

**Regional District of Nanaimo  
Summary of the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan Review  
Citizen's Committee Meeting Held on Wednesday, April 14, 2010 at 6:30pm  
At the North Cedar Improvement District Hall  
2100 Yellow Point Road**

Joe Burnett	Chairperson
Jill Maibach	Committee Member
Jack Anderson	Committee Member
Garry Laird	Committee Member
Brian Collen	Committee Member
Joanne McLeod	Committee Member
Henrik Kriberg	Committee Member
Chris Pagan	Committee Member
Geoffrey Macaulay	Committee Member
Chris Midgley	Manager of Energy and Sustainability
Lisa Bhopalsingh	Senior Planner
Greg Keller	Senior Planner
Stephen Boogaards	Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by the Chair. There were approximately 15 people in attendance.

**MINUTES**

The Chair asked the Committee for a motion to adopt the summary of the March 8, 2010 meeting.

MOVED Henrik Kriberg, SECONDED Garry Laird, that the summary of the Area 'A' Citizen's Committee meeting held on March 8, 2010 be adopted.

CARRIED

**SOUTH WELLINGTON RURAL COMMUNITY LAND USE DESIGNATION**

Greg Keller provided a presentation on the South Wellington Rural Community Land Use Designation. He explained that a subgroup of the Citizen's Committee was formed to discuss the options for South Wellington, working in conjunction with the South Wellington and Area Community Association (SWACA). He explained that the community appears to be polarised but has come to agreement that services that provide for the needs of residents and to keep people in the community would be desirable.

Four options were identified for South Wellington which ranged from small scale changes to recognising the community as a new urban node. The group came up with an option for a new land use designation to allow for rural services within a restricted community water and sewer service area. Mr. Keller explained that the proposed option would not facilitate additional development beyond what is supported without community water and sewer services. The committee discussed the level of community support for the proposed option. Committee members present at the SWACA meetings felt that there was support both for change and no

change. The members agreed that the option for South Wellington should be presented in the draft to receive comments from the wider community.

MOVED Garry Laird, SECONDED Jill Maibach that the South Wellington Rural Land Use Designation map 8.10 be included in the draft Official Community Plan.

CARRIED

The committee members discussed the implications of community sewer and if it is possible to be provided to the community. Mr. Keller clarified that under the proposed option community sewer would not facilitate additional development since the lands in question are not within an existing or proposed Urban Containment Boundary. He also stated that it may be difficult to provide the service as it is very expensive.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Lisa Bhopalsingh, RDN Senior Planner and Chris Midgley, RDN Manger of Energy and Sustainability**

Greg Keller introduced Lisa Bhopalsingh and Chris Midgley. He explained that the committee has requested the opportunity for more discussion on the sustainability checklist. The draft Official Community Plan includes policy in support of a sustainability checklist and incentives. Mr. Keller explained the draft Official Community Plan also supports green building and energy conservation.

Chris Midgley explained that none of the information presented has yet been presented to the RDN Board and was only for discussion purposes. He explained what constitutes green buildings. Characteristics of green building may be internal features, external features, siting or transportation. These features may be considered in a checklist. There are three scales for checklists:

- Community scale – Such as locating the home in the Urban Containment Boundary to reduce transportation related emissions or create population thresholds for district energy systems;
- Building scale – Such as house orientation for solar gain, improved performance for insulation, more efficient appliances, or renewable energies; and
- Human scale – Changing people’s behaviour such as lowering the thermostat or shorter showers.

Mr. Midgley explained the benefits and impacts of green building through three scenarios. These are buildings that meet only code compliance, buildings that meet green building standards, then those that meet green building standards and are in compact communities. He explained on some issues that the benefits from the green building and compact communities scenarios were very close, such as water conservation. Other issues, such as energy and emissions, the compact communities scenario performed much better. This is because smaller homes use much less energy and residents are less dependent on driving.

The committee discussed the meaning of the green building certification programs. Mr. Midgley explained that LEED and Built Green were the two common certification programs and often are

used as policy tools by local governments. He explained that a checklist may be beneficial so that developers and designers are aware of the green building options before they get too far in the development process.

Mr. Midgley suggested that Local governments must also verify that the building is performing as proposed. The RDN should not give out any incentives until it knows that the building does function properly. The group discussed if monitoring could consider the degradation of the building and if the RDN can offer free energy inspections as a way to monitor existing homes. The group also discussed if the sustainability checklist could be appropriate to the rural context.

Lisa Bhopalsingh explained that they are only at the research stages of developing a checklist which parallels the work being done by the sub-group of the Citizen's Committee. She explained that there was limited new development in Area 'A', only 1% of the housing stock last year. The region only has partial enforcement of the building codes. She also identified the large number of existing homes in need of major repair in the area and the breakdown of emissions in the RDN.

Mrs. Bhopalsingh stated that the intention of the checklist is to get developers to go beyond the building code baseline. Education, regulations and incentives may be used in a checklist to achieve these sustainability goals.

- Education - Voluntary checklist where the RDN may help developers access information;
- Regulations – Set minimum standard for minimal environmental impacts. Official Community Plan policies may suggest what to encourage in the checklist guidelines; and
- Incentives – Could be fast-tracking, refunding applications fees or development cost charges, tax reductions, density bonusing, amenity zoning or formal recognition.

Chris Midgley provided context for the four approaches to the sustainability checklist:

- Revised status quo – The checklist would remain as an educational tool, but only more user friendly. The option has low cost but may have no real impact;
- Fast-tracking – The checklist would be more regulatory through the establishment of two new development permit areas. The process would be expedited for green building projects. It is enforceable but the financial incentive is minimal;
- Everyone pays – The money is generated through tax increases to decrease permit fees for green buildings. Incentives are only given out after efficiency is proven. It is not a feasible approach; and
- Fee plus rebate – All building permit applications initially have higher fees and a rebate is offered once the green building has been proven to have higher performance.

Lisa Bhopalsingh explained that the sustainability checklist could be an educational guide, tick list, open ended questions or scored checklist. She then provided case studies of educational sustainability checklists from Salt Spring Island, Ucluelet and Kamloops. The group discussed the program for the toilet rebate and using a similar incentive program in relation to the checklist. Mr. Midgley suggested that it is very specific and would represent a gradual improvement. Mrs. Bhopalsingh suggested that other jurisdictions have incentives not tied to the checklist. Saanich offers developers 1 hour of free consultation with a green building expert. Both Saanich and Prince George have offered rebates tied to energy audits, though with varying success.

## **Jack Anderson and sustainability checklist sub-committee**

Jack Anderson explained the draft checklist that the sub-committee has put together. Mr. Anderson expressed the group's concern that 30 years to implement the changes from the Official Community Plan will be too late. These changes need to be realised much sooner. He explained that the checklist would need to be incentive based and mandatory to complete. The checklist is a means for RDN staff to evaluate residential proposals in a way that is tied to a realistic score. This will entice green developers to come to the area and discourage non-green developers. Area 'A' is next door to the City of Nanaimo which has a pro-development council that supports development that would score very low. There should be a checklist using the 'triple bottom line' concept so there is consideration given to each environment, social and economic.

Mr. Anderson suggested that the checklist needs to fit the context of each local area. It is very difficult for one checklist to apply everywhere. There is a big distinction between a farming community like Area 'A' and urban community like Area 'G'. The weighting of the checklist may vary by electoral area, so that farming may have a high score in Area 'A' but low in Area 'G'. He expressed his appreciation to all the volunteers who worked on the draft checklist. He also emphasized that the challenge is to make sure the checklist has criteria important to development; it uses a mix of incentives and disincentives, that it does have an objective means to score it and that the development is evaluated for performance after it is built.

The **Chair** expressed the committee's appreciation to each Lisa Bhopalsingh, Chris Midgley and Jack Anderson for their presentations.

## **ROUNDTABLE**

The group discussed the next step in the drafting of the Official Community Plan. The committee members expressed support for making a workable sustainability checklist. Greg Keller explained that the sustainability checklist is a separate process and that the draft Official Community Plan will be brought to the public through a series of open houses. Mr. Keller stated that the group still needs to discuss the airport, Official Community Plan implementation, and affordable housing, the last outstanding issues identified by the committee.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Certified correct by:

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Director Joe Burnett, Committee Chairperson