

**MINUTES OF THE PLAN NANAIMO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 2008-APR-15 AT 5:00 PM, IN THE
BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET**

Present: Councillor Bill Holdom Shirley Lance
 Brian Anderson Darwin Mahlum
 Carey Avender Ralph Meyerhoff
 Chris Erb Gord Turgeon
 Bill Forbes Nadine Schwager
 Jane Gregory Michael Schellinck
 David Hill-Turner

Staff:

Bruce Anderson, Manager, Community Planning
Deborah Jensen, Community Development Planner
Fran Grant (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: Jolyon Brown Michael Geselbracht

Guest: Paul Thompson, RDN

Public: 6

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair B. Holdom at 5:15 pm.

B. Holdom introduced Ric Kelm, Malaspina University-College's newly appointed representative to PNAC.

B. Holdom thanked those members of PNAC who were able to attend the OCP community forum on 2008-APR-10 at Beban Park Social Centre.

2. Adoption of Minutes for 2008-FEB-19:

MOVED by S. Lance, SECONDED by G. Turgeon, that the minutes of 2008-FEB-19 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

3. Approval of Agenda and Late Items:

MOVED by C. Erb, SECONDED by D. Hill-Turner, that the Agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. Correspondence:

No correspondence.

5. Presentations:

- a) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Review – Paul Thompson, Manager, Long Range Planning, Regional District of Nanaimo.

Chair B. Holdom introduced P. Thompson and noted that this presentation is in response to the Committee's request to become involved in the RGS process.

P. Thompson gave a presentation on the RGS and what the review has encompassed to date. He also noted:

- 2008-MAY-24 and 2008-JUN-07 are tentative dates for the next workshops. Issues to be discussed will be decided based on workshops.
- A new website, www.shapingourfuture.ca, will be up and running soon. It will contain a survey that he invited PNAC members to fill out.

P. Thompson gave the following answers to questions from PNAC:

- City is working with RDN on the RGS in a limited way. RDN will be sending drafts to City to provide comments.
- There is an IAC committee that City staff sit on, that meet on a regular basis, which is another opportunity for input.

PNAC commented:

- Need to consider social issues.
- Mention of affordable housing needs to be stronger.
- Would like to see much stronger policies on containing urban sprawl.
- Health issue is not mentioned; think in next 10 years this is going to become a major issue.
- Also needs to address economic factor in how we grow as a region and city.
- If social side starts to fall apart, this will affect all other areas.

P. Thompson noted:

- RDN Sustainability project has been looking at social, economic and environmental issues; also looking at ways for the RGS to address these problems.
- RGS is one tool that we can use for a sustainable region, while other projects may better address social issues.

B. Holdom noted:

- A community that offers walking, biking and employment opportunities helps the social aspects as well as economic viability.

PNAC commented:

- RDN will be charging DCCs. Need to develop ways to make land available cheaper if want to see affordable housing.
- Need to change the name 'affordable housing'. It is different for everyone.
- Need to look outside the box to find new ways to provide affordable housing. New ideas like reusing 'black water' should be looked at; currently not allowed by Health and Building codes, so there is no benefit to putting in a grey or black water system.
- Good to have the RDN vision looking at sustainability but there are still regions that have a 'do whatever you want' attitude with no restrictions or building inspections.

B. Holdom noted:

- City of Nanaimo is largest urban node in RDN and has the majority of population. How does it fit into RGS?
- Should be trying more vigorously to focus development into the city as opposed to electoral areas in this plan.
- City and RDN should be working hand-in-hand with this.

P. Thompson noted:

- City is recognized as the largest urban area, but not sure how to focus growth there.

PNAC commented:

- DCCs are charged for sewer at a flat rate. Is there a way through municipalities to charge different for amount of use (one person or four people)?
- Need to focus more on changing demographics, which will have a huge affect on the type of growth in the next 50 years. We don't take that into consideration enough in zoning. Will create more demand for multi-family and urban projects. Need more focus around aging population. Even more seniors will move to this area because of the climate.

P. Thompson noted:

- DCCs are one way to encourage or discourage growth.

N. Schwager advised:

- RDN waste management section has started to look at user rate billing for sewer based on water consumption. There is option of exploring that for the city in the future.

P. Thompson noted:

- PNAC can participate in the RGS process by filling out the online survey and looking at the discussion paper
- The Committee's feedback is most welcome.

The Chair thanked P. Thompson for his presentation to the Committee.

6. Information Items:

a) PNAC Membership Terms

D. Jensen noted:

- At the end of 2008-JUN four PNAC positions will be up for renewal: Youth (M. Geselbracht), At-Large (J. Brown), Development Community (C. Erb), Neighbourhood Network (B. Forbes).
- Youth and at-large positions will be advertised.
- Neighbourhood Network and Business Community organizations will be contacted to reappoint or replace their respective representatives.
- G. Adrienne has resigned as Advisory Committee on Environment (ACE) representative so we will be asking ACE to appoint a new representative.
- Will bring this item back to the next regular Committee meeting.

