

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL,
ON MONDAY, 2005-MAY-30, COMMENCING AT 9:42 A.M.

PRESENT: Councillor T. K. Krall, Chair

Members: Councillor M. D. Brennan
Councillor C. S. Manhas

Staff:	A. C. Kenning	P. Wipper
	A. W. Laidlaw	K. L. Burley
	C. L. Mason	K. King
	B. E. Clemens	

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

- (a) Minutes of the 2005-APR-04 Meeting of the Economic Development Standing Committee held in the Board Room, City Hall at 10:10 a.m.

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

2. REPORTS OF ADVISORY BODIES:

Parking Advisory Committee

- (a) The Gusola Block Redevelopment and Wharf Street Parking

At the Parking Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting held 2005-MAR-11, the PAC received a presentation from Mr. Bob Moss, Investment and Property Management, J. J. Barnicke/Zaicana and Mr. Ian Niamath, Architect, regarding a proposal to create an outdoor seating area along the east side of what is known as the Gusola Block. The Gusola Block is a triangular shaped building which is located at the intersection of Commercial and Wharf Streets, directly across Wharf Street from the Harbourfront Branch of the Coastal Community Credit Union. Mr. Moss has a prospective tenant for the Gusola building who wishes to increase the width of the existing Wharf Street sidewalk to accommodate an outdoor patio/seating area.

The reason that Mr. Moss and Mr. Niamath addressed the PAC was because their proposal to increase the width of the sidewalk would eliminate 4 on-street parking stalls along Wharf Street, including a disabled persons stall. In response to the presentation by Mr. Moss and Mr. Niamath, the PAC requested that Staff prepare a report discussing the merits of the proposal in relation to downtown parking needs.

Staff are of the opinion that creating more outdoor patio/seating areas in the downtown core is an excellent idea which fully supports the City's downtown revitalization initiatives. Unfortunately, this proposal would eliminate 4 of the highest demand on-street parking stalls in the downtown area.

Three years ago, the City was lobbied by the Harbourfront Branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) to provide more short-term parking in the vicinity of the Library in order to provide their customers with free, convenient, accessible parking. In response to the Library's request, as well as to accommodate short-term parking needs in the area, the City changed the parking restrictions along Wharf Street from a 2-hour maximum to a 30-minute maximum. The objective was to create free on-street parking stalls that frequently turn over in order to provide accessible parking in and around the Harbourfront Plaza area to meet the needs of Library patrons, bank customers and shoppers. The results proved to be very successful. In fact, the Library has indicated that once the short-term parking was created, complaints with respect to the difficulty of finding free parking in the vicinity of the Library ceased.

As the PAC is aware, all of the on-street parking along Commercial, Church and Bastion Street is restricted to a 2-hour maximum. While it may, at times, be difficult to find a parking stall along these streets, Staff have observed that 30-minute parking stalls along Wharf Street become frequently available because of the high turnover rate.

Mr. Moss has been in contact with Staff from the Harbourfront Library Branch who have indicated a concern over the potential loss of parking along Wharf Street. On 2005-APR-08, the proposal was reviewed by the Vancouver Island Regional Library Planning Committee, which responded by adopting the following recommendation:

"That the Planning Committee recommend to the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board in June 2005, that a letter be sent to the City of Nanaimo requesting that, if the free, short-term parking on Wharf Street is eliminated, that the City provide 4 free, short-term parking spaces on Commercial Street or in the parkade below the Library, as well as make provision for one handicapped parking stall in the underground parkade for VIRL patrons adjacent to the elevator."

In response to the Planning Committee's recommendation, Mr. Moss and Mr. Niamath have prepared a new site plan that recommends that 4 on-street parking stalls along Commercial Street be changed from 2-hour parking to 30-minute parking, including a disabled persons stall to be located at the corner of Commercial and Wharf Streets. Two of the stalls are proposed to be located in front of the Gusola Block and 2 across the street.

Although the proposed 30-minute parking stalls on Commercial Street are not as conveniently located as the Wharf Street stalls, they nevertheless provide the public with free, reasonably accessible short-term parking in the vicinity of the Harbourfront Plaza and the Library. Staff have no concerns over creating a disabled parking stall in the underground parkade next to the elevator.

Staff and Mr. Moss have met with the businesses in the area that would be most affected by the proposed change. The reaction was mixed depending on the nature of the business.

The Coastal Community Credit Union was in favour of the removal of the stalls under the condition that the City designate a new disabled parking stall in the area and that the remaining parking stalls along Wharf Street be changed to 15-minute parking to accommodate their customers. The Oracle, Lila's Specialty Bake Shop, Nanaimo Travel and Charlie's Restaurant were all in favour of more short-term parking along Commercial Street, while Bygone Books was opposed.

Recommendation: That the Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Council provide direction on whether it is prepared to support the following proposal:

1. eliminate 4 on-street parking stalls along the top end of Wharf Street in order to accommodate a proposed outdoor patio/seating area for the Gusola Block (this would necessitate the preparation of an encroachment agreement); and,
2. convert 4 on-street parking stalls along Commercial Street from 2-hour to 30-minute maximum parking, including the creation of a disabled persons parking stall at the corner of Commercial and Wharf Street, in order to compensate for the loss of short-term parking along Wharf Street.

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

3. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 9:45 a.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

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