

**MINUTES**  
**MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY**

Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers

Via Microsoft Teams

April 11, 2022 at 1 p.m.

Present: Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair); Mayor Fred Haynes; Councillor Karen Harper; Councillor Rebecca Mersereau.

Staff: Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer; Shari Holmes-Saltzman, Manager of Current Planning; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Pam Hartling, Housing Planning and Policy Manager; and Nancy Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerk.

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**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the minutes of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting held February 28, 2022 be adopted."**

**CARRIED**

**RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE**

**MOVED by Mayor Haynes and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the correspondence be received for information."**

**CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Interim Policy on Increasing Height and Density in Corridors**

The manager of Community Planning presented to the Committee (Powerpoint on file) and the following was noted:

- This item is a follow-up to RA Zoning discussions at the March 11, 2022 Council meeting.
- The report to Council included a recommendation of an interim policy to encourage purpose-built rentals and increase height and density in major corridors by considering buildings of up to six storeys as an appropriate land use and building form.
- Staff displayed a map where the interim policy is intended to apply (slide 4 of presentation).
- The interim policy would be in place for approximately one year until the Strategic Official Community Plan (OCP) update is completed.
- Public engagement will occur as part of the Strategic OCP update.

Committee discussions ensued and the following was noted:

- The proposed interim policy and relevant OCP amendments would apply to new development applications as well as applications that are in-progress.
- It was expressed that six storey buildings are low and may not be an efficient use of resources.
- There is some risk to existing rental housing being converted to market strata when increasing height/density as a result of the proposed interim policy.
- Currently, typical development applications range from four to six storeys.

- There may not be an appreciable benefit if the policy allows for eight storey building height.
- Staff are currently seeing mostly six storey development proposals. Anything beyond that involves different building code requirements and structural elements with significant cost implications.
- Staff are generally supportive of parking variances, especially in projects where transportation demand management strategies are proposed.
- Proposals for building height of seven to 11 storeys is economically unviable for developers (until it is doubled).
- The rental market needs a competitive advantage. One option might be to increase the neighborhood designation from four to six storeys with offerings for rental tenure or below market units.
- The permissive policy should include an option to allow building height of up to 12 storeys in the corridors shown on the map in the staff presentation if the project delivers rental tenure or below market units.
- There is no harm in making a more robust and bold policy. The market may choose not to respond.
- Staff are supportive of and prioritize proposals for non-profit housing developments.
- There will be a Report to Council on April 25<sup>th</sup> outlining that Public Hearings are not required if an application is consistent with the OCP, based on new legislative amendments.
- This new legislation would not apply to the proposed interim policy; however, once the interim policy is built into the OCP update, it would then apply to the updated OCP.
- The interim policy should include a reference to the OCP's "bonus density" policy.
- Current in-stream applicants would have the option to revise their application to make use of the proposed interim policy.
- This is viewed as a significant policy change and public consultation is encouraged.
- It will be important to define "below-market" units.
- Neighborhood designation in the OCP refers to all areas within the Urban Containment Boundary that are outside a centre or a village.
- The proposed motions clarify what's already in the OCP which has had ample consultation.
- There has also been community engagement through the Housing Strategy.
- The proposed motions address the housing crisis we are experiencing.

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That while the work to support a strategic update of the Official Community Plan is in progress, Council is open to considering proposals for targeted Official Community Plan amendments in support of residential/mixed-use residential buildings of up to six storeys as an appropriate land use and building form along major corridors, and up to 12 storeys for purpose-built rental tenure or secured below-market units (defined as at least 10% below market rates for at least 10% of units for at least 10 years) in locations noted on map 2 of the staff report dated March 10, 2022, subject to an evaluation of project details, urban design elements, and site constraints."**

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED**

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor Harper: "That Council is open to considering proposals for targeted Official Community Plan amendments in support of residential/mixed-use residential buildings of up to six storeys as an appropriate land use and building form for neighbourhood**

designated areas, which currently allow for four storeys, if they are in close proximity to transit and services, and if either rental tenure or below market units are secured (defined as at least 10% below market rates for at least 10% of units for at least 10 years), subject to an evaluation of project details, urban design elements, and site constraints.”

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

**DIGITIZATION UPDATE & IN-CAMERA MEETING**

MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: “That the remainder of the Agenda and the entirety of the In-Camera Agenda be deferred at the call of the Chair.”

CARRIED

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: “That the meeting be adjourned at 2:42 p.m.”

CARRIED

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Councillor Zac de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary