

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 9th, 2016**

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**MINUTES**

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Present: M. Higgins  
A. Jamieson  
D. Marshall  
M. Robinson  
R. Vesely  
B. Watt  
Councillor Back  
Councillor Bell

Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2, Community Development  
E. Adin, Deputy Director, Community Development  
W. Tse, Planner 1, Community Development  
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

Guests: None

Absent: M. Clark  
D. Farley  
B. Hundal  
T. Valente

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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 July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission held July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. Business Arising**

A discussion on the Sustainable City Awards was added to the end of the agenda by unanimous consent.

### 3. BC Energy Step Code

E. Adin presented the BC Energy Step Code which addresses some of the challenges in the Building Act recently passed by the Province. The Act contains changes to the authority of local governments which affect some City of North Vancouver bylaws.

Some matters in the Code will be permanently listed as “unrestricted matters” e.g. Lonsdale Energy Corporation, and can therefore be influenced by local bylaws. Noise mitigation is temporarily unrestricted e.g. measures contained in the Moodyville bylaws.

City staff will recommend that adaptable design measures also be unrestricted.

The Step Code is a locally mandated code or alternative compliance path that is more aggressive than base code, resulting in buildings that achieve higher energy savings. It can be implemented in a variety of ways, but there will be more consistency in requirements for the construction industry as a result.

*Councillor Bell entered the meeting at 6:17 pm.*

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

- It is going to be an overall standard, not specific materials? **A:** Yes. The City did not want to be too prescriptive so set performance goals. This has influenced the Step Code. It is all performance-based, aimed at achieving the same kind of standards as passive house.
- Is it the same as Net Zero? **A:** Passive house is net zero energy ready. We encourage getting away from reliance on mechanical. The Step Code is envelope-based first, which is resilient and sustainable. It does not rely on complicated mechanical that can break down.
- Passive house gets rid of mechanical which results in savings.
- Does envelope also mean siting and orientation? **A:** Yes, it is part of it; but not with passive house design as it is the size and shape of building that really matters, so there is not a great emphasis on orientation. A savvy designer would reorient buildings if they could. The City of North Vancouver benefits from being on a south-facing slope.
- How does it relate to the National Building Code? **A:** It is groundbreaking; no-one is doing it in the stepped way. Industry can be ready and have a trained labour force. It is a reasonable way to increase energy efficiency.
- Do current incentives disappear? You can get extra density (cellar) if you meet Energuide. **A:** Currently we already require the equivalent of Tier 2; we may encourage rezonings to commit to Tier 3. Many buildings are being built at Energuide 84 to 86 so the bonus could move up the tiers.

### 4. Secondary Suites and Coach Houses on Single Family Lots

W. Tse reviewed the concept of allowing both an accessory secondary suite and a coach house on a single family lot which would function as gentle infill and provide greater rental options in the community.

Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw following the recent endorsement of the Housing Action Plan will be considered in support of providing a diversity of rental suites. Three units on one lot is one option to help with a low rental vacancy rate.

Currently a secondary suite is only permitted when the owner resides in the principal residence. Conversely, with coach houses the owner can live in the principal house or in the coach house. The Accessory Coach House Development Permit Guidelines will not change.

There have been about 50 coach houses built over the past six years; the process has been streamlined to make it more attractive.

Benefits of the proposed change include: encouraging more ground-oriented rental options, more green space, an increase in rental options in lower density neighbourhoods with access to schools, parks and other amenities, the expansion of lower cost rental housing, mortgage helpers to help with the purchase of housing, helping owners on fixed incomes to remain in their homes, and supporting inter-generational living.

Concerns include: perceived impacts on on-street parking and traffic levels, loss of privacy, loss of neighbourhood character, fairness in property taxes with the additional load on infrastructure, livability and safety. People have the perception that renters are more transient.

Staff are recommending two parking spaces on a 50 foot lot to serve the principal unit, in-house suite and coach house unit. Although three could fit on a lot, it would reduce the amount of green space and overall livability. On a 33 foot lot, parking and a coach house will not fit.

