



MINUTES
planNANAIMO ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 2011-JUL-19 AT 5:00 PM
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET

PRESENT:

Bill Holdom, Chair
Sarah Boyd
Ted Greves
Ric Kelm
Darwin Mahlum
Nadine Schwager
Clem Trombley

Brian Anderson
Chris Cross
Michael Harrison
Shirley Lance
Ralph Meyerhoff
Randall Taylor

REGRETS:

Carey Avender
Pete Sabo

John Hofman
Meg Savory

STAFF:

Deborah Jensen, Community Development Planner
Bill Corsan, Manager, Current Planning
Sheila Herrera, Planner, Current Planning
Cindy Hall, Recording Secretary

OTHER:

Keith Brown, Keith Brown Associates Ltd.
Keltie Chamberlain, Landscape Design & Consulting
Al Steeves
Teresa McGown
Missy Hedges
Margaret Dyke

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Adoption of Minutes

MOVED by S. Lance, SECONDED by R. Kelm that the Minutes from 2011-JUN-21 be adopted. CARRIED

3. Approval of Agenda and Late Items

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Correspondence

None.

5. Presentations

None.

6. New Business

a. Rezoning Applications

- i. RA275 – 560 Third Street – To allow for a mixed use commercial and multi-family development.

S. Herrera introduced the application.

K. Brown noted that because the new Zoning Bylaw has not yet been adopted by City Council, this rezoning application is based on the existing Zoning Bylaw.

He gave an overview of the proposed development. Two buildings are proposed consisting of 32 two-bedroom condos, 50 studio units of student housing, 929m² of commercial space, and 31 townhouses. Twelve single family homes are proposed for the remainder of the site. A traffic impact assessment has been completed, and issues identified in that study are being addressed.

He noted that concerns about whether the proposed access road could accommodate fire trucks, and that Lambert Avenue is not a full width road, are also being addressed.

The site is close to downtown amenities and in walking distance to trails and transit. The developer is amenable to a bus shelter being part of the project if appropriate.

Committee Comments

The Committee inquired what the population of the development would be at build-out, and why some single family homes are being proposed on a portion of the land being rezoned, when there is a limited amount of property in the university district available for multi-family.

A. Steeves advised that the approximate number of residents in the development will be 200, and that the composition of buildings including single family homes was determined in response to feedback from the residents. K. Brown added that the layout will create a good transition across the drainage course from smaller residences to the proposed higher density.

The Committee inquired whether the single family homes would have garages, what the primary access for fire trucks would be, if there would be sufficient parking for the commercial space, and whether Third Street would have to be widened.

A concern was voiced that because this development would be on a major arterial into downtown, it would be an important introduction to downtown. The large parking area proposed would change the area from a rural setting to blacktop. Because some of the housing is proposed for students, would the City consider a parking variance?

K. Brown advised that the single family homes will have garages as well as a parking space, and that a fire truck's primary access to the homes would be off of Shelby Lane (off of Third Street). K. Chamberlain added that the continuation of grass pave (a narrower, permeable green surface) could be used by fire trucks as a soft exit to Lambert Avenue.

K. Brown commented that they are discussing with VIU the possibility of having a rental program. He noted that at the present time, the City's parking requirement for student housing is 0.5 per dwelling; the development is proposing a 0.4 ratio.

The Committee asked K. Brown how he thinks the area will develop.

K. Brown replied that the housing surrounding the development site is stable, and he therefore does not envision any major changes occurring in the area.

The Committee questioned the location of the perimeter trees, what type of lighting will be used, ownership of the sites and internal road, and what kind of building materials will be used.

K. Chamberlain advised that there may be room for further plantings of trees in the centre of the development. Their current location in the proposed plan allows for required parking, and provides a hedgerow to reflect the existing character of the street. Respecting lighting, bollards will be used near the residences and lighting with less impact will be used for the remainder of the development.

K. Brown advised that the townhouses will be strata, the student housing will be rental, and the single family homes will be fee simple with the opportunity to have secondary suites. A strata council will look after the road, which will not be denied public access because it is strata. The applicant will retain ownership of the buildings being rented (i.e. student housing/commercial). Building material will include concrete, wood frame and brick.

The Committee asked whether the development will be built in phases, and whether the City has any plans to include this area in a neighbourhood plan. If the City is planning a neighbourhood plan for this area, it might be worth having this project wait until that neighbourhood plan is complete.

K. Brown replied that the development will be phased, and that construction of the student housing is planned for next year.

D. Jensen advised that the City is presently looking at all options regarding the location of the next neighbourhood plan, and hopes to start one in the fall.

The Committee took a 10-minute break to read the information submitted by Teresa McGown and Margaret Dyke.

The applicant's presentation resumed.

K. Chamberlain gave an overview of the proposed landscaping for the development, which will include green streets, raised coloured pedestrian accesses, herbaceous plants, native plants, and storm water management techniques including bioswales and detention ponds. Some pervious grass pave is also proposed. Common areas will include an orchard, food garden, raised beds, and a plaque recognizing the history of the site.

A. Steeves added that a picture montage at the access to the site could be considered. K. Chamberlain concurred that it would be a good addition to the plaza.

K. Chamberlain continued advising that a meadow area would allow for habitat, and there is potential on Lot A to include rooftop planters and green roofs.

The Committee questioned how the units along Third Street would be accessed, what was meant by grass pave and bioswales, and whether there would be cut curbing of the bioswales.

K. Chamberlain replied that the main access to the two buildings is through the centre of the development, and that grass pave refers to honeycombed concrete or recycled asphalt that is filled with soil and grass seed. Bioswales are where water from the paved surface runs into, with cut curbing being where the curbing is cut out in sections. Bioswales help to get ground water back into the ground and remove pollutants.

T. McGown gave an overview of her submission. She stressed the property's heritage value, stated there is a growing movement to buy local produce, and questioned why Nanaimo is not using its farm land to grow food. The property could house students and faculty and offer food growing courses, and could be a way "to put Nanaimo on the map" and also preserve the history of the property. She added that not many people knew about the developer's public meeting.

A. Steeves advised that several letters were sent out about the public meeting, and in response to a concern regarding conserving heritage, he noted that the farm has never actually been a food growing farm. It is a fairly small piece of land, and when setbacks, roads, etc. are factored in, it would be difficult to achieve the suggested food growing idea.

The Chair asked the Committee to consider whether they would like the developer to pursue those values in exchange for more density.

A Committee member stressed that if considering affordability, large single family lots and large community gardens are not affordable. Density is needed in the downtown core area. This plan does not propose enough density; it instead provides for single family homes.

T. McGown advised that other organizations like NALT had dreams for this property. The Chair reminded her that this is private property.

K. Brown advised that because the largest drain on the City's taxes are the transit buses, developing the corridors is absolutely essential.

Another Committee member advised that community gardens are being opened all over Nanaimo with financial assistance from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission, and noted that the farmers market on Jingle Pot Road has gone bankrupt twice. Ms. McGown stated that she believed it was because the farm was too far removed from downtown.

The Committee stated that the development's density could be along Third Street and Howard Avenue, which would leave room for exciting things to happen in the back.

K. Brown stated that reduced parking is the key factor to increasing the density, and that the developer is seeking relaxation of the parking requirements.

The Committee inquired how City staff dealt with the farm being on the City's heritage register. S. Herrera advised that the developer was encouraged to include heritage elements. K. Brown added that the site was only added to the heritage register last year, and no value was attached to any of the buildings on site.

K. Brown noted that a small area is proposed in the development for an agricultural area, but that it would be more for educational use rather than food growing. K. Chamberlain added that throughout the herbaceous plantings there will be edible plantings. She also noted that with regard to including heritage elements, boards from the old barn on site could be used for board formed concrete walls.

S. Herrera suggested there are many different facets to urban agriculture, apart from community gardens.

MOVED by D. Mahlum, SECONDED by C. Trombley to recommend that Council approve RA275. CARRIED

MOVED by D. Mahlum, SECONDED by R. Kelm that the applicant consider developing the back portion of the property as low density multi-family. CARRIED

S. Herrera clarified that that portion would not have to come back for rezoning, and that staff have asked the developer for an amenity proposal.

7. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of PNAC is scheduled for 2011-SEP-20.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

File: 0360-20-P07-02

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