

DRAFT MINUTES

Development Advisory Committee

File: 360-20 (DAC)
Date: February 27, 2020
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: 3W Meeting Room
A, Surrey City Hall

Members:

Brad Howard
Alexander Wright
Louis Kwan
Jas Gill
Jay Chadha
Nathan Hildebrand
Jamie Squires
Mark Sakai
Kevin Rai
Jas Sandhu
Sunny Sandher
Neeraj Sood
Ross Yamaguchi
Adam Donnelly
Tim Bontkes
Jamie Howard
Jonathan Meads
Scott Pelletier
Cassandra McColman
Natalie Pullman
Phil Magistrale

City Staff:

Remi Dube
Rong Gill
Nadia Chan
Tommy Buchmann
John Nguyen

Guest

1. Previous Minutes

The notes of the November 28, 2019 meeting were accepted as distributed.

2. Tree Protection Bylaw update – Nadia Chan

Since August 2019, the City of Surrey has been undertaking a process to update the Tree Protection bylaw which regulates the cutting and replacement of trees.

The process involved a literature review which examined and compared tree protection bylaws of cities across Canada and the U.S. The City also held a public Open House in October 2019 and conducted a public survey which captured 1,300~ survey responses. The survey assessed among other things, opinions on size of protected trees, security amount collected from development, and fines for unauthorized tree removals.

The proposed bylaw update includes amendments with regards to permit fees, replacement trees, tree protection during construction, security releases, and penalty fees.

Comments:

A DAC member asked if there is consideration to allow developers to post bond and reclaim it as they advance through the development process (e.g. phasing for securities during construction as changes occur). Remi Dube replied by saying that would be included in a revised arborist report. Nadia Chan emphasized that it's a process issue unrelated to the bylaw. Remi Dube noted that most feedback provided from developers were regarding securities being returned in a timely manner.

A DAC member asked whether the City compared survey between the general public and developers. Nadia Chan stated that the City was unable to examine the survey responses in that level of detail.

A DAC member asked when the proposed tree protection bylaw would be presented to Council. Remi Dube said likely May 2020.

3. Riparian Areas and Density Calculations – Ron Gill

The purpose of the presentation is to discuss possible changes to Surrey's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw with regards to calculating density.

Currently, when calculating Floor Area Ratio, the zoning bylaw excludes undevelopable areas (defined as utility rights of way and riparian areas).

Zoning Bylaw Part 7A Streamside Protection is based on watercourse class. Anything defined as a protected area under part 7A is to not be included in density calculations.

According to the Official Community Plan there are areas where density is calculated on gross site areas (e.g. City Centre and Secondary plans), however undeveloped areas are not included in gross density calculation. For example, a creek that will be conveyed to the City will not be included in the density calculation.

With regards to development Permits for sensitive ecosystems the desire is for riparian areas to be dedicated to the City. The intent is that the City would be suitable stewards of riparian areas. Maximum safeguarding of riparian areas would be conveyance (dedication). Minimum safeguarding would be applying a restrictive covenant with a statutory right of way, in addition to ongoing reporting from a Qualified Environmental Professional.

The next steps involve seeking early feedback as the City examines ways to (1) ensure consistency between the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw; and (2) encourage maximum safeguarding (dedication/conveyance) of riparian areas.

Comments:

The DAC members expressed concerns on what the land value impact would be of allowing riparian areas to be included in density calculations. The comment was made that while the idea of allowing riparian areas to be included in density sounds good in principle, the additional density may not be useable, but yet would still impact landowner property value expectations.

The DAC commented that the additional density may not be achievable without changing the built form, which may not be contextually supportable (e.g. infill scenarios).

A DAC member suggested that there should be an expedited process for conveyance of riparian areas.

A DAC member suggested that if additional density from including riparian areas conveyed to the City is not possible, that other forms of incentive should be explored, such as DCC credits etc.

A DAC member asked about the daylighting of currently culverted watercourses. Staff acknowledged that we do sometimes get these kinds of proposals.

Ron Gill emphasized that the desired outcomes of examining changes to density calculations are to encourage conveyance to the City and facilitate appropriate built form.

A DAC Member asked if developments will be losing density? Ron Gill replied saying that's how the OCP and ZBL are written now as an undevelopable area may be transferred to another portion of the property.

A DAC Member suggested that during this review process, the City should ensure transparency as much possible and to involve all relevant City departments.

A DAC member suggested that when density calculation is based on gross area and the built form is not compatible with the zoning designation, the City should consider subtracting the floor area. This may help with incentivizing dedication.

A DAC member asked where the City was at in the review process? Ron Gill said that it's still very preliminary.

4. General Questions and Comments

A DAC member asked about the process for grandfathering amendments to active development applications where Neighbourhood Concept Plans are under review (e.g. Fleetwood Town Centre and Clayton). Ron Gill said that the City is reviewing each application on a case-by-case basis.

A DAC member asked about what would happen in a scenario where Council wants to increase density whereas the applicant does not. Ron Gill stated that further conversations with the applicant would need to occur.

5. Comments on the market (all members)

Some DAC members are experiencing steady markets while others have mentioned that land prices are still quite challenging.

A DAC member stated that industrial interest remains strong in Campbell Heights with a number of buildings under construction. The DAC member noted that users are looking for larger commercial spaces.

A DAC member is noticing fewer single-family housing inquiries in Surrey whereas there as been an uptick in interest for multi-family units in Newton.

6. Next Scheduled Meeting – TBD