

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Hull	- Chair, Community Member
Rebecca Bateman	- Community Member
Darlene Carty	- Community Member
Margaret Fairweather	- Community Member
Andrew Feltham	- Community Member
Christa MacArthur	- Vice-Chair, Community Member
Tobi May	- Community Member
Melinda Michael	- Community Member

VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:

Laura Cornish	- Community Member
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STAFF:

Rupinder Basi	- Senior Development Planner
Britney Quail	- Heritage Planner
Lynn Roxburgh	- Senior Policy Planner
Bob Sokol	- Planning Consultant
John Stark	- Acting Manager of Planning
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

1.1 There were no additions.

2.0 HOUSEKEEPING

2.1 2018 Planning Orientation

Rupinder Basi, Senior Development Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the role and functions of the Advisory Planning Commission (APC), including slides covering information on:

- The establishment and terms of reference of the APC;
- The role of the APC in the development review process, including the other City committees and public consultation meetings included in the process;
- The scope of the APC and how it differentiates from the New Westminster Design Panel;
- The APC meeting format and process;
- Key city policy documents; and,
- Staff roles and interactions with APC.

In response to requests from the Commission, Mr. Basi indicated that copies of the policy documents and the presentation would be made available to the Commission.

3.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of Tuesday March 20, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the March 20, 2018 Advisory Planning Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

3.2 Adoption of the Minutes of Tuesday March 27, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the March 27, 2018 Advisory Planning Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

Procedural Note: The Commission recessed from 6:19 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

4.0 REZONING

4.1 838 Ewen Avenue

Bob Sokol, Planning Consultant and John Stark, Acting Manager of Planning, provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing details of the application for an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment and a Rezoning for the site at 838 Ewen Avenue to allow for a 44 unit modular housing development with support services which would address the needs of women who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, as outlined in the report dated May 15, 2018.

Mr. Sokol reviewed details of the project, noting the following:

- Site area and location in context of community amenities;
- The ownership model, whereby the land is owned by the City and leased to BC Housing for a ten year period;
- The two proposals for building design; and,
- The OCP amendment would change the property from Parks/Community Facilities to Residential – Medium Density and would change the Development Permit Area for the site from Commercial and Mixed-Use Development Permit Areas (DPA) – Queensborough Main Street DPA #1 to Residential Development Permit Areas (DPA) – Ewen Avenue Multi-Family DPA #1.
- The rezoning would change the zoning for the site from Local Commercial Districts (C-1) to a new Comprehensive Development (CD) Zone (CD-83).

Mr. Stark provided comments on how the project supports several City policies and reviewed the need for the project, along with the consultation process undertaken by the City, including the following details:

- The current state and extent of homelessness in the City, including figures on the 2017 homeless count and statistics on the amount of women turned away from Gurney Place, which is the only shelter specifically programmed and staffed to meet the needs of women in New Westminster;
- Existing resources available to the homeless in the City, including details on the use of extreme weather response mats and shelters, all of which are located east of 12th Street, with no resources in the West End or Queensborough;
- Summary of consultation activities, which have involved close to 300 people to date, including meetings with the local residents' association, PAC, community groups, and an open house;
- Concerns raised at the open house about the location of the supportive housing units, and the responses being taken to address the identified concerns;

In summary, Mr. Sokol provided the Commission with information on the benefits of the project for the neighbourhood and the City, and identified the next steps in the process.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Sokol and Mr. Stark provided the following information:

- The 44 units are comprised of self-contained studios with a kitchen, bathroom, and a combined living and dining area;
- BC Housing is being given a 10-year lease on the property, with the option to renew, however the modular housing unit itself would have a 50 year life and could be re-located elsewhere
- The City's longer-term plan for the use of the site is for park and civic use;
- The criteria for the site provided by the Provincial Government for this project was that it be City-owned land, located near amenities and transit and could accommodate 40-50 units of housing;
- The potential sites identified, other than the proposed, were as follows:
 - Thirteenth Street near Stewardson Way – a triangular site not large enough to accommodate the number of units;
 - Gasworks site – the property is owned by the Province and requires substantial remediation;
 - 200 Fenton Street – a sewer line passes through the site which any building foundation would interrupt, and the site is removed from transit and amenities;
- The housing is for adult women living alone, however they may be pregnant and children would be able to visit;
- Elizabeth Fry's Gurney Place Shelter is a time limited, emergency shelter, whereas the proposed residence would be supportive housing where residents could reside longer term with the hope that they improve their position enough to move elsewhere;
- The other homeless facilities in the City are as follows:
 - Russel Housing Centre,
 - Cliff Block;
 - Maria Keary Cottage; and,
 - Rhoda Kaellis Residence;
- Residents would be provided a unit according to an agreement with the Operator;
- Residents will receive two meals daily and will be responsible for one meal, with the hope that partnerships with community agencies and other non-profits will promote the learning of life skills, such as cooking, to the residents;
- An example of a similar facility in a residential neighbourhood elsewhere in Metro Vancouver is in Marpole, where a residence recently opened near a school;

- Many of the homeless facilities in the City (as mentioned above) are in residential districts and are not problematic in terms of calls to police services; and,
- If adopted by Council, the Bylaw Amendment would specify the zoning as CD83 zone which allows for housing and parks or other civic uses, therefore the property would not need to be re-zoned for a different use in future.

The Chair called for any speakers from the public.

Laura Ranalletta, Resident, expressed that while she was in support of the housing initiative providing housing for women in need, she was not in support of the selected location, given its proximity to the local elementary and middle schools. She explained that as the schools are at maximum capacity, there is not sufficient playground space on school grounds, and the children use the park and playground spaces adjacent to the proposed project, which may put them at risk to exposure to the residents of the development, and perhaps associated drug use and disposal of drug paraphernalia. Ms. Ranalletta also discussed the lack of infrastructure services in Queensborough to support the proposed housing, such as immediate health services, walk-in health clinics, and designated police presence.

Jamie Meades, Resident, expressed his concern about the proximity of the site to the local schools, and about the lack of plans from the City or the operator for how potential risks to the schoolchildren would be mitigated. Mr. Meades discussed the experience of the Marpole School PAC, which had reported an increase in needles and theft in the area, and expressed concern that a plan be identified to mitigate this type of activity occurring in Queensborough, and an increase in community policing be explored.

Carly Ballarin, Resident, discussed the over-crowding of the Queensborough schools and the use of the adjacent park for play spaces by local children. She cited the experience of the Marpole School PAC, who had seen an increase of needles and loitering near the units built there and is concerned that a similar situation would occur at the Ewen Avenue site. While she appreciates the initiative of the Provincial Government to reduce homelessness, she is opposed to the proposed location based on its proximity to the local schools and the potential of risk to the children.

(Illegible name), Resident, expressed his concern that the proposed location is not suitable for the shelter due to its proximity to the local schools, as well as the loss of valuable park space.

Sue Kenny, Resident, discussed the proposed site and its proximity to the local preschool, daycare, water park, skate park, three playgrounds, middle school, and elementary school with portables, and the associated populations of vulnerable children. Ms. Kenny also discussed the lack of infrastructure in the area in terms of medical services, transit, and a grocery store. She indicated that she is supportive of the purpose, but wishes to put the protection of children first and does not want to see this built on the front lawn of the community centre.

Shawn Bayes, Resident and Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society (EFry), discussed the context of the current building that the Society operates in Sapperton, in that it is across the street from a daycare, a church and a park, with a school up the street, and no significant calls to or from the police occur. She discussed the potential residents of the Queensborough project, who would all be women who are known to EFry and who would have access to mental health services, clinical services and other programs in house.

Jag Saul, Resident, discussed the proposed site and the resources for the community such as a running track and a pool that have been discussed for that location, but not built. He was dismayed to hear that rather than a new resource for the community, the homeless shelter has been in proposed in the location. He also expressed his concern about the over-crowding in the local school and the safety of the children being in such proximity to the proposed project.

Gavin Palmer, Resident, presented the Commission with a handout about the park and expressed his concern that the land purchased by the City at 838 Ewen was originally intended to expand the park and greenspace in Queensborough, not to be used for the type of project proposed. He commented that the land should have been re-zoned for the purpose of a park at the time of purchase. Mr. Palmer was also concerned about the speed of the project's approval process and asked the Commission to consider rejecting the proposal or sending it back for re-evaluation.

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

- Population growth in Queensborough has been quite rapid in the last couple of decades, and the projection is to densify even further – the major effect of this will be on traffic and access to services;
- The Police have an office in the Queensborough community centre, which appears to be seldom used
- Police are seen in the neighbourhood, however the impression is that they come in to the area when they are called, rather than for patrolling;
- It is unclear where an alternative location for the modular housing unit could be in Queensborough;

- The handout provided to the Commission is a Parks & Recreation document available on the City's website.

Brandon Yeung, Resident, expressed his concern that the park space and proposed location for the development, is one of the primary greenspaces for families that live in the area and it is important to preserve the greenspace for the community. Barb Smeal, Resident, expressed concerns about the availability of staffing at the modular housing unit on weekends and also about the location of the activities that the residents would be taking part in.

Sue Kenny, Resident, noted that the meeting (as stated by John Stark) between the City and the Port Royal Moms Group had not occurred and she had not received any letter from the City distributed by the Principal of the elementary school. She also noted that she had not received adequate notice of the APC meeting and that there has been a lack of transparency in the process, resulting in a controversy in the Queensborough community.

John Stark clarified that he had been in contact with several members of the Port Royal Moms Group (citing specific names) and that the meeting had been re-scheduled several times to accommodate schedules. He also noted that the letter had been sent to the schools, but that the distribution of the letter had been left in the hands of the Principals.

Laura Ranalletta, Resident, noted concerns about lack of communication and the project timeline seeming rushed. She added that a multi-stakeholder approach could be useful to discuss policing, crime and access to amenities in the area.

Shawn Bayes, Resident and Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society (EFry), clarified that there would be staff at the residence 24/7 as well as staff on-call and a security company that checks in on staff. Ms. Bayes noted that the work of EFry is founded on the principles of opportunity, justice and equity and the nature of work is organized such that it ensures that the community would not be at risk. This project will provide safety for the women given the opportunity to live there, who will pay towards the housing.

Gavin Palmer, Resident, reiterated his position that this is a land use issue. He noted that he was unsure whether remediation had occurred at the site and whether an engineering study had occurred to ensure the adequacy of building in the location, given the floodplain requirements. He also expressed concern that this building would reduce the site lines of the Community Centre to the street.

Simon (last name illegible), Resident, expressed his concerns about the project being close to the existing BC Hydro line, and about the safety of the nearby children.

Jamie Meades, Resident, expressed his concerns about the “fast tracking” of this development and whether the site would be able to accommodate the building, given the floodplain requirements. He cited a sink hole that was developing in the development across the street from the proposed site.

The Chair called a further three times for any more comments from the public.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Stark and Mr. Sokol provided the following information:

- The Director of Parks & Recreation would be best placed to comment on questions regarding the replacement of the greenspace being taken up by this project, and any issues relevant to future park planning;
- The proposed site has been remediated, and an environmental report has been done, which indicates that the site is appropriate for residential use; and,
- The public notice signage has been in place on the site for the required two weeks prior to the APC meeting.

The Commission thanked the public for their participation and noted the following comments:

- Taking into account the descriptions of the Elizabeth Fry programs that are proposed for this site, the safety concerns may be unfounded, however the community would benefit from more information about the programs;
- The EFry house in Sapperton is generally known to be an incident-free facility which provides support and attention to its residents and does not provide reason for concern, and it is likely that the proposed property would provide a similar experience;
- This project will benefit from being located on one of the busiest bus routes in Metro Vancouver, which serves Richmond and New Westminster;
- This facility is of great importance in creating safe and supportive housing for women and may create impetus for more facilities, policing, stores etc. to be developed in the area;
- The Commission reminded the public that the women living in this project will themselves be mothers, aunts, daughters etc. – while they may be people with challenging backgrounds, they would also have concern for the well-being of the community, as well as themselves;
- The Commission noted that Queensborough has a strong and close-knit community and encouraged the residents to extend this to the women who will come to the facility;