Tandem parking is not recommended by staff as it causes conflict. Laneway parking (recently introduced in the Zoning Bylaw) is not preferred in this specific context.

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

- What is the ratio of 33 and 50 foot lots in the City? Where are they? **A:** 50 foot lots are the norm. There are narrow lots scattered through the City. You could say two accessory suites could only be on 50 foot lots.
- Have you thought about reducing the front yard setback to 20 feet to provide more green space for livability? **A:** We want to do that, and are also looking at the height envelope to get suites out of the ground. It will take time for it to become the new neighbourhood standard. We have to think about how we introduce it as the buildings will stand out.
- I am sympathetic about reducing the front yard setback. The green space behind the house should be for the coach house, the house can have the green space in the front.
- I do not think we need three parking spaces; we want more car sharing. Tenants could get a membership to Car2Go.
- I have no problem with two instead of three parking spots.

- Parking is the biggest issue in the City. You would have to have three parking spots for three suites. We are not getting people out of their cars.
- Why could you not put parking underground? **A:** It is very expensive. A ramp would take away from the green space.
- We are limited by square footage at the moment; have you thought about implementing a ratio of parking spots to green space? **A:** We have lot coverage calculations. There is an additional requirement for green space which a driveway would take away from.
- Setbacks include decks; you could have the parking under the deck.
- What about a coach house above a parking spot? **A:** The parking space would be counted in the floor area of the coach house as an enclosed parking space.
- Try to lessen the impact of parking by not paving it. **A:** It is recommended in our guidelines.
- Can you put a deck over the cars? **A:** There is a maximum floor coverage allowed; the deck would count in the calculations. Carports would be counted in the gross floor area.
- What about parking on the front yard? **A:** Bylaws do not permit parking from the front if there is a lane. This is also for the safety of pedestrians.
- The City has densified close to transportation spines so that people do not need a car. However, if you do not have parking, it will go on to the street.
- There are a lot of renters who are choosing not to have a car.
- Could you put a basement under a coach house? **A:** We do allow garage basements. You can have a crawl space under a coach house up to four feet high.
- You set a gold standard for your presentation; it was very good.
- How many suites are occupied by family members? **A:** We do not have concrete numbers.
- I have concerns re privacy, shading and the loss of light into the neighbours' yards. **A:** The maximum height for a coach house is 22 feet measured from four corners of the lot. It does depend on the grades of the site.
- I am concerned about the height.
- The homeowner has to live in the building if there is a secondary suite? **A:** Yes, we are looking at removing the requirement; it would give more flexibility.
- My concern is that owners had to live on the property with tenants to help regulate conditions. There could be a maintenance issue if they do not live on the property e.g. mowing lawns.
- I do not have an issue with secondary suites but who will check who is living where?
- What is the typical length of a 50 foot lot? **A:** 137 feet.
- We are a streetcar suburb with density decreasing as moves from the central hub. We might be able to sell two spaces to the public. It is not reasonable to make people walk that far.
- Look at having a garage at the front and coach house at the back.
- Bigger suites in houses should be allowed; the Building Code is currently restricting it. **A:** If larger it gets classified as a two-unit building. Extra building code requirements (costs) are transferred to the renter. We can take a look into the implications of not having the size restriction.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed policy of secondary suites and coach houses on single family lots and supports the overall direction.

The Commission commends staff for a thorough presentation.

**Carried Unanimously**

*M. Higgins left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.*

**5. Staff Update**

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

**6. Information Items**

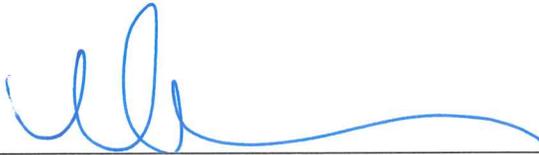
None.

**7. Other Business**

It was agreed to advertise the Sustainability Awards in January; APC will consider submissions in February.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



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Chair