7. Old Business:

No old business.

8. New Business:

a) Community Forum and Feedback

Bruce Anderson noted:

- Online survey has been available since February and comments continue to come in. The deadline is next Friday, 2008-APR-25.
- Community forum on 2008-APR-10 attended by approximately 90 people.

- Also had information displays at Woodgrove and Port Place malls.
- Will speak to substantive changes to draft plan and map change requests.
- Planning on bringing the revised Plan to PNAC to endorse at special meeting on 2008-MAY-06.

D. Jensen noted:

- Have done extensive advertising on the radio, flyers and newspaper wrap.
- Sent out 10,000 flyers through various businesses and public buildings.
- Staff also did a spot on Shaw Cable and there is a live screen display at Harbour Front Plaza.
- All events were heavily advertised in the newspapers.
- Received 40 responses to online survey. Some are duplicates so works out to approximately 33 responses.
- Six responses received as a result of the newspaper wrap.
- Comments sheets at mall and community forum – 29 responses.
- Other (eg: e-mail and letter) - 14 responses.
- Responses cover quite a range of items.
- A comprehensive list of comments will be compiled after the 2008-APR-25 deadline, and provided to PNAC.
- Approximately 120 letters were sent to Jingle Pot residents regarding the UCB and the Urban Reserve designation change. Received twelve back, eight disagree and four agree with change. No specifics on what they like or don't like.
- Upcoming meeting on 2008-APR-24 to talk specifically to Jingle Pot residents.

PNAC commented:

- It is disappointing that there is such a low rate of return.

b) Proposed Draft Plan Revisions

Bruce Anderson distributed Substantive Changes to Draft OCP table and gave a brief description of the changes.

- Will send new Draft Plan OCP to PNAC members before next meeting.
- Items with star in front of them denotes items changed because of Community Forum and consultation comments.
- Staff are working on a strategy for 'sustainability' goal.

Bruce Anderson gave the following answers to questions from the Committee:

- Many of the sustainability initiatives are quite broad and could be measurable at the regional level. RDN has those indicators and that is what we would use as a measure. This Sustainability Strategy is more an action plan which can be tracked. Sustainability in the OCP is a guiding principle with goals and strategies to attain it.
- An OCP assessment, and particularly a Growth Centre analysis, was done for the current Plan Nanaimo, which was an evaluation. The Draft Plan OCP and Working Paper were in a large part a result of that assessment and, in part, why we are now looking at the urban nodes, corridors and neighbourhoods concept.
- The OCP Implementation Strategy table (distributed) shows actions needed to move towards sustainability. The strategies have implementation timing. Some will be done by staff and some may be taken up by the broader community.
- Those initiatives that can be measured, will be measured. Others will be on a checklist which will indicate when they have been completed.
- A Social Status Report, which provides social indicator measures for the social development strategy, will be part of the new Plan.

- Most larger policy documents, like the OCP, have companion documents – working on document now that will speak to affordable housing and would contain measurables.
- Specific height restrictions for high-rise development are now done through rezoning. There was an upper height limit in Plan Nanaimo but it was removed by Council.
- Urban Nodes section talks about compatibility with surrounding area.
- Range of two to six storeys gives envelope for Corridors in the plan. May see mostly three or four storey buildings being built.
- Stewart Avenue basically has a three storey limit on the water side with the waterfront designation.
- Staff will be revisiting the issue of transitions along with social mix of housing, in urban nodes and what needs to be put in corridors.
- Neighbourhood plans need to meet the objectives of overall policies and objectives of the OCP. Neighbourhood plans can expand on those policies and be more detailed. Can put detail in that will guide rezoning. Neighbourhood plans are basically creatures of the OCP and are not separate documents. If there is a conflict of interpretation, that would need to be resolved. Existing Neighbourhood Plans will be carried forward intact as part of the revised OCP.

Each of the items in the substantive changes table were discussed with comments as follows:

PNAC commented:

- Six storey buildings are the most expensive to build.
- Think it is time to do something substantive about affordable housing. Perhaps tie affordable housing to amount of growth. Some of the funds obtained for park land dedication could be re-allocated to affordable housing.

B. Holdom advised that park land dedication is part of *Local Government Act* so City may not have the ability to do that.

PNAC commented:

- There should be density transition in nodes.
- Brooks Landing had a proposal that was approved 15 years ago, that included high-rise but nothing has happened. Is there no way we can put a sunset clause on such proposals? This type of possible development can negatively affect a community.

B. Holdom noted that many agree there should be time limits on development. Could look for way to put in OCP that City will continue to seek ways to put limit on development rights that are granted.

PNAC commented:

- Property should be assessed at a much higher tax rate for the higher use of a property if that is what the owner is successful in obtaining.
- Would much rather have goal for what Nanaimo is going to look like in 25 years for rezoning instead of six months. Right now redesignation and rezonings are done piece meal and they affect the flavour of the day. Let's use the Plan to put some teeth into the policies if we want to reach the goals.
- Economics outweigh social and environment issues, so we have to look at how Nanaimo will develop through economics but keep social and environmental issues alive.
- If we had, or are allowed to have, policies in place that development rights for any major project that greatly increases the value of property rights be limited to two

years, potential buyers would know that and price could be based on that. Might help to accomplish what we want to get done.

Bruce Anderson noted:

- There could be an issue of fettering future councils.
- One way would be to incorporate a sunset clause in terms of re-sale if property belongs to the City.
- Songhees was big test case of phased development that provided some guarantee to the developer that zoning would remain (went to Supreme Court).
- Will have to look into limits on terms of rezoning and bring to the next meeting.
- If you rezone, that does increase property taxes. Can't see how you can limit time for development.
- The Brooks Landing site will be designated Commercial Centre – City.
- Proposing to put in some language that will allow for high-rises already approved for the site.

PNAC commented:

- Will there be rebates or tax breaks for builders that build green?
- Some way to put into Plan that community will strive to support changes to bylaws that promote green building.
- Who is to say what is the most efficient use of energy? Shouldn't impose rules that aren't correct or don't work.
- Change 'required' to 'will be encouraged' (Goal 2, Policy 12).
- Density bonusing policy would be a good way to acquire green space.

D. Jensen noted there aren't any zones currently that encourage density bonusing for green space.

PNAC commented:

- The federal and provincial governments add a lot to cost of building because 28% of cost of building a house is government imposed levies and taxes.
- Only way to get affordability may be subsidized housing.
- Include something to do with health - that we as community need to promote and encourage "wellness" along with food security; perhaps under "livability".
- Parks and Recreation offer many different programs for a healthy body if people care to use it. Don't think it will do any good being in an OCP.
- OCP needs to prevail everywhere and all Neighbourhood plans need to work within the OCP.
- Asked that the issue of Neighbourhood Plans and the OCP be discussed further at the next regular PNAC meeting.
- Node is an ill sounding and technical term. Prefer community centre.

Bruce Anderson noted:

- The term 'node' has been a planning term for decades and is also used in the RGS.

Bruce Anderson referred to Map 1: Future Land Use Plan regarding the proposed corridor designation along Bowen Road and Emery Way and noted:

- Properties in this area have covenants for single family use, which could cause a problem with rezoning.
- Likelihood is not high that this section of Corridor would redevelop to this use.
- Request has been made to remove Corridor designation that encourages higher density residential and commercial in a mixed use development.

PNAC commented:

- Area is up on a hill so don't think it is suitable to have multi-family there.
- There is multi-family around that area and it could have more.
- With covenant, it may not be appropriate that it be changed to multi-family from single family.
- Would still be some increase in density in Neighbourhood as it is on a bus route and near amenities (Bowen Park).

MOVED by R. Meyerhoff, SECONDED by B. Forbes, that the Corridor designation as indicated on map be removed in the vicinity of Bowen Road and Emery Way, and left as a Neighbourhood designation.

CARRIED

Bruce Anderson outlined other proposed changes to the Map 1: Future Land Use Plan. He also noted that the representative for the owner of properties on Island Diesel Way, at Bowen Road, had requested the designation be changed from Light Industrial to Corridor.

M. Schellinck advised that he has a potential conflict of interest on this issue. He did not participate in the discussion.

PNAC commented:

- Agent for the owner stated that there is a possibility that an industrial type building would present a large blank wall along Bowen Road. Light Industrial buildings are required to install plants and trees, and be designed so it wouldn't be an eye sore and could fit in along Bowen.
- This is a designation and not a rezoning.
- Prefer to see it remain as Industrial as designated. Important to save industrial land which exceeds value of making it commercial.
- Already other light industrial businesses in the area.

MOVED by R. Meyerhoff, SECONDED by S. Lance, that the subject lots on Diesel Way remain as Light Industrial designation.

CARRIED

9. Late Item:

A member of the Committee advised that there was a question at the last regular PNAC meeting regarding whether Harmac's license to harvest water would remain when the business is sold.

D. Jensen indicated that A. Tucker is checking into this issue but he is currently not in the office. Will advise the Committee at the next regular meeting.

10. Next Meeting:

The next regular meeting of PNAC is scheduled for 2008-MAY-20.

A special meeting of PNAC is scheduled for 5:00 pm, 2008-MAY-06, at the Beban Park Social Centre, Rooms 19 and 20, to do a final review of the Draft Plan OCP and make recommendation to Council.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

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