

# MINUTES

## Development Advisory Committee

File: 360-20 (DAC)  
Date: September 28,  
2017  
Time: 2:30 p.m.  
Location: 3W Meeting Room  
A, Surrey City Hall

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### Members:

Rob Elliott  
Jeff Fisher  
Dwight Heintz  
Nathan Hildebrand  
Dexter Hirabe  
Roger Jawanda  
Jaret Lang  
Phil Magistrale  
Andrew Peterson  
Anne Peterson  
Gopal Sahota  
Kiegan Scharnberg  
Rocky Sethi  
Kevin Shoemaker  
Jamie Squires

### City Staff:

Jeff Arason  
Kimberly Chan  
Nadia Chan  
Jean Lamontagne  
Sam Lau  
Karandeep Pandher

### 1. Previous Minutes

The notes of the June 22, 2017 meeting were accepted as distributed.

### 2. Metro Vancouver Liquid Waste Development Cost Charge (DCC) Adjustments (Jeff Arason, Manager Utilities; Fraser Smith, General Manager Engineering)

- Jeff Arason presented on Metro Vancouver's proposal to adjust their Liquid Waste DCC rates effective April 1, 2018.
- Metro Vancouver has a liquid waste DCC that has not been adjusted since it was first implemented in 1997. The DCC varies by 4 sewerage areas in the region (Fraser, Lulu Island West, North Shore, and Vancouver) where sewage is collected and treated by wastewater treatment plants.
- Metro Vancouver is proposing an increase in DCC rates by 220%. For example, the DCC rates for a single family house within the Fraser sewerage area would increase from \$1731 to \$5428.
- The increase in DCC rates will help finance significant infrastructure expansions to meet demands of the growing population in Metro Vancouver. It will also help offset the cost of increasing utility rates in the various sewerage areas as a result of the replacement of the Lions Gate waste water treatment plant, a \$750 million project (where \$450 million was derived from provincial/federal funding) and the future replacement of Iona island waste water treatment plant.
- This program is currently consulting with the public/stakeholders on the increasing rates. Jeff attended the consultation on September 28<sup>th</sup> and there were concerns over the extent of the rate increase, lack of the proposed implementation of a onetime increase, the lack of more frequent review, and a one development cross charger over the entire region as opposed to a variation of charges within the sewerage areas. Metro Vancouver did not

respond to all of the comments and questions and indicated that they would review and report back this Fall.

- With regards to the concerns of grandfathering, the grandfathering that everyone is familiar with, the City's DCC bylaw would be the exact same as Metro Vancouver. If you have a subdivision application in stream before the bylaw, you have 1 year to complete it. Also, if you have a development rezoning/building permit application in stream before April 1, 2018, you have 1 year to get the building permit issued. Surrey, as a municipal government, was not asked to comment. However our City Councillors have been involved in the processes and discussions.
- Metro Vancouver has no water DCCs and they have no intention of introducing a DCC for water at this time. Water costs to service growth are embedded into the general water utility rate paid by customers.

#### **Comments:**

- Jeff Fisher pointed out that the remaining stakeholder sessions will take place on:
  - October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Anvil Centre – Fraser (North) sewerage area
  - October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Executive Airport Plaza Hotel Richmond (Lulu) sewerage area
  - October 4<sup>th</sup> – Webinar
- Jeff Arason suggested visiting Metro Vancouver's website to register for the public consultation sessions and find out when, where, and what time the remaining events will take place.
- Jeff Fisher attended a public consultation in Vancouver and provided his opinion on the phasing scheme mentioned in Metro Vancouver's original report. In other sewerage area, there is a 100% increase and this one is over 200%. There was barely any warning at all of these increases in DCC rates. At the consultation meeting, Metro Vancouver did not appear to fully understand the Local Government Act provisions around the DCC grandfathering and the municipal approval times (they only considered approval times back in 1997). Jeff Fisher encourages others to revert back to the original phasing scheme. Although money is required to cover the cost of infrastructure, Metro Vancouver does not fully grasp the concept of grandfathering.
- Jeff Arason anticipates that the effective date will be April 1, 2018 so it will not align with the effective date the City's next proposed DCC bylaws of May 15, 2018.
- Kevin Shoemaker asked how these public consultation sessions are advertised. Jeff Arason responded that Metro Vancouver has a general consultation mailing list, which he is currently signed up for, but is unsure how Metro Vancouver reaches out to the general public.
- Jeff Fisher mentioned that the TransLink DCC consultation session will be held on October 23, 2017 at Burnaby Hilton. This DCC will be less of an impact than Metro Vancouver with \$700 - \$2000 per new residential unit as a charge for the Phase One Plan. It is estimated that a DCC applied across the region at these rates could generate approximately \$15 million to \$20 million per year, which is nowhere near Metro Vancouver's impact.
- Jeff Arason noted that TransLink does not have the authority to charge a DCC as they require a change in legislation and TransLink is proposing that their DCC would come into effect in 2020.
- Jeff Fisher commented that it would be advantageous to have a municipal perspective on this matter as well so the rates could be phased in rather than being implemented abruptly. Jean Lamontagne responded that he would rather not make assumptions. For example, in 2007, when the DCC rates increased drastically, it created a huge backlog and the City was unable to meet deadlines. Jeff Arason added that the increase was introduced in 2015, and the first 3 phases were implemented in 2016. They were subsequently updated again in

2017 with the intention of consulting and discussing this with the committee this Fall in regards to the 2018 plan.

**3. Trees and Landscaping Discussion (Nadia Chan, Trees and Landscape Manager; Nathan Hildebrand, Canadian Horizons)**

- Nathan Hildebrand wanted to form a discussion around the frustration that he and his consultants have been experiencing. The discussion would help establish a solution to hopefully streamline the processes on both ends.
- The issue is reviewing trees and landscaping and receiving comments back. It is too often that pressure is being placed on his consultants, City staff, and eventually City managers, to inform them of crucial timelines/deadlines. It is not an enjoyable process. Nathan Hildebrand would rather have meetings and discussions throughout the process so they are not constantly waiting, reminding, and putting pressure on the trees and landscaping team to get their comments. These comments seem to be the last thing they are rushing to get at the end. He partly blames his consultants for not numbering the plans correctly or missing trees in their plans, etc. However, these problems could have been quickly identified through scheduled meetings and discussions. Could it be a staffing issue? Are new staff replacing retired staff? Is there lack of staff in the trees and landscaping department? Is it too much information to process with the limited staff? What is the solution to these problems? The comments provided are not consistent: some goalposts vary from project to project, retention of alders versus not retaining alders, different requirements for different route zones and protection zones for various projects, etc.
- Jean Lamontagne responded that new staff require time to be acquainted with the system, review all buildings, tree cutting permit applications from residents, etc. The staff are being pulled in all directions. Jean suggested that standardizing arborist reports could help speed up reviews. You can quickly see if it meets your requirements or not before proceeding to review it, like a checklist.
- Nadia Chan indicated that she has heard these frustrations since the start of her position in January. She is still trying to understand the City's processes while she and her team find ways to make these processes more efficient, such as the implementation of standard procedures (i.e. tree cutting permits, single family infill lots etc.). However, Development sites are more complicated. The next step would be to come up with standard operating procedures for the review of sites, and develop terms of reference so the arborist will know exactly what the City wants to see. The City also plans on consulting with the arborist community to get their input on the issue and find solutions that work for everybody.
- Nathan Hildebrand suggested that the City should consult with the developers as well so there is a full understanding on all ends on what is required in the arborist reports.

**Comments:**

- Kevin Shoemaker provided a backend perspective on the landscaping inspection issue, particularly in Surrey. Everyone is pressed for time and short staffed including his consultants and trades who constantly have to head out to clean up the landscaping deficiencies. When a landscaping inspection is made, it takes time to get the first report. After the fix is made, another inspection has to be conducted 6 months after, if a landscape feature perishes, they have to start from square one again. There is a need to tighten this process up with contractors and inspectors. What would help is if the City staff inspectors and landscape architects could perform only one thorough inspection of the landscape. After that, the onus would be on his team to fix the issues. It is irritating for new homeowners to have someone in their backyards multiple times, inspecting the landscape. It is challenging to perform an inspection all together but it does in fact work, as it has been

done before. City staff appear to be unprepared for the one year final inspections. The inspection schedule does not seem to be rigorous or regular. It would be helpful if the City followed an inspection schedule so they could have sufficient staff when the time comes for the inspection. For many years, strata would need to sign off prior to the final sign off on the landscape. Is this still in effect? Jean Lamontagne responded that the City gets complaints from the strata when things go missing or when there are securities issues.

- Kevin Shoemaker argued that these things should not happen. There should be a disconnect between these issues. For example, peeling paint or light bulbs burning out prematurely, etc., are used against signing off on the landscaping to acquire other things. The City should be the one responsible for reviewing the landscape to the Development Permit. The separation between landscaping and other things is not clear to strata. It should not be a precursor for strata in getting securities returned.
- Kevin Shoemaker pointed out another issue he has experienced over the last 16 years, where he feels that there is not much of an importance on policy returns on landscaping than there should be. The returns seem to take a while and they do not always go smoothly. With multiple developments under construction, Polygon is stretched for money. They need money returned to them before they can lend more money.
- Kevin Shoemaker mentioned another issue with the TFO work that falls under the 5 year maintenance. Polygon has a couple that are half a million dollars out for 4 years. This has to change.
- Roger Jawanda provided his feedback, from a consultant's perspective, on the timing/completion of arborist/tree reports. He finds that it takes a long time to complete an arborist report. After a report is submitted, concerns and comments are then addressed but, at that point, new reports come in and the report goes back into the queue. What his team has attempted to do was review the tree report with their grading plan. However, there were many times when the report conflicted with their plans. More time is then spent on finding the conflicts. He also finds that City planners are forwarding the tree reports to the arborist, where it sits in the queue. When there is a conflict in the report, a revision has to be made and the report goes back into the queue again. The City planners should review the tree reports and the grading plans, etc., before it gets sent back into the queue where it just sits. If conflicts are identified, the report can be sent back to his team to resolve the conflict so it can be later forwarded to the City arborist. There were many times when the City instructed them to preserve boulevard trees. With existing utilities in the boulevard, a lot of time and energy is required to reroute the utilities during construction in order to preserve the trees. He understands that there is an issue with short staffing of arborists, the City, his team, etc. His team is attempting to iron out the conflicts beforehand to streamline the processes.
- Nathan Hildebrand commented that he has experienced issues with the utilities as well. How much information would you actually have to provide in the final rounds? He indicated that this becomes a challenge as well.
- Roger Jawanda commented that it would be helpful if the City Planner could review the reports before they end up sitting in the queue.
- Roger Jawanda expressed an issue with bond refunds and trees. Many developers with single family dwellings do not get their money back after selling their lot. Trees may have been planted upon selling but they have to be guaranteed for a year. At that point, they do not have the right to go back and replant the trees so they end up forfeiting their money. Is there a way to improve on this process so the bond can be refunded – at least 50%?
- Rocky Sethi asked Roger Jawanda whether the owners are charged or if the deposits are transferred to the homeowner. Roger responded that there is no other way of doing it other than to have it in the sales contract. The compliance fee is really for the building of the house itself.

- Dexter Hirabe asked how long should a review of an arborist report take before it is returned to the consultants? Two to three weeks? In comparison, Engineering is committed to providing comments, servicing, or grading of plans within 6 weeks. This concrete timeline works very well for Dexter Hirabe's team. Nathan Hildebrand responded that after you submit an arborist report, it will not be reviewed unless you really push for it. Dexter Hirabe concurred with Nathan Hildebrand as he has waited 4 or 5 months and sometimes 6 or 7 weeks in the past before an arborist report was reviewed. Dexter Hirabe asked whether the review should in fact take 2 to 3 weeks. Nathan Hildebrand responded that 2 or 3 weeks is rather unreasonable considering the amount of volume and other work the team is bombarded with. Even the initial planning meeting takes 2 to 3 months after a submitting an application.
- Roger Jawanda commented that he appreciates the Wednesday deadlines when there is a Council meeting. However, things like tree cutting permits, etc., are pushed to the side and they are left waiting weeks before they are acknowledged because other matters presented to Council have more priority. Roger Jawanda questions whether Council reports are a priority for the arborists. Jean Lamontagne confirmed that Council reports are one of the priorities of the arborists. They are also committed to reviewing arborist reports, reviewing landscape plans for Development Permits, etc., ahead of time.
- Roger Jawanda added that his contractors have been waiting for the tree reports since July. Changes made to the report have been submitted and now they are back in the queue. As such, he is unable to complete RCs, etc.
- Nathan Hildebrand commented that this experience is very frustrating and a solution has to be devised to eliminate this frustration.
- Rocky Sethi asked Kevin Shoemaker as to how difficult it is to perform a joint inspection between City staff and landscape architects. Jean Lamontagne responded that it would probably be a fixed day, perhaps 2 days in a month, or a weekend.
- Kevin Shoemaker added that if a joint inspection is not achievable, he would prefer if feedback could be provided right after an inspection. There is no indication when the inspectors have gone out and it takes months before there is word from the inspectors. There is no time to prepare and fix the problem once they receive feedback from the inspectors. Nadia Chan stated that this has been done in the past where an arborist inspected the site with the developer/landscaper. The process is in fact smoother, especially when they physically point out the specific trees that are dead on site.
- Kevin Shoemaker agreed that joint inspections are important, especially when reasonable tree substitutions are suggested. Overall, he believes change is for the better.

#### **4. Timelines for Letters of Credits Discussion (Nathan Hildebrand, Canadian Horizons; Kevin Shoemaker, Polygon Homes)**

- Rob Elliott commented that the only challenge with regards to the Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) By-law is getting the letter of credits back. Clearly, it has been done for a long time. The issue may be staffing.
- Jeff Fisher stated that he received an email about a presentation on Riparian Area Regulations (RAR) and trees but is unable to attend an upcoming meeting.
- Nadia Chan confirmed with Jeff Fisher that there is an upcoming wind and trees workshop with Steve Mitchell. Steve Mitchell is a professor at the UBC forestry program and his specialty is in windthrow, trees uprooted or broken by wind. Wind storms and windthrow are becoming more and more of an issue in the Lower Mainland due to climate change. Neal Aven, Manager of Urban Forestry, has invited Steve Mitchell to present to a diverse group of developers, City staff, etc., to find ways to deal with windthrow. Steve Mitchell will eventually develop course material to help people in urban environment manage,

retain, or remove trees. Due to the limited space, a small group has been invited to this event to generate discussion.

- Jeff Fisher asked if the City of Surrey is having the same windthrow problems as the City of Coquitlam. Nadia Chan responded that an arborist may not be the right individual to perform a windthrow assessment in a riparian corridor. A Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) would be required to understand force dynamics, ecology, diseases, insects, etc.
- Jeff Fisher asked whether they should anticipate regulations. Jean Lamontagne responded that it is not necessarily regulations, but it would be necessary to perform ground truthing. You can only prepare so much for a windstorm as the natural environment is constantly changing. Nadia Chan added that the Association of BC Forest Professionals is currently looking at urban forestry and how it relates to the Provincial Forest Act and National Forest Act. The review has been ongoing for years and the Association is looking into the need to have registered professional foresters involved in urban forestry. There are no current regulations at the moment. Nadia Chan will be attending a presentation in the first week of October by the Canadian federation of forest council. Every province has a representative that presents on provincial urban forestry.
- Jean Lamontagne commented that urban forestry is evolving and City staff are certified at assessing trees. Nadia Chan added that it is an international standard that all arborists are ISA certified and ISA tree risk assessor.
- Dwight Heintz commented that after the August 2015 windstorm, an arborist informed him that the strong winds originated from the south. The arborist took that into consideration in his designs of windthrow management. Nadia Chan concurred and added that when it is windy, trees shake as they react to the wind. Trees may sway in the direction of the wind but it could also oscillate back and forth. A lull in the wind may cause the tree to then snap backwards due to a minor defect up top. Trees may topple over in windy conditions therefore specific trees should be examined in particular locations.
- Roger Jawanda asked Jean Lamontagne and Nadia Chan if they had a chance to discuss with their staff and arborists on providing better quality and quicker turnaround times for reports. Nadia Chan responded yes. City staff are currently working overtime to process incoming work on a daily basis. Staff are interested in working towards these terms of reference and have acknowledged the back and forth process in identifying and fixing missing information. One of the struggles that staff are experiencing is not getting enough necessary information, which is possibly due to the arborist not having all the information, etc. The initial comments provided by City staff become irrelevant as new information comes in. Staff eventually have to start the review process all over again, which is quite time consuming. The issue may lie in not specifying criteria for what is required for the report. Jean Lamontagne added that there has been some discussion around standardizing the arborist report across the region with a common template.
- Dwight Heintz asked how the reviews of reports are prioritized by City staff. Jean Lamontagne responded that it is based on Council. The timelines are linked to the priority of the report.
- Dwight Heintz asked whether the timelines are tracked. Nadia Chan responded that the timelines are tracked in Excel spreadsheets based on the date they were submitted and a required completion date.
- Gopal Sahota asked what the timeline is to get all the ducks in a row. Jean Lamontagne responded that the timeline varies case by case and by the file number. It really depends on whether there is sufficient amount of information provided to the City.
- Nathan Hildebrand asked when consultants will be notified of the implementation of this checklist for the review of reports. Nadia Chan responded that what the City hopes to do this year is to have a checklist for the planners to go through of what is required for the arborist report. The Checklist will then be sent to Emily/Allen if completed or it will be sent

back to the consultants if the report is incomplete. The final draft for review will be completed by the end of the review and implemented next year.

## 5. Comments on the Market (All)

- Rob Elliott. Since the last meeting, construction on the project just across the street has begun. It has been delayed a month with frame ware not showing up, etc. Mosaic is trying to get into the market as fast as possible or else they will not sell.
- Roger Jawanda. Citiwest Consulting has been fairly busy and short staffed. Housing prices are increasing. The subdivision project of 40 lots in South Surrey is sold out. The Market is good so far but may change with the new government in place.
- Phil Magistrale. A few townhouse projects are selling in South Surrey. The summer was steady with consistent sales. Curious to see how the market will respond to the increase in interest rate.
- Gopal Sahota. Sales of homes are slowing down but the demand for multi-family homes are increasing. There is a whole niche of multi-family homes being eliminated with the changes to mortgage rules. Other restrictions may be introduced with the new government. The supply should be strongly considered and Gopal has spoken with officials in the Lower Mainland regarding the need to speed up processes. The demand for developer products still remains. Homes in the Fraser Valley are affordable and attainable. Dwight Heintz commented that Vancouver supplied 10,000 units to the market last year and that was not enough to keep up with the demands. Gopal responded that they advised the officials that this flood of inventory is not good enough for the next 4-5 years. It could inadvertently turn the market. There needs to be an ongoing exchange.
- Dwight Heintz. The Townline rental project on 176 St is going well. The market and revenues are strong. Townline has a concrete site in the City Centre and there were some reservations by senior staff on the revenues obtained from concrete. Dwight Heintz has been working at Pollyco on smaller residential, commercial, and industrial projects where the market is fairly strong.
- Nathan Hildebrand. All the sites in Fraser Heights have been sold. Canadian Horizons has engaged with the Community Association early on but found it challenging at the most recent public hearing. They try to engage with the community as early as possible. The Fraser Heights area has been a servicing nightmare, with the trees, infill area, and replacement of pipes in the parks, etc. Canadian Horizons would like to have more product to sell and build. Nervous about the market, Canadian Horizons is targeting smaller areas rather than rushing to buy large tracts of land. The single family homes in South Surrey are not selling as fast as expected.
- Jamie Squires. Guildford and the Plaza are sold out and the Summit is still selling. 2 projects called the Crest by different developers are coming soon. Evolve has 2 units left in South Surrey. Fifth Avenue Real Estate Marketing is currently working on a tower in City Centre.
- Jeff Fisher. Strong market across the region.
- Jaret Lang. The industrial market continues to be strong. Beedie currently has 6 projects in Campbell Heights and they are doing well.
- Rocky Sethi. The checklist for the arborist report would be very helpful. There is no excuse for submitting reports with incomplete information as everyone is quite familiar with what is required. In other municipalities, reports are not accepted right off the bat (at the front counter) if it is incomplete. The clear expectations from both sides are very valuable. The pre-application meetings are important as well with planning, parks and trees, building approvals, building code requirements, etc. Jean Lamontagne commented that setting up timelines is crucial so there are expectations on both sides in terms of deliverables.

- Anne Peterson. She has been on the Delta Planning Committee for 15 years. The checklist is a good idea as it is familiar to the Delta Committee in their sustainability initiatives. Pre-planning meetings are greatly appreciated by developers and the land use team. The team is currently developing a red tape survey, an edge marking processed timeline that tracks people's perspectives on City/Provincial licensing, Federal taxes, etc. The DAC is invited to a panel discussion on December 1<sup>st</sup> discussing development issues, processed timing, and impacts of Light Rail Transit and its opportunities for developers. Complimentary coffee and breakfast will be served.
- Kiegan Scharnberg. The checklist is a good idea and it is very inconvenient for the City to review incomplete applications.

## **6. Other Business (All)**

- Roger Jawanda commented that, in regards to the pre application, in the Fraser Heights area, his team presented the application and proposal to City Staff and the Community Associations before moving forward with the details. Jeff Fisher asked that with the new government, has there been any movement on the LRT project? Jean Lamontagne responded that TransLink will present on the LRT project. The LRT team is currently located in the Gateway tower. The pre planning funding has been approved, but the funding for the project itself has not been finalized.
- Nathan Hildebrand wanted an updated on the NCP #2 Sunnyside moratorium and wants it to be lifted. Jean Lamontagne responded that a school site has to be secured. Nathan Hildebrand responded that there is no point in waiting for decisions to be made as his team has tried everything to secure a school site.

## **7. Next Scheduled Meeting – October 26, 2017**

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:04p.m.