

MINUTES
Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply
via Microsoft Teams
January 10, 2022

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

Staff: Brent Reems, Interim Acting CAO; Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning; Shari Holmes-Saltzman, Manager of Current Planning; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk; Nancy Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Councillor de Vries called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Mayor Haynes and Seconded by K. Harper: "That the Minutes of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting held November 29, 2021, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. Update of New Planning Positions

The Director of Planning and the Manager of Current Planning provided an overview of staffing including new planning positions and auxiliary assistance. In response to questions from the Committee, staff noted:

- The size of the Planning staff complement is difficult to compare with comparably sized municipalities. In some cases, the Subdivision Approving Officer doesn't form part of the Planning department. It also depends on the nature of the community, its culture and processes.
- Once the staff vacancies are filled, it is believed that within a year, the Planning department will be able to track the process changes.
- It is expected that some level of increase in application processing will take place once the new Planner and Manager of Operational and Service Quality positions are filled.
- It's important to note that other departments are involved in the application process and they too are experiencing workload pressures.
- The Planning department has done informal research to compare with City of Victoria application numbers and processes. The City of Victoria's Planning department doesn't handle subdivision. To perform a formal review and assessment would require ample resources and time.
- KPMG's report included a survey of other similar sized municipalities' structures and processes. This helped frame the suite of recommendations for Saanich.
- Arrangements will be made to provide an update to the committee on digitization.

2. Residential Units and Lots

The Director of Planning and the Manager of Current Planning presented to the Committee:

- There have been questions about the applications requiring Public Hearing and concerns about the time impact of the process, as well as questions about the number of residential units that are being created.
- The number of active Development Permits, Garden Suite Development Permits, and Subdivision applications was presented, as well as the numbers requiring a Public Hearing.
- Staff are following up with applicants and closing files that are no longer active.
- In 2021 staff brought a report to Council noting legislative changes that allow local government to not hold a Public Hearing if an application conforms with the OCP. Staff are working on a follow-up report to Council.
- The number of completed applications from January 1, 2019 to December 14, 2021 are as follows:
 - 2449 units created through development permit applications
 - 31 units created through garden suite applications
 - 104 lots created through subdivision applications. Most subdivision applications are also incorporating secondary suites.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff noted:

- 2019 was an unusual year in terms of number of units approved as a result of UVic student housing and Nigel Valley developments.
- Staff are looking at streamlining the 10% frontage waiver requests that Council currently considers.
- The new legislation allows further delegated authority to staff for minor variances.
- The conversion rate from the Development Permit application to a successful Building Permit and final product fluctuates.
- Building permit data is a better indicator of what future housing projections should be.
- Projects don't typically get completed within the same calendar year.
- Staff have not seen significant changes in average application timelines. Timelines encompass all stages of application including reviews by other departments.
- Generating units in a timely manner is within the District's control and remains the focus.
- Affordable housing is also a key focus and is outlined in the District's housing strategy.
- Increased student housing on campus at UVic may free up units; however, it is unsure how much of a relief this will make on the housing market. The nature of universities is also changing with more remote learning.
- Staff can track volume of units being created in the Housing Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation report.
- The estimated demand up to 2025 is 600 units per year; however, this doesn't speak to the types of units needed.

The Acting Chief Administrative Officer presented to the Committee on Building Permit statistics:

- Updated total building permits issued:
 - 2018: 747
 - 2019: 695
 - 2020: 674
 - 2021: 753 – most active year in the last four years
- The number of dwelling units associated with those building permits, not including dwelling units that have been demolished:

- 2018: 536
- 2019: 115
- 2020: 149
- 2021: 570
- These numbers are fairly accurate as opposed to the development permit numbers that don't always end up being built out.
- The building permits for the student housing (UVic) were issued in 2019 and are not captured in the data. The Acting Chief Administrative Officer will look into how these units have been characterized.

In response to questions from the Standing Committee, the Acting Chief Administrative Officer noted:

- Additional information can be gathered with regards to occupancy data in relation to building permits issued.

3. Draft Cadboro Bay Local Area Plan

MOVED by Mayor Haynes and Seconded by K. Harper: "That the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply hold a supplemental meeting in order to deal with the outstanding item of the Draft Cadboro Bay Local Area Plan presentation and discussion".

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Mayor Haynes, "That the meeting be adjourned at 10:06 a.m."

CARRIED

Councillor Zac de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary