



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

PUBLIC HEARING

June 30, 2008 7:06 p.m.
Council Chamber
City Hall

NOTES

PRESENT:

Mayor Wayne Wright
Councillor Jonathan Cote
Councillor Calvin Donnelly
Councillor Bill Harper
Councillor Bob Osterman
Councillor Betty McIntosh
Councillor Lorrie Williams

STAFF:

Mr. Paul Daminato	- City Administrator
Mr. Rick Page	- Corporate Officer/Director of Legislative Services
Ms. Lisa Spitale	- Director of Development Services
Mr. Steven Lan	- Acting Director of Engineering Services
Mr. Gary Holowatiuk	- Director of Finance and Information Technology
Ms. Judi Turner	- Deputy Corporate Officer

Mayor Wright read a statement regarding the conduct of the Hearing.

BUSINESS

1. **Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 7245, 2008** [a bylaw to establish the Comprehensive Development Districts (246 Sixth Street) (CD-20) zone and rezone the property addressed as 246 and 258 Sixth Street from Community Commercial Districts (High Rise) (C-3) and Community Commercial Districts (High Rise) (C-3A) to Comprehensive Development Districts (246 Sixth Street) (CD-20)]

- a) The Director of Development Services summarized the intent of the bylaw and gave a description of the proposal.
- b) The Corporate Officer advised of the written submissions received in response to the Notice of Hearing.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the following correspondence be received:

- *Brow of the Hill Residents' Association, supporting the project*
- *Adrienne Garrone, 311 Fifth Street, opposing the project*
- *Petition from Lars Brunback of 506 Third Avenue, with 21 signatures, opposing the project*
- *Petition of residents of the 400 and 500 block of St. George Street, Queens Avenue and Fourth Street, with 22 signatures, opposing the project.*

CARRIED.

All members of Council voted in favour of the motion.

The following letter was circulated on table:

- June 27, 2008 letter from K. Bray and P. Smith of 307 Fifth Street, opposing the project.

- c) The Mayor invited persons having an interest in the above bylaw to address Council.

Jean Buman of Buman Architecture rose on behalf of the applicant to describe the project:

- Will achieve more affordable suites in the complex
- 5-6 units per floor for 64 residential units and 11 live/work units
- tried to go green with the building with green roof where possible for storm water management, a number of open areas, bicycle storage, sustainable materials, low water consumption plumbing, parking stalls for shared car parking, and live work units.

The delegation responded to questions.

Morris Doornberg of #207, 225 Sixth Street, rose to voice the following concerns:

- New construction across the street is not complete and is having an impact on the area; does not want this repeated with subject proposal
- blockage of the sun to his home from the project
- Increase in traffic and congestion from the live/work units
- Sun blockage from the building of 16 storeys across the street.

A representative of Buman Architecture rose to comment on the shadow study conducted on the project. He displayed slides to demonstrate the shadow impact on neighbouring properties.

Shelly Linke of 515 St. George, although stating she is pro-development, rose to voice concerns over:

- Shadow impact to her home
- Privacy loss in her home
- The height of the building (would prefer 10 storeys rather than 16)
- Putting up a wall of towers will impact the neighbourhood
- Parking and extra traffic need to be mitigated.

Sergio Vitomir of 502 Third Avenue resides 100 metres from the proposed project. He opposed the project for the following reasons:

- Council is spending money on Columbia Street to improve it and make it better; do not destroy Queens Park
- Towers along Sixth Street are not a good idea
- Spoke for his neighbour, Harold Watkiss, who has opposed buildings above four storeys on Sixth Street
- The plan is inconsistent
- All residents on Third Street agree with this position (as demonstrated by the petitions)
- The amount of traffic on Third and Sixth will increase dramatically
- Green buildings are intended to be designed environmentally using sun, air and wind and this project does not accomplish that goal
- Is concerned over density.

The Director of Development Services noted that the current proposal is not to consider permitting a high rise (this decision was made some years ago), but to consider allowing live/work units and creating smaller units by using their floor space ratio.

Salva Dio, owner of a restaurant on 412 Sixth Street, rose to support the project as she believes in the live/work plan and supports bringing more residents to the City.

Suzanne Adams of 302 Fifth Street voiced concern over the loss of privacy from the proposed building.

Marcus Logidye of 3775 Lenox Street in Vancouver, rose to support the live/work plan as he hopes to move to New Westminster. He is working on his CA and would plan to open an office in his home.

Michael Dunne of 319 Second Street rose and noted the property is zoned for high rise. However, if there is a high rise zone on Sixth Street towards uptown, can it be rezoned for lower buildings to address the concerns raised by residents.

David Dewar of 501 St. George Street, resides in an 1891 home and rose to raise a concern with the proposed development. The neighbourhood contains single family homes and the proposal is contrary to this vision for the area. The number of vehicles will be increased on Sixth Street which already suffers with a traffic problem. He urged that the number of suites be retained at the number originally requested. He asked that this project not be allowed to become a precedent and create a wall of tall buildings along the street. He also voiced concern over privacy and shadow impacts. An apartment with 64 suites will not encourage the same kind of community which presently exists. Mr. Dewar urged that Council stay on the lower side of the minimum requirements. He did not oppose improvements to that side of Sixth Street nor live/work units, but the project should not be so tall, should not intrude on the community and should be kept to the minimum requirements.

Jeff Dresselhuis of 410 St. George Street rose and commented that many residents did not know of the project until last week. His concerns included:

- The need to maintain the neighbourhood feel of Sixth Street with low rise buildings offering residential and service uses
- The massing of the building is not appropriate for the area and will create an overwhelming "skyprint"

He supported the live/work concept but opposed the sheer mass of the project. He asked for the larger question to be asked of whether the zoning is appropriate for the area. He suggested it is not necessary to approve the highest possible structure for the project.

Mary Alpatrick of 225 Sixth Street rose to voice concern that this building coupled with the building under construction across the street will become eyesores.

The Director of Development Services reported on the status of the building under construction across the street.

T. Cocosco of 46 West 41st Street rose to support the project which will permit persons who cannot afford expensive properties to find a solution in the form of the live/work option. This option will assist them personally with to earn their livelihood. She and her husband do not drive a car and this type of housing will be a big savings for them.

Ingrid Kroell of #204, 1030 Fourth rose to ask about the value of the units.

The applicant rose to respond to the question. He added that if the project reverts to 52 units, it becomes unaffordable for them.

Rio De Capite of 405 St. George Street rose to voice concerns:

- Project will set a precedent
- He will see the structure from his back yard
- Why does Sixth Street have a straight vertical wall, while the alley has an offset
- The noise from the project
- More dust, noise and problems from the construction
- If there are families, the impact on schools
- The height of the building.

The Architect rose to explain the rationale for the project development, noting that City required setbacks were followed. She displayed the site plan to demonstrate the setbacks.

Bill Dixon of 413 Queens rose to voice concerns:

- One side of the building going up 16 storeys will have negative effects visually and esthetically and will ruin the streetscape
- The corridor effect which will not work
- A setback from the street would have been an improvement and a relief for the street
- A precedent of 16 storeys will result in the development of more tall buildings down one side of the street making it an eyesore.

Jason Parker of 211 Fourth Street, rose to ask the average size of square footage per unit (the Architect answered as follows: 630 to 800 square feet with 1500 square foot penthouses; live work units about 1200 square feet)

Mr. Parker's concerns were:

- Housing a family with children or 2 adults in a 600 square foot home
- The neighbourhood does not support the project
- Consider the environmental impact on the neighbourhood
- This is not a family dwelling building.

Neil Tambeline of 1040 Fourth Avenue rose to ask about guarantees that the project will complete on time and on budget given rising construction costs.

Ken Andrew of 858 Kingsway, Vancouver, representing the developers, rose to note that the previous project was not feasible. Therefore, the number of units

has been increased, allowing the price per square foot to be reduced. People do not want to pay for larger units.

Mr. Andrew commented that many comments made during the Hearing were directed to the project across the street. The developer for the subject project intends to deliver a product that will be well received by the market. The applicant went beyond city requirements with two community presentations, listening to the input, and in responding to staff direction. In response to a question, Mr. Andrew stated that they have never run out of money to complete a project. He described other projects they have completed.

Leslie Parker of 211 Fourth Street rose to raise the following concerns:

- The approval of this building will irrevocably change the look of Sixth Street
- Holding a Public Hearing on this weekend has prevented many from being present
- Parking and traffic
- Lack of a family building
- The mass of the building which is 16 storeys.

Ms. Parker urged Council to think about the massing and the impact it will have on the community as a precedent. A lower smaller building will fit better with the community and its heritage.

Ron Henkrich of 215 Fourth Street rose to make the following comments:

- He asked Council to look to the future – this development will set a precedent
- The zoning of that side of the street must be revisited
- He moved to the neighbourhood for the character and the community feel – the proposal will not compliment that
- Residents expected 4 or 5 storey buildings, not 16
- How many suites will be marketed at \$250,000 and how many at \$400,000 - is there really an intent to be more affordable.

Ken Andrew rose again on behalf of the developer to comment on the marketability question. Current market conditions suggest \$250,000 to \$400,000 range. However, the building across the street would be priced beginning at \$350,000. He advised of the number of units proposed and their market price.

Lars Brunback of 506 Third Avenue rose to comment as follows:

- Will the building be earthquake proof
- Will pile driving be required; how will the watermains be affected
- Is concerned over noise and shaking caused by the pile driving
- Is concerned over shadow impacts
- Has suffered with the noise of construction from the building across the street.

Recess:

The Public Hearing recessed at 8:50 p.m. and reconvened at 9:02 p.m. with all members of Council present.

Jose Jesetedoro of 1599 West 71st Avenue, Vancouver, rose on behalf of the developer who followed the bylaw requirements but wanted a change on number of suites to make the project more affordable. The developer conducted two community consultations and received support from the City's advisory design committees. After two years, it is disheartening for the developer to find opposition.

Jeff Link of 515 St. George raised the following comments:

- Livability of the area
- proximity of services
- 16 floors will be a gross anomaly in the area
- suggested that the zoning should contribute to making a project work for the community.

Donny Santiago rose and made the following comments:

- He resided in Vancouver in an apartment and moved to Surrey because of the opportunity to purchase a townhouse
- He chose Surrey because it was cheap and he was a student at the time
- For 6 years, he has been observing New Westminster and observed that it is conservative
- He noted that it is not only residents that make a community – it is the new citizens who would like to join the community
- He asked that these new residents be given a chance
- He urged that New Westminster be allowed to grow as it is being left behind.

A representative from Bumen Architecture was involved in the two public meetings that were held. Letters were sent and notices were placed in the papers. The input received was considered in the development. He noted that the developer has spent considerable time and money and effort.

Michael Dunne of 319 Second Street rose again and noted the issue is placing a high rise in a community of low development. He suggested that this type of meeting/hearing will be repeated for every new development on every on Sixth Street. He asked why another high rise corridor is planned along Sixth Street when there are alternative locations. He encouraged that the zoning along Sixth Street be reviewed.

Sergio Vitomir of 502 Third Avenue rose again to point out that the community does not want a precedent set for the street. He asked that the community's interests be heard.

David Dewar of 501 St. George Street rose again to comment:

- On the comments of the developer's representatives
- The developers seem to have a problem with the zoning – the site is not economically feasible – this should speak of the zoning and the property
- It is important to recognize there is an opportunity to evaluate the zoning on the basis that it doesn't suit the developer at the moment
- This is a family neighbourhood
- He has spent time and money to restore his home to reflect the neighbourhood
- The space between buildings reflects the neighbourhood
- This is not a Vancouver specials neighbourhood
- This development is not needed next to their community
- The plan to decide how Sixth Street should be zoned was made in the context of a different plan for the Downtown, Uptown was a new idea and with development is now suited to higher developments; but the corridor has changed; downtown looks toward the water; Queens' Park neighbourhood look toward their own parks forming their social community
- The Downtown area doesn't need connection to Uptown
- He urged that this project be reevaluated as to whether it suits the community.

In response to a question from a member, the Architect rose to advise on the finishes intended for the suites. More details will be developed if the project is approved. She also spoke of the effort to make the building as green as possible, although it is not certified green.

Shelly Linke of 515 St. George rose again to comment on the following:

- Their house is their dream home but it has consumed all their resources
- Is concerned that the privacy of their back yard will be lost.

Jason Parker of 211 Fourth Street rose again to comment:

- The previous speaker is not alone - there are a number of others from the community who also oppose the proposal
- Is concerned over the loss of privacy in their back yards
- The greater the voice, the greater the responsibility of Council to act on behalf of the community.

Ingrid Kroell of 1030 Fourth Avenue rose again to comment:

- Noted she lives on Fourth Avenue and Tenth Street
- However, they will be impacted by the proposed development
- The whole community is looked at in an overarching spectrum
- She suggested that this development would be a mistake and a poor precedent
- There are no guarantees for the price points for the suites
- Although affordable housing is necessary, it is not up to one developer in one project to address the matter
- It is necessary to ask how this community is zoned
- She asked for the plan for the city
- New Westminster should continue to be a family community – it is not Yale Town
- She urged that this project not be allowed to proceed.

Jeff Dresselhuis of 410 St. George Street rose again to comment:

- This is not the venue to garner sympathy for a process that is well entrenched in the region
- The project should be assessed on its merits
- Few people attended the earlier communication phases because they didn't know of it; asked what areas were notified of the project.

A representative of the applicant responded that a Canada Post carrier walk was used to circulate leaflets on two separate occasions, in addition to the publication of newspaper ads.

Mr. Dresselhuis noted that leaflets on the project were not seen by himself, his wife, or many of his neighbours. Although he would support development of the lot, the proposed height is not appropriate. A four storey building is more suitable.

A representative of the developer rose again and commented that he submitted a letter to Council from Brow of the Hill whose executive supported the project.

David Dewar rose again and advised that he spoke with the Chair of the Queens Park Residents Association, Dr. Lemke, who only recently learned of the project.

Neil Tamboline of 1040 Fourth Avenue rose again to ask what guarantees there are that this project will not go over budget. The applicant's representative responded that there are no guarantees.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 7245, 2008 be referred to Council for consideration of third reading.

CARRIED.

All members of Council voted in favour of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

The Public Hearing concluded at 9:51 p.m.

Certified as being a fair and accurate report of the Public Hearing.

Richard L. Page – Corporate Officer