

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NANAIMO
HELD IN THE SHAW AUDITORIUM, 80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC
ON THURSDAY, 2013-JUL-04 COMMENCING AT 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: His Worship Mayor J. R. Ruttan, Chair

Members: Councillor M. D. Brennan
Councillor G. E. Greves
Councillor J. A. Kipp
Councillor D. K. Johnstone
Councillor W. B. McKay
Councillor J. F. K. Pattje

Regrets: Councillor G. Anderson
Councillor W. L. Bestwick

Staff: B. Anderson, Manager, Planning & Design Section, CSD
S. Herrera, Planner, Planning & Design Section, CSD
P. Masse, Planning Clerk, Planning & Design Section, CSD

Public: There were 14 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL THE SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL TO ORDER:

The Special Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. CALL THE PUBLIC HEARING TO ORDER:

Mayor Ruttan called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 pm. and advised that members of City Council, as established by provincial case law, cannot accept any further submissions or comments from the public following the close of a Public Hearing. Mr. Anderson explained the required procedures in conducting a Public Hearing and the regulations contained within Part 26 of the *Local Government Act*. He advised that this is the final opportunity to provide input to Council before consideration of Third Reading of Bylaw No. 4500.043 at this evening's Special Council meeting.

(a) Bylaw No. 4500.043 – RA312 – 359 Nicol Street

This bylaw, if adopted, will rezone the subject property from Single Dwelling Residential (R1) to Community Service One (CS1) in order to expand the adjacent Personal Care Facility (Samaritan House).

Mr. Jack Anderson, Anderson Greenplan Ltd. – Applicant Representative

- Samaritan House has been operating for several decades at 355 Nicol Street. The facility is an older residential building which creates challenges for incorporating all the programs they would like to offer. Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS) has been looking for opportunities to expand for a long time as they have been unable to provide the level of programs to the women they serve in order to break the cycle of return (30 days in the emergency program). The opportunity came up to purchase 359 Nicol Street which requires a zoning change to allow for their services.
- A Community Charrette was held last spring regarding the proposal; invitations were sent to the South End Community Association (SECA), service-oriented associations and members of the community. The specific proposal to join 355 and 359 Nicol Street is to increase their licensed capacity of 25 persons to 32 persons; however, while the building size will increase by 50% the capacity of persons is only increasing by 25%. This is to ensure that Samaritan House can provide therapeutic programs and transitional housing to enable the women they serve to make life changes.
- Plans include a teaching kitchen, a multi-purpose room for educational programs, a computer resource area to gain skills for future employment, exercise facilities, and a horticultural program. ICCS is very excited at the prospect of offering these life changing programs which may end the cycle of returning clients.
- Currently there are up to eight women sharing a common dorm; this proposal will result in no more than four persons per dorm. The program would graduate users from the dorm to shared living pods, which would include two persons per sleeping space and would include making their own meals. The final stage would include independent suites where they are fully responsible for housekeeping and meals. This graduation program is impossible in the current building.
- In response to a submission of opposition which cited litter in the area; the proposed new building would provide more garbage receptacles and more control in the nature of operations. Another concern that was submitted to Staff cited privacy concerns, not only for the direct neighbours but also for the women being serviced in the facility who require certain security levels. The design of the proposed building is recessed from the south side for the courtyard, which would give women staying there the ability to enjoy the outdoor space without being concerned about individuals they may have fled from being able to see them from the lane or the street. It would also provide privacy to immediate neighbours as increased fence heights and vegetative screening will be sought.

Mayor Ruttan asked if the immediate neighbours to the subject property had been notified.

Mr. J. Anderson noted that SECA attended the community Charrette, the open house, as well as an additional meeting recently. The president of SECA has formally offered its support to the proposal.

Councillor Pattje asked for clarification regarding how many people would take advantage of the therapeutic programs that are not living at the facility.

Mr. J. Anderson stated there would be very few persons who would attend the Samaritan House on a daily basis other than staff and tenants in the programs. The therapeutic program, namely the transitional housing aspect, requires less supervision than the emergency shelter components. There is a lack of personal space currently which can lead to conflict. They are looking to minimize the emergency program and maximize the therapeutic program.

Councillor Pattje asked Staff for clarification regarding the number of submissions received to date.

Ms. Herrera noted that four submissions have been received by Staff; however, two submissions were received prior to the bylaw receiving First and Second Readings so they do not form part of the Public Hearing record. The authors of those two submissions did resubmit, which will form part of the Public Hearing record.

Councillor Johnstone noted that one of the submissions noted a concern about mobility issues, specifically that some women could not use the stairs in the current facility, asked if an elevator is proposed for the new building.

Mr. J. Anderson confirmed that the new building includes an elevator to all levels of the therapeutic housing. All bathrooms will be fully handicapped accessible as well.

Mr. Brett Hayward, 5710 Vanderneuk Road – In Favour

- Is a current Director on ICSS Board and works with VIHA and the homeless on a regular basis. Believes the proposal is a thrilling endeavor for Nanaimo as it will take better care of people in our community.
- ICSS has a reputation of listening to the community, and adapting and adjusting if needed. If any problems exist or arise ICSS wants to hear them and work with the neighbours.

Ms. Debbie Sayles, 5185 Dunn Place – In Favour

- Ms. Sayles' presentation is attached as a part of "Attachment A – Submissions for Bylaw No. 4500.043".
- Our community needs a shelter for women to be safe, the proposed shelter will not only offer safety and a place to sleep and eat, but will also give the tenants skills to live in the community safely and productively.

Councillor Brennan thanked Ms. Sayles for the courage it took to speak on this issue and for stepping forward.

Ms. Tina Schoen, 875 Townsite Road – In Favour

- Has worked as a support worker at Samaritan House for five years. The change she sees in the women who use the service is phenomenal. It is an honor to witness the journey of change in women who were desperate when they arrived.
- The current lack of space in Samaritan House cannot be underestimated. Nor can the lack of private space to speak to tenants.
- Samaritan House has a community of women who support the functions of the house; every woman has a daily chore and they always go above and beyond to care for the facility.
- It has been said that a society can be judged by how it cares for the vulnerable. The women who stay at Samaritan House are among the most vulnerable of our community.

Councillor Brennan thanked Ms. Schoen for speaking on behalf of Samaritan House clients in such a positive and caring way.

Mr. Ken Connolly, 718 Wentworth Street – In Favour

- Has undertaken work in the existing facility over the past several years. There is a definite lack of space that needs to be addressed.
- Works with Loaves and Fishes; it seems like the most difficult thing is the transition beyond a tragedy or difficult situation. ICSS and Samaritan House have a good track record in the community for helping people transition and become self-supportive and healthy again. They are a benefit to our community.

Councillor Kipp thanked Mr. Connolly and Mr. J. Anderson for the work they do in the community.

Mayor Ruttan asked if the existing facility would undergo renovations.

Mr. J. Anderson noted that a challenge will be to maintain ongoing operations while building; a phased development will include building the new facility, then moving staff and tenants into the new building and then renovating the existing facility.

Councillor Brennan asked for clarification regarding a timeframe for completion.

Mr. J. Anderson noted that ICSS is a non profit society; this rezoning would be the initiation of needed fundraising. Timeframes are dependent upon the Ministries that support the facility as well as the community. Optimistic that what will be created will be such a positive value to the community that it could be sooner rather than later.

Councillor Pattje asked Staff if the late submission from the Chair of SECA will form part of the Public Hearing record.

Ms. Herrera noted that Staff had not received the letter from SECA prior to 4:00 p.m. and were therefore not aware of the submission.

- Councillor Pattje read the letter of support from SECA into the Public Hearing record; it is attached as a part of "Attachment A – Submissions for Bylaw No. 4500.043".

Mayor Ruttan noted that the letter from SECA was received electronically by Mayor and Council at 4:38 p.m.

Mr. Gord Fuller, 604 Nicol Street – In Favour

- Speaking as an advocate for social change. He was concerned about scaling back of the emergency shelter services to 10 beds. However, he has been assured that if there is a need the emergency services can be expanded. He was also concerned that the services might draw people in need of those services into the community; the therapeutic community allows those who have already gone through the programs to work as mentors to others going through the programs.
- ICSS is looking at other housing as well in different areas of the city to ensure that there is not one area with an over-concentration of these services.
- Has worked with the homeless for over a decade; therapeutic community is a great benefit to the community.

Councillor Kipp asked how much communication transpires between SECA and the Vancouver Island Heath Authority (VIHA).

Mr. Fuller noted that the question would need to be posed to the current Chair of SECA.

Councillor Kipp asked Staff if applications such as this are referred to VIHA.

Ms. Herrera noted that this application was not referred to VIHA.

Mr. Fuller stated that while the applicant representative did consult with SECA not all immediate neighbours were consulted with.

Councillor Johnstone asked for clarification regarding the timeframe for the transitional housing program.

Mr. J. Anderson noted that the emergency housing program has a timeframe of 30 days. The transitional housing program is concerned with life change so timelines are extended and can last up to several months to ensure end of cycle. Added that ICSS is funded by BC Housing not VIHA.

Ms. Ronell Bosman, Program Director, Samaritan House – In Favour

- Confirmed that she personally walked the streets surrounding the subject property and knocked on the doors of the residents there to invite neighbours to the Charrette; a good relationship with the neighbours is very important to the Samaritan House.
- Since she started working at Samaritan House in 2010 she realized that the women who enter the shelter are broken in many ways and the facility is in many cases a last resort for these women. They are disconnected from family and friends and they feel no hope. Adding therapeutic programs to their services will offer skills and opportunities to give these women their dignity back and to give them the capacity to be a healthy community member.

Ms. Pearl Frederickson, No Address Given – In Favour

- Has worked at Samaritan House for six months. It is a privilege to work at this facility and with her co-workers, who truly care about the women they serve. Many of the women are broken when they arrive and they feel that everyone in their life does not care about them; many are suicidal. Immediate improvement can be seen after just a few days of arriving; they are cleaner, healthier due to the nutritious meals. The women take great pride in pitching in and helping with maintenance. The therapeutic program and bigger space will offer a much higher level of service to these women.

Mr. Paul Leslie, 378 Harwell Road – In Favour

- Has been associated with ICSS since 2000 when he hired as the Executive Director.
- The limitations of the existing property would not allow for any notable expansion. When the subject property became available as ICSS knew it was the answer to the pressing needs. ICSS has evolved as a society and has gained more experience in therapeutic, transitional housing. A lot of thought, prayer and dreams have gone into this proposal.

There were nine verbal and five written submissions received with regard to Bylaw No. 4500.043.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

4. BYLAWS:

“ZONING AMENDMENT BYLAW 2013 NO. 4500.043” (RA312 – 359 Nicol Street – from Single Dwelling Residential (R1) to Community Service One (CS1) in order to expand the adjacent Personal Care Facility (Samaritan House).

It was moved and seconded that “ZONING AMENDMENT BYLAW 2013 NO. 4500.043” pass third reading. The motion carried unanimously.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 7:47 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

MAYOR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER

Attachment A

Submissions

For

Bylaw No. 4500.043

**(RA312 – 359 Nicol Street –
Samaritan House)**

Penny Masse

From: Debbie Sayles [buvromans82829@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 04, 2013 1:38 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Fwd: Thurs

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Debbie Sayles [buvromans82829@gmail.com]

I want to share with you the importance of having Samaritan House renovated to allow for more transition suites. There are many reasons for a person to be homeless, and not always that person's fault. I am a member of the staff, yes, but unfortunately, I have also had the need to be in a place like Samaritan House.

More than 20 years ago, I was forced to leave my husband, who was abusive, and adulterous, and my life was in danger that night. I had nowhere to go to be safe; the village where I lived is very small, and it would have been no problem to find me. Neither did I have family in the province (I was in Ontario). The provincial police brought me to the closest city, 50 miles away, and where I lived for a month .

The time I spent there allowed me the time I needed to get my thoughts together, and to make plans for my life.

The clients that will be using the transition suites need to have that same benefit of having time to put their lives back together. Some of them need help with learning new skills in order to change their lives. One goal is to teach basic cooking skills to those who need it.

There are also women who need our help, but we are unable to do so because of their physical needs. We've turned away women because they are unable to manage the stairs to get to the dining area. We don't have the resources to be able to bring their food to them. But these ladies deserve to have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Debbie Sayles



South End Community Association

July 3, 2013

Re: Re-zoning application for expanded Samaritan House operation by Island Crisis Care Society.

Dear Mayor and Council

Jack Anderson and Ronell Bosman attended a general meeting of the South End Community Association to seek our support for the planned expansion of the Samaritan House operation. Together they provided an overview of the project and fielded a number of questions from our members. We are pleased to support this proposal. A number of members noted that this has been an excellent community consultation process, with particular reference to the planning charette that we were invited to last year and the willingness on the part of the proponents to include the community in the process. Overall the impression given is that the Island Crisis Care Society has arrived at a well thought through concept that should greatly benefit the clients served.

