

MINUTES
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS REVIEW COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 2011-SEP-19 AT NOON
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET



PRESENT:

Mayor John Ruttan
Councillor Jim Kipp
Councillor Loyd Sherry
Councilor Merv Unger
Greg Constable, Island West Coast Developments
Ian Niamath, Ian Niamath Architects
Maureen Pilcher, Maureen Pilcher & Assoc.
Rod Smith, Newcastle Engineering
Bob Wall, RW Wall Ltd.

STAFF:

Ted Swabey, General Manager, Community Safety & Development
Holly Pirozzini, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS:

Byron Gallant, President, Nanaimo Homebuilders' Association

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 noon.

2. NOMINATION OF CHAIR

MOVED by J. Kipp, SECONDED by M. Pilcher that Loyd Sherry be nominated to Chair the Development Process Review Committee. CARRIED

L. Sherry accepted the nomination.

3. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee had no comments.

4. REVIEW ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The 2011-JUN-15 Building Construction Industry minutes were attached to the agenda; however, the Chair suggested a roundtable discussion to identify issues of concern.

5. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

- *Duplication of regulations* – occurs in City processes; appears to be redundant and occurs even when no relaxation of the regulations is requested.
- *Length of time it takes to process a permit* – single family and small projects take the same time to process as complex projects. The “Professional Builder’s Stream” which was created a few years ago did not result in a faster turnaround time.

- *Develop a straight forward, easily understood process* – the current process is too cumbersome and Staff has a heavy-handed approach to projects even when all requirements have been met. Extraordinarily long process for small projects.
- *Improve interaction between departments* – Public Works, Engineering Services, Parks, Recreation & Culture departments are not working well with Development Services to quickly process permits.
- *Reduce the need for amendments / revised drawings, etc.* - requirements for a revised set of drawings or other changes to original application shouldn't be necessary when the developer is made aware of required changes and promises to address them. This will reduce the time for the project to be completed.
- *Silos exist* – combine all departments' requirements in one list. Departments appear to be working independently, instead of together to assist development.

MOVED by M. Pilcher, SECONDED by G. Constable that a representative from the Nanaimo Homebuilders' Association be included on the Development Process Review Committee. CARRIED

- *Reduce the amount of time spent at the Permit Centre counter with first-time developers* – this is frustrating for professionals who are delayed submitting an application because they have to wait for Staff who are having a lengthy discussion with a new developer.
- *Level of requirements is not clear* – the requirements are clear, but the level of those requirements is not clear. A pre-application meeting with Staff from all areas (Public Works, Engineering Services, Parks, Recreation & Culture and Development Services) all in one room to avoid duplication of requirements and speed-up the process.
- *Coordinating professionals* – when the City receives a professional engineer's stamped drawings, they shouldn't need to be checked, which could alleviate Staff time.
- *Need a planning approval process* - this would discern which developers would require a professional to assist them with their development, but need to avoid requiring an army of professionals to build a small project.

For complex projects, a pre-meeting could be held with the developer to discuss all requirements, a comprehensive letter provided afterward and a "Coordinator" or key contact Staff member assigned to assist the applicant through the process. A charge/fee could be applied to the pre-meeting, which is refundable when the project is completed.

Mayor Ruttan vacated the Board Room at 11:45 a.m.

- *The Development Process Review Committee (DPRC) could also bring new ideas to the City from the building industry* - be innovative and not just deal with permit processing concerns/issues.

- *Liability* – appears to be the biggest issue for the City; need to find ways to mitigate this. How are other communities getting away with fewer requirements from the developer?
- *Need a comprehensive list of requirements in the beginning* – avoid additional items being requested a few weeks later and then more items added a few weeks after that ...”curve balls” are thrown and it’s difficult to get answers to specific questions in a timely manner and then the answers differ from those received from another Staff member in the same department.
- *Staff in various departments don’t act like they are on the same team* – referrals can be delayed in one department, holding up the process and delaying the entire development, which makes the City look bad.

Consensus of the Committee - focus on one process per meeting with the first process being Single Family developments. H. Pirozzini will email members of the Committee copies of the Permit Centre counter handouts to review, prior to the next meeting.

B. Gallant will provide members of the Committee with the Housing Affordability Symposium action plan.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date is Thursday, October 13 at noon in the Board Room, City Hall.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

APPROVED:

Loyd Sherry, Chair

2011-OCT-13

Date