



City of Surrey

Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes for March 26, 2009

File: 360-20 (DAC)
Date: March 26, 2009
Time: 2:30 PM
Location: Planning Room #1,
Surrey City Hall

Attendees:

Councillors:
Marvin Hunt

Members:
Amy Spencer-Chubey
Andy Aadmi
Bill Kruger
David Porte
Gopal Sahota
Greg Sewell
Jeff Fisher
Kevin Shoemaker
Steve Forrest
Steve Kurrein
Ted Dawson
Tom Miller

City Staff:
Craig MacFarlane
Jean Lamontagne
John McKenzie
Judith Robertson
Judy McLeod
Remi Dube
Sam Lau
Theresa Kidd

1. The minutes of the meeting of February 26, 2009 were amended to reflect Greg Sewell's comment on RF9 lots, should refer to RF lots. Amy Spencer-Chubey noted that the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy meetings involving stakeholder and public consultation will be complete by May 15/09. The Minutes were received as amended.

2. **Lobbyist Registration Policy –Craig MacFarlane**

Craig explained that there will be a one page form which the Lead Consultant will be asked to fill out when application is made for OCP or zoning bylaw amendment. The form will also be on the website so it can be downloaded. The purpose is to have transparency as to who the contact person is. There will be no cost associated with this form. The plan is to have this process up and running in later part of May 2009.

Andy Aadmi asked why it is needed. Craid replied that Council felt it was needed to identify the point person in a consulting capacity for an each. It does not apply to an owner, only a consultant. Contractors and Architects are considered lobbyists if acting on behalf of someone.

Several members asked why is the Agent name and agency letter not enough? It was noted that the agency letter is still required, and the form will further require the chief applicant to be disclosed, in accordance with Council's directive.

Councillor Hunt explained that it lets the community know that we are transparent and these are the people that are working on specific projects. It identifies who the chief applicant is on any given project. Most applicants are known to the City but if it is a numbered company, the City would still require the individual name(s).

Greg Sewell asked why a numbered company would have to disclose names. Councilor Hunt explained that Limited Companies are familiar with the City, and they tend to do more than one project, for the most part the City knows who these people are. Numbered companies tend to do just one project. There needs to be consistency with the chief applicants being disposed.

It was suggested that rather than a separate form, this disclosure could simply be another column on the Application form to keep it easy. Tom Miller suggested that we might want to think about changing the name “Lobbyist” to Chief Leader or something else.

Gopal Sahota felt that the “lobbyist” term is misleading at times, and perhaps the public feels that there may be money to follow at some point and people become curious.

Craig and Jean will review the current form and see if it is possible to incorporate this new information into the form. Craig will be reporting back to Council.

3. Proposed Stair Encroachment Amendment for Small Lot Developments

Judith Robertson, in introducing her power point presentation, noted that this proposal is a result of input received from one design consultant who deals with a fair amount of small lot developments. The issue is the separation between the principal building and the detached garage. The zoning by-law requires a 6m separation between the wall of the house and the wall of the garage. This works well when everything is flat and the lots are a bit deeper, but there can be a problem on sloping properties, and more than the allowed 3 risers are needed for the stairs to access the rear door of the dwelling. Judith proposed to the DAC to allow more than 3 risers if necessary but the risers would need to run parallel to the wall-regardless of whether there are 3 risers or 8, it really doesn't change the impact very much on the separation area. The proviso would be that a deck would not be allowed, only a one square metre landing. Two developments are depending on the proposed text amendment-East Clayton and Douglas.

Steve Kurrein felt that the fundamental problem was that there should be at least 30m of setback to each property and it will solve all the issues the City is having. Judith explained that when staff originally introduced these zones, staff proposed 32 metre lot depths, which have been reduced to 30 and 28 metres. The experience has been that regardless of lot depth, builders are putting the largest house possible on the lot and building to the maximum, so there is seldom more than the required 6 metre separation.

Tom Miller felt that the city should be the gate keeping and require better, and Council should make that decision and stick with it.

Judith explained that the City hopes this will address some of the unauthorized construction that is occurring. The proposed changes would be to the RF12, RF 12C, RF9 and RF9C zones, and unless there were specific concerns by DAC, it is the intent to have a report on the matter at the April 20 Land Use agenda.

4. Sustainability Development Checklist-Mark Allison

Mark Allison distributed a copy of the Sustainability Charter to the DAC members, and noted that the Charter identified 57 different scope items for action by the City. The intent of the Development Checklist is to assist applicants and the City in working together to

develop high quality buildings, developments and communities that support Surrey's sustainability vision and goals. The Power point presentation given to the DAC outlined the proposed timeline for the checklist, proposed to accompany all new applications starting in September 2009. After a one year period, the checklist would be reviewed.

Steve Forrest didn't understand how it would work in regards to who decides which developers are doing enough and which ones aren't. Mark explained that much of the checklist is simply to raise the awareness in each project. David Porte felt that Council could "fail" the checklist if they don't feel that there is enough low income housing in a high cost area or if Council feels there should be more created.

Kevin Shoemaker agreed with David's comment and he felt that over time, even if the checklist says "voluntary", that these items will have to be done. He asked if there could be a sub-committee from the DAC to review this checklist and be involved in it.

Tom Miller felt that his issue surrounds uncertainty, if there is uncertainty then he would be concerned.

Gopal Sahota felt that because there is no quantitative measurement at the end, it does not secure anything for developers at any given time.

Andy Aadmi did not 100% agree with what is expected to be achieved by this document, and that it is just going to add more work for the Developer-it should not be an obstruction for development.

Mark Allison stressed there would be no "right" or "wrong" answers. Each application would be assessed on its individual merits and context.

David Porte also pointed out that the word "voluntary" can become non-voluntary over time. Because it is at the discretion of council-these are areas of concern.

Marvin Hunt discussed the use of the checklist as an information tool and to bring awareness to the industry. He felt that it could also ultimately be used as a selling tool for the development itself. While recognizing the fear amongst the DAC members, he asked that it be looked at as a positive tool.

Tom Miller felt that there should be regulations and guidelines around this information. He does not want the development to get to Council and find that the package of sustainability features does not pass.

Kevin Shoemaker wanted to know if this checklist would become public record. Mark advised it would. Kevin felt that as well meaning as it is, we need to be careful how it's packaged, as even if the project is positive, the information in the Checklist can be turned against the applicant.

Jean Lamontagne suggested a small sub-committee getting together to discuss the checklist in the near future. David Porte, Kevin Shoemaker, Steve Kurrein and Jeff Fisher volunteered to be on the committee. Mark Allison will set up a meeting with the sub-committee to go forward.

Mark Allison asked if the DAC members could go through the checklist and send feedback so he has that information before the sub-committee meeting.

5. Comments on the Market (all members)

- Jeff Fisher was at the last Board meeting and Surrey's proactivity was mentioned however he did have a concern with the Aboriginal Title issue and the new draft LRSP update. Judy noted that Metro has asked for an initial municipal response by April 8th and Surrey does have some key issues to be brought forward. May 22nd is set for the deadline public consultation and final municipal input to this draft. Jean advised that Councils comments will be brought to the next meeting.
- David Porte commended the Building Department. They were absolutely great in helping them with their South Surrey development. David advised that the market is still slow but it is picking up in Surrey and Langley. It's better than at Christmas time.
- Greg Sewell reminded the Committee that last month that there was a 12% reduction in Morgan Heights but he has yet to confirm that it has reflected in sales. He is looking into whether. Builders price reductions are paying off in other areas.
- Tom Miller thinks that there is definitely a market out there and people are actively looking. People are currently writing multiple deals and using their 7 day option to decide which one they want to go through with.
- Amy Spencer-Chubey advised that the VHB had their 1st Homebuyers Seminar and they had almost 900 people attend. They had to turn about 100 people away. 300 respondents completed the survey, and only 40 respondents said that market situation would deter them from buying right now.
- Steve Forrest feels optimistic with sales. Displays, good product and good landscaping is all key in sales and it helps with people wanting to move into the area. Bank appraisals are an issue with pre-sales.
- Gopal Sahota noted that traffic has increased. There is a lot more re-sale activity than new home sales. Some resale business is going into the new homes.
- Andy Aadmi, as a realist, feels that the market is still going down, and feels bad for people buying right now. The news in the USA is getting better but it's not good yet.
- Ted Dawson stated that it might be a really good time to buy right now, as interest rates are low and sale prices are down as well. People want to own a home. Traffic and sales volumes have picked up. The market seems to have found a bottom whether it lasts or not and one of the most positive things he's heard is Amy's comment on the homebuyers seminar.
- Bill Kruger observed that new applications are dead but on the positive side applications that were on hold from last month have now gone ahead.
- Marvin Hunt advised that his nephew is in FoxRidge in Cloverdale- He advised that there are several houses in the development that are selling and he is happy with that news from the development side.
- Kevin Shoemaker noted that Polygon has had a good couple of months. Their project in Delta had one person who camped out overnight. Interest rates are really good and it is tempting for people to get into the market right now. Kevin was talking with an associate from Morning Star who where homes are selling for \$210-230,000 Initially there were 22 for sale and now there is still 10 left.
- Jean Lamontagne advised that in an effort to help with the economy, the Tree By-law has been reviewed in regard to the security deposit. Details will be on the website on Monday, March 30th.

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- Amy Spencer -Chubey asked if anyone was interested in the First Nations issue that went to Council recently? Marvin Hunt replied that we are starting to get information on what it would cost and the amounts are extremely high. A resolutions may start coming forward soon.
 - Tom Miller wanted to know about Surrey's DCC amounts being reduced by 1/3 as indicated in the recent economic stimulus announcement. Jean advised that they are working on that with legal and they are hoping to have a Corporate Report by April 20th. Tom wanted to know if payment of DCCs could be as late as occupancy. Jean advised that while options are being explored, it could probably not be that late.
 - Kevin Shoemaker suggested a future agenda item being Garbage Collection in phased developments. Phasing is now taking longer, and in some situations, a planned single phase is now being divided into more several phases. He has a project where one side of the project is getting garbage collection and the other is not.. Jean will check into it.
 - Andy Aadmi asked about the money collected for beautification in the City Centre and wanted to know if the City is still doing that. Marvin Hunt explained that the money should have been spent already but if there is money there, it will definitely be spent.
 - Steve Kurrein sits on the Development Finance Review Committee which is finalizing new procedures for grandfathering DCC's on single family. This is a proposed policy change which will be in the Best Practices Manual.
 - There was a question regarding the status of the Web based tracking system? Jean explained IT is working on it and we may have something by the end of the year. Currently we have an online electrical application and that is very successful.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 4:28pm.

The next meeting of the DAC will be held on April 23, 2009.