

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
March 21, 2018 at 3:00 pm

Present: Graham Gidden, Cynthia Hildebrand, Robert McLeod, Tony James (Chair)

Regrets: Jerry Blake, Keith Davidoff, Cory Lee, Erica Sangster, Gary Smith

Staff: Neil Findlow, Senior Planner; Shari Holmes-Saltzman, Manager of Current Planning;
Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – February 7, 2018

Due to a lack of quorum, the minutes were not adopted.

CASE #2018/04

Application by BC Housing to rezone the site, to a new CD-6NV (Comprehensive Development Nigel Valley) Zone. The properties currently have a range of applicable zones including single family (RS-6), multi-family (RT-2, RA-3, RM-5), assembly (P-1), or residential personal care (P-3, RP-3).

Legal Description:

- **Lot 11, Block 2, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 1375** (828 Vernon Avenue)
- **Lot 12, Block 2, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 1375** (832 Vernon Avenue)
- **Lot 22, Block 1, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 1375** (837 Darwin Avenue)
- **Lot 23, Block 1, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 1375** (833 Darwin Avenue)
- **Lot B (DD 228678I), Block 1, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 1375, Except Part in Plan 23288** (841 Darwin Avenue)
- **Lot 1, Sections 9 and 33, Victoria District, Plan 23288, Except those Parts in Plans 24291, 26904 and 27771** (846 Nigel Avenue)
- **Lot A, Section 9, Victoria District, Plan 24291** (880 Vernon Avenue)
- **Lot 1, Sections 9 and 33, Victoria District, Plan 25469** (880 Vernon Avenue)
- **Lot A, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 26904** (801 Darwin Avenue)
- **Lot A, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan 27771** (813 Darwin Avenue)
- **Lot A, Sections 9 and 33, Victoria District, Plan 40348** (843 Nigel Avenue)
- **Lot 1, Section 33, Victoria District, Plan VIP52049** (821 Nigel Avenue)

Planning File: DPR00665; REZ00581

Planner: Neil Findlow, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

The Senior Planner provided an overview of the process to date as follows:

- The application is to rezone the Nigel Valley site, which comprises 12 separate properties, to a new CD-6NV (Comprehensive Development Nigel Valley) Zone to permit phased redevelopment of the properties to accommodate both affordable/supportive housing and market housing. The properties, which currently contain a total of 186 units of affordable and social housing and support services for persons with special needs, are reaching the end of their useful life. The proposal would increase the total number of residential units within Nigel Valley to 651 units.

- The applicant is BC Housing who is coordinating the development proposal on behalf of the following agencies:
 - Provincial Rental Housing Corporation
 - Broadmead Care Society
 - Capital Mental Health Association
 - Garth Homer Foundation
 - The Corporation of the District of Saanich
- In addition to residential the proposal would include:
 - Expansion of facilities available for programming space used for clients in either day care programs or residing on site
 - Introduction of small scale commercial activity
 - Addition of a neighbourhood park
 - Addition of a public plaza
- A Development Permit is also requested that would incorporate the Nigel Valley Neighbourhood Plan and development guidelines for the whole site to guide the redevelopment.
- A Master Development Agreement is proposed to guide future development and secure various commitments respecting servicing, amenities and processes.
- A Housing Agreement is also proposed to establish occupancy criteria and affordable rental rates for the non-market housing in accordance with the mandates for each of the participating agencies.
- Future development applications would include subdivision applications to realign property boundaries, as well as dedicate land for roadway and park. When completed, nine new properties would be created, each representing a future development site as well as a neighbourhood park and a public plaza.
- Through extensive consultation BC Housing has obtained approval in principle from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to undertake changes along Vernon Avenue. Proposed changes include restructuring the right-hand lane to provide wider sidewalks, boulevard trees, cycling lanes, and a new mid-block pedestrian cross-walk.
- The proposed CD-6NV Zone and Development Permit have been drafted to capture the anticipated density in terms of the number of residential units and gross floor area desired by each user group. As each owner/agency secures financing in order to move forward with the redevelopment of their sites, detailed site/building design would be considered through the Development Permit Amendment process.
- The new zone would divide the site into Development Areas and would contain regulations which would be applicable throughout the site as well as regulations specific to each Development Area, including the permitted uses and density, building height and setbacks and required vehicle and bicycle parking.
- The proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan which focuses the majority of future growth to centres and villages and supports the establishment of more compact, walkable neighbourhoods that address a variety of local resident needs.
- The Nigel Valley is part of the Uptown Major Centre which includes a diverse range of regional commercial uses. In accordance with the OCP, the proposed development would provide a range of housing types that can accommodate people of different ages, income, family structures, and physical and social needs. It would allow people with special needs to become or remain part of the community in new, customized accommodations.
- This proposal fosters the development of a community that is safe, diverse and inclusive and where social interaction, physical activity, sense of place, and neighbourliness are actively promoted and supported.
- Redevelopment of the Nigel Valley would support future growth of the Uptown Centre with a greater mix of housing choices, transformed streetscapes and complete streets, new public amenities and open spaces, and enhanced walkability within a vibrant urban centre.
- A great deal of discussion was held between the applicant and staff about required setback.

