

## **ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 6:30 pm**  
**Council Chambers**

### **MINUTES**

#### **VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Peter Hall	- Chair, Community Member
Christa MacArthur	- Vice-Chair, Community Member
Darlene Carty	- Community Member
Richard Carswell	- Community Member
Laura Cornish	- Community Member
Margaret Fairweather	- Community Member
Andrew Hull	- Community Member
Tobi May	- Community Member
Alex Swezey	- Community Member

#### **GUESTS:**

Sohrab Ali	- Canada Islamic Cultural Society
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#### **STAFF:**

Hardev Gill	- Planning Technician
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

#### **1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no additions.

#### **2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

There were no items.

#### **3.0 INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS**

There were no items.



## **4.0 REZONING**

There were no items.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Temporary Use Permit 00014 for 718 Twelfth Street**

Hardev Gill, Planning Technician, summarized the report dated May 16, 2017, regarding a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) application that has been received from the Canada Islamic Cultural Society to allow an institutional use (religious worship) of 718 Twelfth Street, which is within a commercial district.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Gill provided the following information:

- Examples of other places of worship in commercial zoned areas were not known to him;
- The Local Government Act allows municipalities to administer TUPs on a case by case basis;
- In order to address the lack of non-commercial space available for groups to use as places of religious worship, Council has directed City Staff to look into amending zoning bylaws to allow for this type of use;
- The amount of TUPs that Council has approved for this type of use was not known to him;
- It was not known whether the Canada Islamic Cultural Society leases the space nor whether they are looking to renovate the space;
- The City has sign bylaws but information on whether there is an exemption for religious worship was not known to him;
- It was discovered that the upper floor level of the existing commercial building (west elevation) was being used contrary to the Zoning Bylaw through a Bylaw enforcement filing;
- The group has already been operating for a year in the current space;
- The future OCP land use designation of this property will be mixed use low-rise, therefore the zoning will not allow for institutional once it is adopted; and,
- Properties in institutional zones that are available for use in the City are currently scarce or overused, as demonstrated by the Canada Islamic Cultural Society's unsuccessful and lengthy attempts to find space.

Sohrab Ali of the Canada Islamic Cultural Society introduced the Society and gave some background into why they have chosen to locate the Society's premises in New Westminster, rather than looking in neighbouring communities.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Ali provided the following information:

- Despite different times of worship between faiths, the Society has not found any other space within the City of New Westminster suitable to worship. There are no other mosques or spaces appropriate for Muslim worship, for example the practice of foot washing;
- It is important to the Society to be respectful of other faiths and allow “a church be a church” and not blend religions in the same space; and,
- Before using the current space at 718 Twelfth Street, the Society used to meet in Mr. Ali’s home, however parking became a major issue.

Sikander Beg, a Volunteer with the Society, spoke in support of the Temporary Use Permit Application as he believes that having a place of worship within a community brings together many cultures.

Rauf M. Cassim, a Volunteer with the Society, spoke in support of the Temporary Use Permit Application as he values the space used by the Society as a place of meditation, allowing him the opportunity to escape the stresses of his daily routine – an opportunity that is not available to him elsewhere in the City.

The Commission thanked the Applicant and his associates for their information and noted the following comments:

- Much goodwill was expressed for the well-being of the Society in their search for a permanent space in which to worship;
- There are examples in the City of places of worship in commercial districts ;
- Most churches are non-conforming, as they were likely established prior to current zoning;
- This Temporary Use Permit Application adheres to the OCP principles as noted on page 5 of the report;
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes the multicultural enhancement of Canadians, which should apply in this case;
- It appears that the Canada Islamic Cultural Society has minimal impact on the neighbourhood and is an excellent addition to the community, seeing as there are over 2600 Muslims, including the Imam from the Burnaby mosque, living in New Westminster and potentially in need of a place of worship;
- As evidenced at a recent presentation on Islam at the Library, there is much interest in the Muslim faith in New Westminster and diversity is something to be supported; and,
- The Commission supports the importance of all faiths having a place to worship, find solace and grow understanding.



**MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommends that Council approves the Temporary Use Permit Application at 718 Twelfth Street.*

**CARRIED**

All members of the Commission present voted in favour of the motion.

**6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

There were no items.

**7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

**7.1 Correspondence re: Temporary Use Permit 00014 for 718 Twelfth Street**

**MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Advisory Planning Commission receives the report and correspondence associated with the Temporary Use Permit Application at 718 Twelfth Street for information.*

**CARRIED**

All members of the Commission present voted in favour of the motion.

**8.0 NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

**Peter Hall**  
Chair

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

**Heather Corbett**  
Committee Clerk