

DRAFT MINUTES

Development Advisory Committee

File: 360-20 (DAC)
Date: September 24,
2020
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: 3W Meeting Room
A, Surrey City Hall

Members:

Anita Huberman
Jamie Squires
Cassandra McColman
Nathan Hildebrand
Johnathan Meads
Stefan Hertel
Jas Sandhu
Troy Abromaitis
Phil Magistrale
Jennifer Clow
Mike Harrison
Louis Kwan
Jay Chadha
Neeraj Sood
Jasroop Gosal
Ryan Jenkins
Alexander Wright
Stefan Slot
Sunny Sandher
Scott Pelletier
Adam Donnelly
Mike Harrison
Brett Standerwick

City Staff:

Jean Lamontange
Jerome Thibaudeau
Sam Lau
Tommy Buchmann
Fay Wong
John Nguyen
Kristen Lassonde

Guest

1. Previous Minutes

The notes of the May 28, 2020 meeting were accepted as distributed.

2. Land Development Process Modernization – Jerome Thibaudeau

Land development, delivered through Planning and Development and Engineering, continue to modernize its service delivery, using technology and a data driven approach. COVID-19 accelerated

the digitization of business processes as staff and contractors were forced to adopt new practices. Overall, the data and feedback reveals digitization has been well received by both end users and created a more accessible and open process.

Currently 98% of electrical permitting is processed online. Online permitting for plumbing increased from 18% in January 2019 to 76% in August 2020, with the strategic implementation of new functionalities, layout improvements and education campaigns. Online Permitting has benefited both contractors and staff in key areas such as reducing errors and incomplete applications, improving transparency and accountability and faster issuance.

To maintain service level during COVID-19, the City enabled a range of digital services such as the implantation of a call centre, online credit card payment and promoting digital submissions of applications and documents. .

Based on the overall success of digitization the City is working to formalize and enhance its' modified business processes while working closely with Engineering and IT.

Comments:

3. Townhomes on Parkades in Surrey City Centre – UDI

The purpose of the presentation is to address concerns raised regarding townhome on parkade development presented by Jamie Squires of Fifth Avenue.

Several factors guide the desire for townhomes on parkade; frequent doors and patios addressing the street provides street level engagement and a sense of safety and 'eyes on the street' while having sleeping areas on the second level provides a more private and quiet place for rest. Having residential units that are not in townhouse form along busy streets is not a desirable and liveable arrangement. Providing for a range of family housing (2-3 bedroom units) in townhomes are expected as other forms such as flats, and loft forms produce different environments.

Alternative building forms such as flats and loft style townhomes with ground level entries and patios do meet some key objectives such as providing for a sense of human scale, promoting eyes on the street. However, the City wants to emphasize the importance of providing a frequency of doors at grade and providing for 2-3 bedroom units.

Exploring alternative to townhomes at building bases can be explored however key objectives will need to be addressed to ensure liveability. Townhomes will still be requested along arterials as it is important to have sleeping areas above street level. 2-3 bedroom units are required to accommodate families; if 2-3 bedroom units are not accommodated at ground level (in townhouse form) they will need to be provided elsewhere in the building. Furthermore, frequent doors at street level are important. As such studios, one-bedroom units or lofts can be provided along streets and lanes.

Comments:

Jamie Squires: Stated that developers can meet the objectives of the City and looks forward to working together to provide housing at affordable prices

Johnathan Meads had a question regarding softening the street edge – e.g. fences. Some homeowners raised concerns with the lack of fencing and privacy for some townhomes and asked if the City is supportive of fencing as oppose to just hedges. Ann McLean noted that the City is

generally supportive of a low fence in City Centre (minimum 1m setback from property line and less than 1 metre in height). The intent is not to have a strong barrier between the public realm and residences.

Louis Kwan raised a concern that with the requirement of having more doors, there is a trade off of having 2-3 bedroom units on the ground floor because the city has a preference to not allow windowless bedroom. Louis Kwan asked if the City would consider allowing windowless bedrooms if more 3-bedroom were produced? Ann McLean said no. Ann McLean emphasized that the City feels strongly that bedrooms need to have windows. Ann Mclean further noted that if 2-3 bedroom units are not provided at grade, then they will need to be accommodated elsewhere in the building as the City wants to provide viable housing options for families.

Alexander Wright asked for clarification with regards to the City supporting garden flats on local roads as oppose to busy streets. Ann McLean stated that the objective is to have liveable units on busy streets where quieter space can be accommodated for residents by having sleeping areas on above ground level. While the City still wants frequent doors along quieter local roads, a 1 bedroom flat at grade will likely not to have the same traffic noise and frequency of passer-by's as would be the case along arterials and collector roads.

Troy Abromaitis asked if the City of Surrey will be requiring developers to provide minimums for 2 and 3 bedroom units in new development. Ann McLean replied saying that the City of Surrey currently does not have minimum requirements for family units. The City has policy language that speaks to a variety of unit types and Planners work with each site and developer to provide family-oriented units.

Ann Mclean noted that a position for a Development Industry Representative with the Advisory Design Panel has opened and invites members to apply. Also, the nominations for the City's Civic Distinction awards are open for projects between June 2017 – present.

4. Surety Bond Pilot Program – Sam Lau

The City of Surrey surety bond pilot program for Engineering Works security for Servicing Agreements is currently in process. With the most recent Corporate Report based on the economic action and recovery plan, the number of eligible projects have increased to 20. The intent is to have early discussions regarding the suitability of surety bonds for an application and have developers identify their request at pre application meetings. A development variance permit is necessary with the application and should be included with the planning report. Key objectives for application of the surety bond include key strategic locations (e.g. SkyTrain and rapid transit corridors, City Centre) along with economic incentives such as employment and other items significant to Council. These objectives are starting points to assess eligibility of projects.

5. Comments on the Market

DAC members noted either a steady or strong market response throughout summer with regards to interest in residential projects though some noticed less inquiries for single family homes. On the industrial side, demand has picked up as well and there is overall optimism in the market. Virtual open houses have been working well so far.

6. Next Schedule Meeting October 22, 2020