On a broader neighbourhood note, we continue to be concerned about the concentration of services in the south end. We now have an expanded Samaritan House, NYSA's Rowe House, and the Balmoral Hotel all located within an area that continues to be challenged by issues related to poverty, mental health and addictions. The challenge is to somehow strike a balance between providing needed services for vulnerable citizens in our community while not placing a disproportionate burden on any one neighbourhood.

Sincerely,

Douglas Hardie
Chair
South End Community Association

Penny Masse

From: Dan Adam [mailto:danadam@shaw.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, July 03, 2013 10:46 AM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Samaritan House Expansion

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the upcoming meeting, today (July 4th) 7:00pm in the Shaw Auditorium, concerning rezoning of the lot adjacent to Samaritan House on Nicol Street.

I am in support of this proposal for the following reasons:

1. We (City of Nanaimo and it's citizens) are doing a great service to our community by addressing the establishment of housing for the homeless and those who struggle with deep rooted problems associated with addictions and mental illness, as well as those who suddenly fall upon various challenges and obstacles in their life..
2. Samaritan House has a proven record of addressing the problems cited in #1 above but are restricted in being more effective towards these areas by an aging and crowded facility.
3. It would seem in the best interests of our community to expand the effectiveness of this front line work by affording further steps to wellness for their existing clientele.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Dan Adam
Senior Pastor
Harewood Community Church
Empowered-Equipped-Employed

Penny Masse

From: andrew.rodacanachi@shaw.ca
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2013 12:59 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: re: BYLAW NO. 4500.043 Subject Property: 359 Nicol Street

Dear Mayor and Council;

I strongly object to the rezoning of the property on Nicol Street to aid in VIHA's expansion of their already expanded facility.

After a long process with public consultation, the city community plan and the South End Neighbourhood plan both reached consensus that decentralizing services was important and that further concentration of services in one neighbourhood is contrary to the revitalization of any neighbourhood. This is especially a concern in the South End. VIHA has bullied its way past bylaws that are already in place, and the results can clearly be seen by walking past the Balmoral on Haliburton: development properties are left vacant and the surrounding residents are under further stress created by the mess.

In the South End, VIHA is not a good neighbour. They show no respect for the residents. Despite home owners required by the zoning in place to provide adequate parking, VIHA seems to be exempt (yet what residence requires more than a dozen parking spaces for staff?) They impose conditions on their clients ("no smoking", banning of certain illegal activities), which only pushes the clients onto neighbouring properties. The constant vehicular activity at all hours is not an expectation for what is transitioning back into a "normal" residential neighbourhood. Despite these concerns, VIHA is continuing to request further expansion.

Further, at what point does the Mayor and Council consider the few blocks bordered by Needham, Farquhar, Haliburton and Nicol to be saturated beyond any tolerable stress to the community? There is a ministry services building at Nicol and Needham; a youth housing complex on Haliburton (the former White House); a bar (once designated as a nuisance property); the infamous property at 236/240 Haliburton (which upon recommendation of the City Manager council again abdicated responsibility for) which continually requires police and medical emergency responses. Despite these stresses, the community continues its struggle towards a desire for more stable residential atmosphere, with many owners doing their best to improve our homes and clean up the surrounding areas. Approving this application is a "slap in the face" to us.

Sincerely,

Andrew Rodocanachi

321 Farquhar Street

Penny Masse

From: Pat McArthur [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2013 3:11 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: BYLAW NO. 4500.043 Subject Property: 359 Nicol Street

I object to the rezoning of the subject property.

I think the South End is completely saturated with these kinds of services. How can we continue to improve our neighbourhood if we are forced to deal with even more services than the area can tolerate.

There is not enough parking or room for the services we have been dumped with already and I'm sorry but I don't see a lot of these people as helpless as they park wherever they want, dump garbage, condoms, beer bottles (yes I know alcohol is not allowed at the shelter but I've seen them go in drunk and drink in the alley), key cars (case in point a worker at the shelter was asked politely not to dump her ashtray on an owners property which she parked in front of, she in turn threatened to key his car and later that night indeed the car was keyed. And this is someone who WORKS for the shelter.)

We have enough with the Balmoral, which is a complete joke, the Newport, the welfare bulding on Needham, the old building on the corner of Farquahar and Haliburton which is literally fallling down and whose yard hookers shoot up in. Several crackhouses, drive by shootings (ok, only one of those). When does it become to much? Enough is enough.

Yours,

Pat McArthur
[redacted]