



**City of Surrey**  
**Development Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Notes for February 23, 2006**

File: 360-20 (DAC)  
Date: February 23, 2006  
Time: 2:30 PM  
Location: Planning Room #1,  
Surrey City Hall

**Attendees:**

**Members:**

Andy Aadmi  
Chris Barbati  
Norm Couttie  
Jeff Fisher  
Jake Friesen  
Avtar Johl  
Bill Kruger  
Steve Kurrein  
Bob Laurie  
James Patillo  
Greg Sewell  
Kevin Shoemaker

**City Staff:**

Murray Dinwoodie (Planning and Development)  
Judith Robertson (Planning and Development)  
Judy McLeod (Planning and Development)  
Vincent Lalonde (Engineering)  
Rob Wilson (Engineering)  
Jeff Aranson (Engineering)  
Adrian Kopystynski (Planning and Development)

**Observers:**

Dr. Francisco Percello (Surrey EAC)

**Guest:**

Mike Tynan, Design Consultant

**1. Introduction of New Members**

Murray Dinwoodie introduced James Patillo of Grosvenor International and Chris Barbati of Mosaic Homes as new members of the Committee.

Dr. Francisco Perrello attended as an observer from the Surrey Environmental Advisory Committee.

**2. Comments on the Market**

The following is a summary of some of the comments made by the members concerning market conditions:

- Avtar Johl indicated that the market was “insane” and lot prices were “scary”; He indicated that the typical RF-12 lot sells for around \$200,000; demands is high, however the supply of land for development is low.
- James Patillo advised that the market is very strong for the residential and retail commercial sectors; construction costs are rising.
- Chris Barbati indicated that there is very little supply of land for townhousing; reasonably priced lands is difficult to find; multi-family developers are competing with single family developers for the same land; speculation for single family sites is driving up land prices.
- Bill Kruger indicated that business continues to be busy and clients are looking for suitably priced land for development; public investment such as new hospitals is anticipated to drive up construction costs.
- Jake Friesen said the market is very strong. However some prospective buyers are not completing because they cannot get mortgages; RF-9 lots in Clayton are being appraised

by BC Assessment at about \$180,000, although not all lots are being sold at that high price; finished RF-9 houses are selling for close to \$360,000.

- Avtar Johl noted Morningside in Sullivan is selling around \$420,000.
- Jake Friesen also noted that coach houses are being used for purposes such as housing for elderly parents rather than mortgage helpers; he noted that coach houses do not provide for a reasonable return on investment given their costs for construction.
- Murray Dinwoodie introduced Mike Tynan, a local House Designer and asked for his insights concerning the market. Mike Tynan indicated that he considers this to be a mature market, the strongest market he has ever seen; some view land as a trading vehicle; he reviewed the historic market cycles and observed that the anticipated down-cycle and correction in 2000 did not materialize citing such reasons as post 9-11 interest rate drop, investment being diverted to development, etc.; work load is steady in the range of 160 to 200 house plans awaiting completion in his office.
- Bob Laurie cited a number of statistics, such as the GDP, that support the continuation of a strong real estate market. There was some discussion concerning crime rates and the effect on development decisions.
- Greg Sewell advised business is strong, processing time at City Hall is becoming longer and there is some pressure to complete applications before the higher development cost charges come into effect.
- Andy Aadmi noted that world events continue to have an influence on the local market; he expressed concern about fears that any repeat of 9-11 may reverse the market.
- Kevin Shoemaker indicated that the market is steady; his firm is not banking on inflation to generate a profit.
- Jeff Fisher commented that a recent legal decision concerning the Arbutus rail corridor in Vancouver that concerned the designation of lands might have an impact on the development industry.
- Murray Dinwoodie distributed and commented about the numbers for lots created in January 2006 and also reviewed the value of construction starts to date this year.

### 3. Building Schemes

Murray Dinwoodie and Steve Kurrein provided some background about previous discussions concerning regulating the design of single-family houses using building schemes. Steve Kurrein concluded that Building Schemes might be promoting monotony in design and favour neo-traditional designs. Murray noted that he would be receptive to increase the flexibility and practicality of the Building Schemes or to try other ways to insure quality design and creating a good community image.

Mike Tynan offered a number of comments concerning building schemes and plans for new houses. Some of these included the following:

- The predominant house style in the 1960's involved low sloping roof designs.
- Then the trend changed to 1-½ story structures.
- Neo-traditional styles became in vogue starting in the late 1980's.
- This style is in response to market demand and builder direction rather than being predicated by building schemes.
- Building schemes allow the potential for a greater variety of housing styles than builders are prepared to build. There is less flexibility for infill situations and lots of flexibility for green field developments.

There followed a discussion and these are some of the comments that were made:

- Jake Friesen suggested that the 20/80 rule in the Zoning By-law could be changed as it may have outlived its usefulness;
- Chris Barbati suggested that design-related regulations should be removed from the Zoning By-law and included in building schemes, something like development permits in addressing the character and form of multiple residential and commercial buildings.
- There was a discussion about whether building schemes responded to market demand or dictated market in terms of design. Nicholas Lai reviewed the evolution in the use of building schemes in Surrey – at first they were an effort to prevent unlawful secondary suites by limiting basement entry houses. Then, with the introduction of prerequisite character studies they became a tool to insure new development was compatible with existing or emerging neighbourhoods.
- There was also discussion about the opportunities for variety in house design at different densities, and how land prices can drive housing styles and densities; Chris Barbati cited the variation and variety in housing associated with the housing densities in San Francisco. Imaginative designs could provide a competitive edge in marketing housing products.
- Jake Friesen commented that Surrey is noted for encouraging innovative housing by offering a variety of zones and density ranges. There was some discussion about further refining some of the zones and their regulations. For example, reducing the separation requirement for detached garages in the small lot zones.
- Mike Tynan noted that the Zoning By-law has an inherent assumption that all sites are flat, thus some of the regulations are awkward or more difficult to apply to sloped sites; he also noted that Langley shifts some of the design-related Zoning By-law provisions to the building schemes, crafted by applicants and the City.
- The committee responded favourably to forming a subcommittee to consider how building schemes can be improved and the Zoning By-law be changed to promote more flexibility and less monotony in house designs. Mike Tynan and Jake Friesen agreed to sit on this subcommittee.
- Murray Dinwoodie thanked Mike Tynan for attending and advised that a subcommittee meeting would be arranged prior to the next DAC meeting.

#### **4. Presentation on Industrial Land Supply by Bob Laurie**

Bob Laurie made a PowerPoint presentation about the trends and demand for industrial lands in the region. Among the matters noted were: types of industries locating in the region have changed over the years, there is need to accommodate trans-shipment of goods from China and more port-related capacity, the modest amount of land devoted to industrial use in relation to agricultural land and the erosion of industrial land for non-industrial purposes.

A proposal for a private school in an existing industrial area in South Westminster was discussed. The impact on ancillary non-industrial uses being attracted if this use is approved, and the potential negative impacts on investment being made by existing industries in the area were discussed.

#### **5. Update on changes to Development Cost Charges (dcc)**

Vincent Lalonde advised that a public open house is scheduled for February 28, 2006. Developers, consultants and others are invited to learn about and comment on the proposed

changes. Using a handout, Vincent Lalonde reviewed the proposed changes, the process to approve them, the “grace period”, etc.

In the discussion that followed, these are some of the points that were considered:

- Incremental adjustments for inflation to avoid big jumps in DCC rates.
- Depositing dcc’s into specific reserve accounts, with interest on the funds staying in each specific account.
- Servicing costs are higher in some areas of the City in comparison to other areas.
- The Corporate Reports and 10-year servicing plan concerning the changes are available for review.
- The potential for adjusting the rates for phased development and dwelling unit sizes.
- The reasons for not adjusting the parks dcc rates.

Digital copies of Vince’s presentation materials are available upon request.

**Follow-up** – There will be an update at the March committee meeting.

## **6. Web site suggestions**

This matter was deferred to the next meeting. In the meantime, suggestions can be forwarded to Adrian Kopystynski.

## **7. Future Agenda Items**

These items were suggested:

- Process for the sale of City-owned land
- Sediment Control By-law Update

Other suggestions may be forwarded to Murray or Adrian.

## **8. Next meeting & Adjournment**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2006.

The meeting ended at 5:05 PM.