- To foster the objective of creating a sense of place that is inclusive, encourages social interaction and active streetscapes the required setbacks in the proposed CD-6NV Zone support a more urban design. The setbacks, which range from 1.0 m to 6.0 m, were requested by the applicant based on pre-design work undertaken by the applicant and individual owners/agencies for each site, in consultation with the project architects.
- The proposed setbacks are less than those initially proposed by staff, which ranged from 4.0 m to 6.0 m. The staff proposal was based on the need within each site to accommodate such features as accessible building entrances, patios and gardens; short term bicycle parking; seating areas; landscaping; and rain gardens for stormwater management. It was anticipated that variances could be considered on a site-by-site basis through the Development Permit Amendment process when detailed designs for each development site became available.
- Relying on Council to approve variances at the detailed design stage is not an acceptable option for the individual owners/agencies. Individual owners/agencies are advancing their plans for development of their sites, and securing financing, based on the maximum achievable gross floor area which is influenced by the required setbacks. As a result, they require certainty about the gross floor area that is permitted.
- Based on detailed pre-design work undertaken to-date, the applicant is confident that municipal interests can be accommodated on each site with the setbacks reflected in the draft CD-6NV Zone.
- The Director of Planning has been waiting until after this meeting to take a final position on this matter. Based on other successful projects with similar setbacks, including the Selkirk Waterfront development, the pre-design work undertaken for individual sites, and the need of individual owners/agencies for certainty about the gross floor area that may be achievable for their site, Planning is leaning towards moving the application forward for consideration by Council based on the applicants proposed setbacks.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Senior Planner noted:

- In terms of Zoning, the overall design will be looked at and zoning conditions will be part of the overall Development Permit. As each site is developed, Development Permit Amendments will be made. These will come back to the Panel for consideration.
- Future variances will be built into the Development Permit and be part of the master development agreement. It will be recommended to Council that these agreements be made available to the public prior to the Public Hearing, and also that final reading be withheld until the agreement is registered.

Comments from applicant / owner / applicant representative(s):

Lauren English, BC Housing; Paul de Greef, Murdoch de Greef Landscape Architecture; and Frank D'Ambrosio, D'Ambrosio Architecture and Urbanism were present to speak to the application. The following was noted:

- Steering Committee Member Organizations include BC Housing, Island Community Mental Health (ICMH), Garth Homer Foundation, Broadmead Care Society, Greater Victoria Housing Society.
- Stakeholders include District of Saanich, Island Health, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mount View Colquitz Community Association, Gorge Tillicum Community Association, Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association and Community Living BC.
- This is a nine-acre site with five different operating agencies. A summary of assets along with existing and proposed residences were provided as follows:
 - BC Housing: 79 existing residences and proposing 168 residences
 - ICMH: 63 existing residences and proposing 133 residences
 - Garth Homer: 0 existing residences and proposing 85 residences (non-market)
 - GVHS: 18 existing residences and proposing 67 residences
 - Broadmead Care: 26 existing residences and proposing 90 residences (non-market)
 - Market housing: 0 existing residences and proposing 190 residences

- This is a precedent-setting project with the convergence of health care agencies. Under the umbrella of BC Housing they can act as one.
- Vernon Avenue is a street that isolates the community from the new urban centre at Uptown.
- The vision is to create an inclusive neighbourhood of housing and care that seamlessly integrates a variety of uses to transform lives, offering an environment for all and a hub of social activity which connects with the wider community.
- Planning principles include a compact walkable neighbourhood; integrating and connecting to the surrounding community; more types of housing, care and support services; a better transportation network; natural area spaces; a renewed and inclusive neighbourhood; green buildings and infrastructure, equitable land allocation; support community social enterprise through integration of commercial land uses; and a flexible development phasing strategy.
- The site is well connected but there are challenges. Lochside Trail and Vernon Avenue are the gateways to the project. They tried to join Nigel Avenue to Darwin Avenue but there is not enough room to make the Nigel Avenue right-of-way any bigger.
- The majority of buildings would be 6 storeys in height. A maximum of 16 storeys is allowed.
- Community engagement has occurred over the last three years.

The Landscaping plan was discussed:

- The area is accessible; there is an opportunity to create open spaces on the site and a trail and lake sit nearby. A proposed plaza/square would give opportunity for connection.
- Some protected and non-protected trees are to be removed. About 255 urban trees will be well spaced on the site.
- Stormwater management was explained; piped rainwater and raingardens will address water issues. A cross section indicating how raingardens drain to city drain systems was provided.
- A park is proposed that starts at Darwin Avenue (at the big Oak tree) down to Nigel Avenue; this may be developed into a playground.
- They have asked the Ministry to consider closing a lane along Vernon Avenue that is not well used; this would provide new frontage for the development. A mid-block pedestrian controlled walkway would be installed and there would be separate walking and bicycle lanes, making this a more pleasant street frontage.
- The biggest ask is the building frontages. It is not known yet how close they will be, but the proposed setbacks are viable.
- They will be guided by Development Permits for each site. There will be lots of public input and applications through this Advisory Design Panel for each building. The guidelines have changed over the years. Greater details are needed now in terms of separation, mobility issues, lighting, fencing and walls, parking.
- The tall buildings will be visually appealing and will be the gateway to Saanich.
- The design details are proven in terms of raingardens and function; they know they can landscape this successfully.

The applicant responded to various Panel questions. It was noted that the northeast section behind the curved building is a future connector and is an amenity to the housing development that could be for private use or as a recreational area/tennis court, etc. This area does need a connection and they did try to purchase a house to complete the connection.

Comments from the Panel:

- The overall project is appreciated.
- It is evident that the 11 houses that are left on the street would be compatible for inclusion in future development.
- In general there is a lot of massing. The parks are good but it feels like more greenspace is

needed.

- The proposed water management is good. The proposed mid-block cross walk is good.
- Have they considered electric vehicle plug-ins for both cars and scooters.

- The 5-storey height for buildings along Darwin Avenue (behind the existing houses) seems abrupt but it is recognized that there is an extreme elevation change of one or more storeys already at the back of the houses.
- Question was raised about adequate parking for the development.
- With the amount of residents being over 500 people, is it possible to have a commercial business in the area (eg. café, art gallery etc.).
- The setbacks and buildings define a strong street edge.
- Have they considered contacting BC Transit for programs such as the Eco-Pass to assist with the need for parking.

In response to a question about raising the proposed height; the Senior Planner advised that the Official Community Plan limit for buildings is 18 storeys.

The Manager of Current Planning noted that typically transit passes are negotiated by the developer and are site specific. In addition to public transit, some developers also consider the MODO car share program.

CONSENSUS:

As there was no quorum, a formal motion could not be made. Consensus of Panel members is that this is an important project that has been well thought out. Members would like to see this project move forward with the setbacks as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary