



Meeting Record

Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Review Community Working Group Meeting

Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 6:30 pm
Lighthouse Community Hall

Members Present:

Steve Biro	Tony Botica	Candace Cowan
Jim Crawford	Theresa Crawford	George Dussault
Dianne Eddy	Nelson Eddy	Jerry Flynn
Bill Friesen	Murray Hamilton	Margaret Healey
Ed Hughes	Marci Katz	Don Milburn
Lee Melnychuk	Shirley Petrie	Dave Simpson
Mac Snobelen	Dick Stubbs	Greta Taylor
Lynette Twiggee	Len Walker	

Guests Present: There were 27 guests present, of which the following wrote their names on the sign-up sheet.

Zoe Fiddler	Jim Fiddler	L. McLeod
Joy Zerke	Craig Kerstens	Thomas Plensky
Wade Babcock	Skyeanne Jenkins	Jense Johansen
Barry Bevilacqua	Manfred Winter	Bob Leggett

Others Present: Paul Thompson, RDN Manager of Long Range Planning
Courtney Simpson, RDN Senior Planner
Jamai Schile, RDN Planner
Bill Veenhof, Electoral Area 'H' Director

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW OF AGENDA

Director Veenhof called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm and introduced the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) staff present. Planner Simpson welcomed everyone to the meeting, and acknowledged the general public in attendance. She explained that tonight is a Working Group meeting open to the

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general public to observe, and that on June 22, 2016 is an Open House where input from the community at large is welcomed. She described the broad community engagement undertaken so far and that the Working Group meetings are just one part of a larger public engagement effort for this project.

2. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MEETING RECORD OF APRIL 19, 2016

There were no revisions requested to the meeting record. The meeting record of April 19, 2016 was adopted by general consent.

3. PRESENTATION OF MAY 3, 2016 OPEN HOUSE WITH THE BOWSER PARENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Planner Simpson gave a presentation on the May 3, 2016 open house that was co-promoted with the Bowser Parents Advisory Council and included children's activities and a hot dog BBQ. She provided some highlights of the input received, and noted there would be a written report on the event available shortly. She thanked the four Working Group members who volunteered to help with the open house and the BBQ.

Planner Simpson invited any Working Group members who were at the Open House to provide additional comments and reflections. There were comments and some discussion about the need to attract and retain younger residents to the community versus a preference for a seniors-oriented community. There were comments about the value of the school to the community and a suggestion that Official Community Plan (OCP) meetings are held at the school. Planner Simpson noted that the RDN has attempted to hold meetings at the school but so far it has not been a good match for the school and the RDN.

There were questions from the audience about why the OCP is being reviewed. Director Veenhof responded that during his election campaign he heard from the community that it was needed, and that it is typical to review an OCP at this interval, being 12 years since it was last reviewed.

Planner Simpson reviewed some background on the project to bring first-time attendees to a Working Group meeting up to speed. On the topic of the postcard that was distributed in January to all mailboxes in Area 'H' prior to the first Community Meeting and to advertise the survey, it was noted by a Working Group member that anyone who opts out of "junk mail" with Canada Post would not have received it, and there could be many people who did not receive it.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF VILLAGE CENTRES

Planner Simpson provided a presentation on the topic of development outside village centres and summarized the key input so far. She asked for comments on the list of key input, if there was anything missing or anything not characterized correctly.

One member noted that a rezoning application was in progress for the lands at the Horne Lake / Highway 19 intersection, that the rezoning does not change the use from residential but it only to allow subdivision, but that a change to the use of these properties could be discussed as part of the OCP review process.

Paul Christensen, of the Spider Lake Community Residents Association, said that he had collected comments from his community on how they wish to see future land use at the Horne Lake intersection.

He noted that there are comments in favour of change and those opposed, and he provided a written copy to the RDN.

A Working Group member noted that shellfish harvesting and processing is important to local economy. Where should that occur? Shouldn't we be talking about that now? Is Deep Bay a location for processors? Processing occurs on land (agricultural land) but not necessarily near raw product located, which is located in the water.

One member noted that there should be a buffer between industrial and residential use.

Planner Simpson noted that the current OCP already includes language about the protection of the sensitive aquifers, which would be apply to new industrial lands/ uses.

A Working Group member noted that there is a lack of light industrial land in the Bowser Village Centre so that a business may be forced to leave Area 'H' if they want to expand their business. Planner Simpson clarified that there are additional areas designed "commercial mixed use" in the Bowser Village Centre where light industrial is permitted, and that a rezoning to light industrial is supported by the OCP in these areas.

A Working Group member asked how do light industrial uses fit in with the village center. Light industrial is generally considered acceptable next to residential uses. If there are exceptions what would those be?

A member of the public noted they are supportive of new businesses and that they would like people to keep an open mind as to what they might be to encourage a mix of local businesses.

Working Group members made the following comments:

- That light industrial doesn't mean heavy duty industry. Light industrial can be a good fit for village center. Maybe the name should be modified to better reflect the type of uses – possibly "commercial".
- If we don't plan for where light industrial can go now, we'll miss out on business opportunities.
- The OCP should be specific and define what is permitted as light industrial.
- The OCP should not be that specific but should define permitted uses by their consequences such as noise or pollution.
- What is the difference between commercial and light industrial?

Planner Simpson commented that for the purpose of the discussion at this point in the OCP Review it isn't necessary to define light industrial beyond being less impactful to the surrounding area than "heavy" industrial".

A member of the public noted that there is a shortage of hatcheries which is different from shellfish processing facilities, and that agricultural lands not near water so not a fit for hatcheries.

5. REFRESHMENT BREAK

6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON CLUSTERED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Planner Simpson gave a presentation on the topic of clustered residential development and summarized the key input so far. She asked for comments on the list of key input, if there was anything missing or anything not characterized correctly.

A working group member commented they support cluster development in Bowser Village Center but not in rural lands. They expressed the opinion that covenants can be changed and would not retain cluster development in the long-term and result in increased density on small lots. The member gave an example of Vancouver-style development.

Director Veenhof responded to clarify that cluster development is about protecting the lands we have not about doing Vancouver-style zoning.

Planner Simpson commented that the input on the topic has been clearly received that there is a concern of some that a covenant is not strong enough way of protecting the remainder lot in a clustered subdivision.

A member of the public commented they can support cluster development if it is in Bowser center and areas around it are protected.

A Working Group member commented that people should be able to choose to live by the sea, in Bowser, in cluster development, etc. They should be able to down size in live in a smaller house in a cluster development to enable them to stay in the community.

Planner Simpson suggested the conversation move forward around the question of under what conditions should clustered residential development be allowed.

Working Group members made the following comments:

- Would like to see more members of the public attend OCP Review events.
- Clustered development should be on community water and sewer.
- Clustered development is an excellent approach to designing subdivisions to achieve protection of the environment and allow movement of wildlife, and is better than the status quo of large private lots.

Director Veenhof commented that there isn't an intention to require cluster housing to be on sewer.

A Working Group member asked what percentage of the community is in favor of cluster housing?

Planning Manager Thompson commented that the Regional Growth Strategy only allows for alternative rural development patterns, and just provides options for including them in OCP's rather than making it a requirement.

Working Group members made the following comments:

- Cluster development is intended to protect green spaces and does not need community sewer. Biggest threat to water supply is failing septic systems, second is agricultural run-off. While sewers are not required maybe they should be.
- Current trends in subdivision don't provide for protection of green spaces, but maximize land values. Cluster development at least can protect this.
- Who owns the green space of cluster development?
- Clustered development cannot be recommended in the absence of a detailed definition.

Planning Manager Thompson responded that it can vary - Crown, property owners (strata), conservation or restrictive covenant, trust, etc.

A Working Group member reminded the group to keep the focus on what we value. Septic or no septic, we just want it to work to protect the environment.

Members of the public made the following comments:

- Housing is not unaffordable in this area as some have said, as they know many young people are wanting to move here because is less expensive in other areas like Qualicum Beach and Parksville.
- Why are we not going through the OCP line by line? The lack of community input is disappointing compared it to the last time, when the current OCP was created.
- I can support cluster dev if it's not stratified. Don't want "big" development and want a mix of development.

A member of the Working Group asked for a vote on cluster development, and commented they would like the Working Group to be asked to review the OCP line by line.

7. PLANNING FOR THE NEXT WORKING GROUP MEETING

Planner Simpson acknowledged that the meeting was about to go over time, and should anyone wish to leave they should feel free to do so.

Planner Simpson reminded the group that the next Working Group meeting is on June 7th on the topic of Deep Bay and will be held at the Deep Bay Marine Field Station. All Working Group meetings are open to the public, but the general public is encouraged to attend the June 22 Open House which is designed for the general public not necessarily involved with the Working Group. She noted that the June 22 Open House will have an online component for those who cannot attend in person, and that input from the public can be received any time through letter or email. She explained the role of the working group versus general public meetings, and that no decisions are made by the working group, but it is an opportunity to have a more detailed discussion.

Planner Simpson said there appears to be a desire from some Working Group members for the next Working Group meeting to take on the format of a public townhall meeting. She asked for the Working Group's input on how the next meeting should be formatted.

A Working Group member asked if members can send an alternate if unable to attend a meeting? Director Veenhof responded that we had not anticipated this request, that it would be hard to say no, but it is contrary to the spirit of the Working Group where continuity of membership is key to its success.

Working Group members made the following comments:

- Next meeting, the general public should not be allowed to speak during the meeting of the Working Group.
- Acknowledge that the general public in attendance tonight are reacting to a lack of basic information on the project and context for the process and discussions. They may be triggered by language being used.
- Prefer other options are considered such a Working Group meeting before the public meeting.

A member of the public commented that those in attendance tonight who are not part of the Working Group feel that they are not being heard. There needs to be an outlet for this frustration because it is wasting time and distracting from the work of the working group. They suggested that the next meeting could begin with an open forum for the general public and be followed by the Working Group meeting.

A Working Group member asked about the June 22 Open House format and if Working Group members would be asked to help. There were nods in support of this, and Planner Simpson said she would follow up with more information in planning for that event.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm