 - Cellars are exempt from Gross Floor Area calculations.
 - Proposing to allow for GFA exemptions for basement levels instead.
 - Establish maximum allowable depth for levels with basement suites.
 - Encourage suites to be raised more from the ground to improve their accessibility and accommodate more natural light and ventilation.
 - Looking at allowing for larger sunken patios. The method that we use to calculate average grade allows for a combined exclusion of 10sqft for sunken patios. For a lower level to qualify for a GFA exemption, sunken patios are limited to 100sqft and duplexes only 50ft² per unit.
 - Staff are proposing to increase this to 150sqft per dwelling unit. Duplex could have 150sqft patio per dwelling unit.
 - This would maximize useable outdoor space
 - Can you make it fit in the setbacks? **A:** Yes.
 - Does that encourage walkouts? **A:** Yes, we want suites in basements which is defined as being between 1-5 feet below grade.
 - Can you get rid of basements with the exception of small homes? It would be nice to have a policy precedent where all single family homes are secondary suite ready. It's about increasing the resilience of our housing stock. **A:** We used to have incentives in that you could only have your cellar GFA excluded if you build to Energuide 80. Now that we have the Energy Step Code in place, do we need something else to make it an incentive that you only have your basement excluded if you're suite ready?
 - Permit non-habitable cellar level space in coach houses for storage purposes only.
 - What do you define as non habitable? **A:** There is a height restriction of 4ft, no windows, no plumbing and no insulation.

- Is there a rule for the stairwell down? It is very small, look at increasing the landing area. Make sure it's reasonable enough to carry things down into.
 - From Staff: Do you like the exterior access? **A:** Yes.
 - It's better to have a mechanical room in the cellar.
- Allow for higher density of up to 0.5 FSR for purposes of adding a coach house. Currently, we do see people in a situation where they want to maximize to the 0.5 which is in the OCP so they have to go to Council and go through the rezoning process to add square footage. Proposing to allow that outright in the zoning bylaw so they don't have to go to Council.
 - Does this mean that you're going to allow overall more square footage on that lot? **A:** It's to incentivise the retention of older single family houses.
 - Preference would be for rowhouses if you're trying to increase the number of units, it goes back to lot size discussion. rowhouse is more egalitarian and a way for more people to have home ownership and yard space and to add infill housing.
 - Coach house use is an expensive form but it's also useful for home owners. I understand why we would go to 0.5 on the larger lots, but then restrict the smaller lots with the 0.5, why not leave it open on the smaller lots? **A:** 0.5 is the maximum on the OCP, we can't exceed that.
 - Is there some way you can write this that would help the larger lots get to 0.5 without impacting the smaller lots? **A:** The bylaw already states 'the lesser of', so it's the lesser of the two calculations. In all cases it would never go over the 0.5.
- Siting Regulations:
 - Decrease minimum required front lot line setback for all one-unit and two-unit residential zones to 20ft.
 - Advantage of a more prominent street frontage.
- VisitAbility:
 - Introduce incentives for incorporation of VisitAbility features in principal dwelling units, secondary suites and coach houses.
 - Three features include: no step entry, clear passage way on main floor and accessible bathroom on main floor.
 - Suggesting between 50-100sqft floor area exclusion for the principal dwelling if you can meet these three features, 25sqft for a secondary suite and 25sqft for a coach house.
 - How does height envelope work with the no step entry? **A:** It could be ramps, depending of the slope on the site.
 - If going down this route, make an allowance for ramping that can go into the front yard to allow for the setback in the front. Think about the design.
 - Bringing in elevators has become more affordable too, lifts as well.
- Development Processing Streamlining:
 - Allowing 0.5 FSR for coach house development without Council referral.

- Simplify Duplex Development Permit Guidelines.
- Joint development permit/building permit application review processes for duplexes.

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

- Have you explored the stratification of laneway and single family in situations where you can reduce the demolition rate and enable the use of the exiting building? **A:** Stratification of coach house is an idea outlined in the Housing Action Plan. We are trying to tackle a simpler process first.
- If you start stratifying it, you might make it less affordable for people. The smaller a unit gets, the more demand there is so it drives up the price. Without stratification if it's a rental, you're solving affordability issues for someone that's buying a house. It helps getting more rentals which we need here. If you start stratifying, you drive up the price.

Staff: We do rely on the suites and coach houses as a secondary rental market.

- This needs further exploration. So many of our single family homeowners are 70+ and don't want to become landlords. We need to figure out what to do with single family home owners.
- Parents tend to go into coach houses and the family goes into the house.
- Staff: When you start stratifying it becomes hard to redevelop for transit because there are too many owners.
- Consider new models like Hollyburn Family Services where they lease the secondary suite and the owners don't have to become landlords.

Staff: Hollyburn Family Services is looking into this.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the Ground Level Housing Liveability Zoning Bylaw Review and is very supportive of the general direction of the proposed amendments. The APC recommends staff explore opportunities to:

- Encourage rowhouses versus splitting multiple small lots;
- Encourage secondary suite-ready units in all new single-detached homes except small homes;
- Encourage ramps, lifts and elevators to enable accessibility; and,
- Discourage cellars in single detached homes except small homes.

The APC recommends the following:

- Increase the height envelope to 34 feet;
- Define minimum lot width in combination with square footage; and
- Increase the size of the landing area for accessing the cellar in laneway housing and permit mechanical room in the cellar.

Carried Unanimously

5. Information Items

Harry Jerome Recreation Centre: Ideas Fair:

- Thursday February 15th, 2018 5:30-8:00PM.
- City Hall Atrium.

PLAY Activation Grant:

- Activation of public spaces.
- Grant that's open for people to come up with an idea and get funding.

Youth Awards:

- Consider a youth to nominate for an award, information available on the City's website.
- Deadline is March 16th.

North Shore Food Asset Map:

- Intended to map where different types of food, retail stores, free or low cost meals and where to grow foods, contact info, kitchens and food programs etc.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, March 14th, 2018.

Chair

