

**Council Presentation March 14, 2016**  
**Large Lot Subdivisions Departure Bay**

I'm here tonight representing the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Association. I would like to talk to you about an aspect of the City's subdivision approval process that has recently become an issue in our area. Specifically this involves the need for more extensive community consultation and community engagement when infill type subdivisions threaten to make major changes to an established neighbourhood.

At the moment, when subdivision applications are being reviewed by city staff the only opportunity for public input seems to be through a single letter of notification to the neighbourhood association, if one exists for that area. There is no requirement to contact or notify nearby Residents and there is no mechanism for residents to have any input in the process. As a result, those that will be most directly affected are excluded from the review process.

For us, this problem came to light recently and involves a series of about 20 very large, well landscaped single family residential lots at the top of Departure Bay Rd, just below the Brooks Landing shopping mall. These lots vary in size from about 0.8 acres to 1.1 acres and currently provide a very attractive treed gateway to the Departure Bay area. I'm sure most of you are aware of these properties - they are quite striking and I think unlike any others in the city.

There was a recent change in the legal status of these properties, as the courts agreed to remove a building scheme registered against them. The result is that 10 of these lots can now be subdivided to create a multiple number of smaller lots. At the moment, the remaining 10 lots still have the building scheme attached; however, this may well change in future.

Subdivision proposals are starting to appear for some of these properties. One example that has already been approved by the City, would allow for 4 single family residences, and up to 2 duplexes where there currently is one single family home. If the houses also contain a secondary suite, 12 dwelling units are possible. Considering the number of properties that can now be subdivided in a similar fashion the potential impact on the surrounding, established neighbourhood will be considerable. Overall it appears that there could be more than 40 single family residences and duplexes where there are currently 10 homes.

I'm not here tonight to say whether this is appropriate or not- that could be a topic for another day. But I do think that this is a significant enough change that the residents most affected need to be a part of the process. At the moment they seem to be shut out. Ideally, what is needed is the development of an overall vision for the area that will help guide the future subdivision process, and also help surrounding residents understand how the area will change.

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Meeting Date: *2016 MAR. 14*  
*Supplemental*

If such a vision exists it has been created without any input from the surrounding community, and hasn't been shared with the community.

When we started looking into this we were very surprised to learn that the City's subdivision policies in cases like these do not allow for any input from the surrounding residents. As previously mentioned, if there is a neighbourhood association in the area, they are notified of the application, which is good, but inadequate as the only means of consultation for the following reasons:

First of all, not all parts of the City have active neighbourhood associations. What happens in areas where there are no such groups?

Secondly, there is no incentive for developers to communicate with surrounding residents, or try to work with surrounding property owners to resolve conflicts. Developers know residents don't have a voice in the process and that city staff are the only ones they need to deal with.

Thirdly, if the City's expectation is that the Neighbourhood Association will contact all the individual residents affected, they are mistaken. In this particular case, many of those that will be most affected are not members of our association so we have no easy way of contacting them, and we may not be in a position to try to represent their very specific concerns.

As a first step, some fairly minor changes to the city's subdivision process would help, and would ensure that subdivision requirements more closely resemble how other types of developments are handled. For example:

The city could require that a sign be placed on properties as notification of a subdivision application along with information on where/how concerned residents can get more info. This is currently one of the many requirements when rezoning a property but isn't required when subdividing.

Alternatively, the city could require that written notification be provided to those living close to the proposed subdivision- as is currently done for even minor bylaw variance requests.

In addition the referral process needs to be expanded to allow residents, as well as neighbourhood associations, the opportunity to submit written input outlining any issues/concerns they may have.

I looked around other Southern Vancouver Island municipalities a little to see what other jurisdictions are doing and found a good example in the District of Saanich.

Like Nanaimo Saanich requires that where Neighbourhood Associations exist, that they be notified. However they go further and also require that:

- The applicant notify all neighbours within 90m of the property
- - applicant also expected to hold a public meeting
- Saanich's subdivision application forms include a section where the applicant has to specifically outline how they have consulted with the community.

We recognize there may be other options that would work here, and we also recognize that, when it comes to subdivisions, provincial legislation plays a very large role in what can/can't be easily done, so we are asking Council to do the following:

1. Have staff seriously look into the options available to better involve surrounding residents in the subdivision process, especially when large or multiple infill subdivisions are possible in an existing established neighbourhood.

2 Considering the potential cumulative effects of the numerous subdivisions now possible in Lynburn area, staff also be asked to outline the options available for the preparation of a vision or plan for the area that will help avoid piecemeal, inconsistent redevelopment, and also help residents better understand the types of changes they can expect

(impact on the existing urban forest, how the surrounding road network will change, increased traffic and parking demands, impacts during construction....)

Thank you for listening

That is the end of my presentation.

The next presentation will be by Don Duddrige, one of the Lynburn property owners who will be directly affected by the subdivisions I have been talking about.

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