- Many of the concerns raised at the meeting can be dealt with through open dialogues between the City, the operator of the facility, the future residents, and local community groups, and the Commission encouraged continued communication and facilitated discussion between all parties to ensure that concerns and questions about how the building will be managed, and how it will affect the community, are adequately answered and understood;
- While the community has raised valid concerns about resources, services and over-crowding in local schools, these issues seem to be in place currently, pre-dating the project, and should not preclude the project from being built in the proposed location;
- The community's concerns about policing and the access of emergency services to Queensborough are issues that warrant attention from the City, however they are issues that should be dealt with separately from this project;
- Overall, this site may be imperfect, however there does not seem to be another site available for this type of housing;
- Concern was expressed about the loss of greenspace, as per the City's own statistics, however given that multiple sites were looked at and the project is getting funding from the Government with the proviso that it be on City land, this appears to be a supportable location.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommend to Council approval of the proposed project at 838 Ewen Avenue.

CARRIED.

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

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommend that Council direct staff to dedicate permanent police resources in Queensborough.

CARRIED.

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

5.0 RECESS

The Commission recessed for from 8:51 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

6.0 PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area: Incentives Program – Proposed Implementation Framework

Lynn Roxburgh, Senior Planner, and Britney Quail, Heritage Planner, summarized both the report and the On Table memorandum dated May 15, 2018, regarding the Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area Incentives Program. A draft Zoning Amendment bylaw was presented to the Commission that would implement two of the incentives identified for implementation in the short term: 1) an increase in Floor Space Ratio of 0.2; and 2) the ability to transfer unused density from the principal house to a laneway or carriage house to allow a laneway or carriage house of up to 958 square feet.

Ms. Quail provided background information about the Heritage Conservation Area and the Incentives Program, including the intent and process of the program. Ms. Roxburgh outlined the staff proposed Implementation Framework that was outlined in the report to the commission, and provided a summary of Council's revisions to the Framework, including the direction to not move forward with the implementation of larger laneway houses or stratification of the principal dwelling.

Ms. Quail and Ms. Roxburgh provided a summary of the four incentives that were endorsed by Council for implementation in the short term. Direction was requested from the Commission regarding the two incentives that required implementation through an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw. Ms. Quail outlined the next steps in the process following the presentation to the Commission.

In response to questions from the Commission, Ms. Roxburgh and Ms. Quail provided the following information:

- Staff are looking for the APC to comment on the recommendations regarding the increase in FSR and the ability to transfer unused density to a laneway or carriage house;
- Through the development of the laneway and carriage house policy, staff have addressed the impacts these structures would have on tree retention and open space by recommending that they replace existing accessory structures and by allowing the policy to be flexible so that relaxations are negotiated in order to allow the construction of a house to be shifted on the lot if a tree could be saved;
- In terms of stormwater management, the City has adopted a citywide integrated stormwater management plan which would be rolled out for single family dwellings over the short and long term, and which would apply to the Heritage Conservation Area;

- The limit of dwellings on a property is set by the Official Community Plan (OCP), and the single-detached dwelling designation was maintained in the Queen's Park neighbourhood, meaning that three dwellings per property is the limit, albeit different configurations are possible;
- The only way to change the density to greater than three dwellings on a property is through the Heritage Revitalization Agreement process;
- Council endorsed that the incentives be implemented outright;
- The FSR of a property would be confirmed before consideration of an addition, and if, for example, a property is at or above an FSR of 0.7 already, no additional FSR would be granted.

The Chair called for any speakers from the public.

Linda Peteherych, Resident, enquired how many potential laneway houses could be built in Queen's Park.

Ms. Roxburgh replied that through the previous adoption of the laneway or carriage house program, all single family homes are entitled to build such a structure, however not all properties will qualify due to the requirements.

Ron Spence, Resident, expressed his support for the Queen's Park HCA, and protecting the neighbourhood and trees, however he had concerns about protecting personal privacy and the overlook that two-storey laneway or carriage houses may have on neighbouring properties. He asked that privacy be included in the conditions to build a laneway or carriage house and suggested one-storey structures as a solution.

James Jamieson, Resident, expressed concern about the potential costs that may be incurred in order to take advantage of the proposed incentives, as renovation work can be costly on older heritage style homes. He also stated that it is difficult to see the benefits of the incentives when it appears that they are primarily designed to increase density in the neighbourhood.

Larry Church, Resident, expressed his support for the Queen's Park HCA, however he was concerned about increased densification in the area and the need to preserve the heritage nature of the neighbourhood for the benefit of future generations. He recommended that the current layout, street grid, trees and lot sizes be maintained in order to protect the park-like nature of the area, and to combat the risk that the neighbourhood would lose its character-defining elements with densification through the addition of laneway and carriage houses.

Paul Turton, Resident, recommended that all incentives be considered and voted on at the same time, as his opinion was that they are not mutually exclusive and should not be separated.

Larry Church, Resident, reiterated his concern about the potential erosion of the Queen's Park area with increased density and subsequent rentals, as the current infrastructure would not be able to handle the increase in population.

James Jamieson, Resident, was in favour of the incentives as they may help with the valuations in Queen's Park and the increase in Floor Space Ratio may bring consistencies into the neighbourhood.

Kathleen Langstroth, Resident and Queen's Park Resident Association President, addressed Queen's Park housing prices, noting that a recent presentation to Council had showed no loss in value in the neighbourhood. Rather, it's been shown that the implementation of the Heritage Conservation Area has attracted buyers to the neighbourhood because of its stability.

Linda Peteherych, Resident, discussed falling house prices, and stated that she would be happy to see a decrease in valuations in order for future generations to be able to purchase property. She was of the opinion that there is no need for new housing to be built, due to the high prices and amount of vacant homes in the region, and that doubling the density of Queen's Park would destroy the neighbourhood.

Ron Spence, Resident, endorsed the idea that the package of incentives be looked at as a whole and that the vote to implement the recommended incentives be delayed. He recommended that further consultation be completed and that the public be given the chance to vote on the package.

The Chair called a further three times for any more comments from the public.

In response to questions from the Commission, Ms. Roxburgh and Ms. Quail provided the following information:

- The maximum amount of three dwellings on a property is set by the OCP, and is not under discussion at this time;
- The proposed incentives are targeted at reducing the economic impacts of owning a heritage home;
- The changes to the OCP, which was adopted after the HCA, is the vehicle which entitles property owners across the City to build laneway and carriage houses and to transfer some existing density from the principal house to the carriage or laneway house;
- The incentives being proposed will give property owners added flexibility to decide how to use the density on their property;

- Without the density transfer, the current maximum density of a laneway or carriage house is 10% of site area (and can transfer up to 5% of site area, for a total of 15% of site area) or to a maximum of 958 sq. ft., whichever is less. Therefore for the majority of sites, the limiting factor is the site area;
- The City's plans to support increased densification and neighbourhood amenities are addressed through the OCP, including through supporting the Uptown area as a commercial core, and through the Master Transportation Plan, including by improving pedestrian and bike movements and advocating to TransLink for increases to transit services.

The Commission thanked the public for their participation and noted the following comments:

- Even if the City passes the incentives program, it does not mean that every property owner in the HCA will take advantage of the incentives, nor will their neighbour;
- Within the APC package, over 100 pages of comments were included from the survey and open house, which reflected common themes put forward by members of the public at the meeting;
- It would be beneficial to view the incentives program through the filter of it allowing families to make changes to their houses to create a variety of additional housing types (for example rental suites, in-law suites) to make it more affordable to live in heritage homes, while protecting those heritage homes all at the same time; and,
- The long term incentives seem to require more consideration, therefore the two-phased approach of approval seems reasonable.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommend that Council support the incentive of an increase in Floor Space Ratio of 0.2 for protected properties in the Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area.

CARRIED.

Christa MacArthur voted in opposition of the motion.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommend that Council support the incentive of the ability to transfer unused density from the principal house to a laneway or carriage house to allow a laneway or carriage house of up to 958 square feet for protected properties in the Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area.

CARRIED.

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

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Correspondence regarding Queen’s Park Heritage Conservation Area Incentives Program

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission receive On-Table Item 1.

CARRIED

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

8.0 NEXT MEETING

The next Advisory Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 2018 in Council Chamber, City Hall.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Andrew Hull
Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk