

NOTES

Development Advisory Committee

File: **360-20 (DAC)**
Date: **May 26, 2011**
Time: **2:30 p.m.**
Location: **Planning Room 1,
Surrey City Hall**

Members:

Clarence Arychuk
Tim Bontkes
Jake Friesen
Deana Grinnell
Bob Hyslop
Bill Kruger
Steve Kurrein
David Porte
Gopal Sahota
Jas Sandhu
Patrick Santoro
Greg Sewell
Jeff Skinner

City Staff:

Jeff Arason
Rob Costanzo
Shaun Greffard
Nicholas Lai
Jean Lamontagne
Sam Lau
Don Luymes
Judith Robertson
Fay Keng Wong

Regrets:

Debbie Gallichen
Kevin Shoemaker
Amy Spencer

1. Acceptance of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of April 28, 2011 were accepted as distributed.

2. New City Hall Update (Aubrey Kelly, Surrey City Development Corporation)

- Aubrey Kelly presented a PowerPoint presentation on the new City Hall.
- City Hall will include a community plaza and open space that will eventually link the new City Hall with Central City.
- The possibility of hosting different events in the community plaza is being explored. It will not be part of the capital program at this point, but the plaza space is being planned to be large enough to allow these events.
- A large transparent screen will be on the face of the new City Hall to project onto for community viewing.
- The new City Hall will be about 200,000 sq. ft., with two building blocks (six-storeys each) connected by an atrium ("City Room") which will hold four bridges connecting the two buildings. The possibility of a green roof is being explored.

Comments:

- Greg Sewell asked for clarification regarding the size of the new City Hall relative to the existing City Hall building. Aubrey commented that about three departments that currently work outside the existing City Hall location will be housed in the new City Hall. The new City Hall will also have more Council Chamber seats, from 146 in the existing City Hall to 212 seats in the new City Hall.
- Bill Kruger commented that the new City Hall seems like it will be undersized. Jean Lamontagne commented that there be a Phase 2 in the future. The new City Hall will initially have enough space for the first three years.

- Clarence Arychuk asked if there will be services like a restaurant in the Civic Square. Aubrey commented that there will be a small cafe. Jean added that it would be similar to the City of Richmond's City Hall. Aubrey noted that there are also places to eat nearby.
- A question was asked about parking. Aubrey commented that there will be an 800 stall parkade underground.

3. New City Centre Library (Jean Lamontagne, Planning & Development General Manager)

- Jean presented a PowerPoint presentation on the new City Centre Library.
- The new City Centre Library is scheduled to open in the third week of September. Among its unique features, the library's form is slanted such that light flows down naturally from the third floor to the second floor.
- A section of the library will be leased to SFU Surrey. When the lease runs out, the library's collection will grow and include, for example local artefacts from the Cloverdale Museum.
- The project is still on budget.

4. Grandview Heights NCP 5A – Verbal Update (Jeff Arason, Utilities Manager)

- Jeff Arason provided a verbal update on Grandview Heights NCP #5A.
- Stage 1 is complete and there is a recommended strategy.
- Stage 2 is underway. The consultant is doing a percolation test to determine the best drainage strategy. Results so far indicate that the area has a high water table. City staff and the consultant are working now to explore options. They will bring the recommended options to the CAC for further discussion.
- A question was asked whether this will impact the area (Sunnyside Heights NCP) to the south. City staff and consultant are comfortable with the infiltration approach followed in (Sunnyside Heights Grandview Heights NCP#2).

Comments:

- Clarence asked what kind of options are there. Jeff A. commented that a full infiltration system may not be possible to deliver because of the high ground water table, so it may be a hybrid of infiltration and detention.
- Clarence asked if not having swales would change the land use plan. Jean commented that there are different options being explored. Jeff A. added that these options will be completed within a month.
- Bill Kruger asked if the high groundwater table will affect basements? Jeff A. replied that it is expected that basements will still work.
- Jake Friesen asked about whether the street network will be adjusted. Nicholas Lai commented that the City's Engineering department has made some adjustments.
- Tim Bontkes asked if the street network with smaller blocks is the norm in new NCPs. Jean commented that it is part of the Transportation Committee's direction. Don Luymes responded that the City is supporting a grid pattern that is more compact (smaller blocks)

than in the past in order to address traffic distribution, walkability and on-street parking demands.

- There were concerns expressed that in multi-family developments, particularly townhouses, that the street grid requirements of the City are making it difficult to design economically viable projects, given the price of land.

5. Metro Regional Growth Strategy Update (Don Luymes, Community Planning Manager)

- Don provided an update on the Metro Regional Growth Strategy.
- The Metro Regional Growth Strategy received first and second readings. 23 local governments accepted it, and two did not, yet, including the City of Port Moody and the City of Coquitlam. The City of Port Moody has since resolved its issues and has now accepted the RGS. The City of Coquitlam's objections are more fundamental and triggered a dispute resolution process. The Minister has indicated that the dispute is to be resolved (if possible) in an expedited manner. The initial meetings in the dispute resolution process are June 14 and 16, and a report is due to the Minister on June 30. Every local government is welcome to attend the dispute resolution. There is a desire to complete the ratification of the RGS prior to the next civic election in November.

Comments:

- Steve Kurrein asked if the Metro Regional Growth Strategy Update is about industrialization. Don commented that it one of the main issues the Plan is trying to address is the loss of industrial land in the Region.
- Clarence asked if the provincial election will have more of an effect on the decisions made than a civic election. Don commented that local governments cannot go back on what they approved in the past. David Porte asked does that local governments cannot change their vote on the RGS? Don responded that votes can be changed only on new items (any new changes).
- Patrick Santoro circulated a handout from the Urban Development Institute (UDI). The UDI has joined a larger business coalition in opposing the RGS, and seeking changes to bring a higher prominence to the growth of the regional economy.
- Clarence commented that what is missing is that it is becoming too expensive to live in this area. It is becoming a resort community. Jean responded that is why we have a regional context statement. Don added that if there is a revision of this plan in this process, other local governments will want to be at the table. If the plan is amended, there may be opportunity for the concerns of UDI and others to be addressed.
- Clarence commented that the Metro Vancouver planning process does not draw much attention compared to, say, a specific rezoning application. Jean agreed.
- David commented that Surrey is a little different than other municipalities since there are still opportunities to rezone "greenfield" land to create jobs and affordable housing. A lot of municipalities do not have these options.

6. Corporate Report R074 – Illegal Dumping Abatement Strategy (for information and any comments) (Rob Costanzo, Deputy Operations Manager)

- Rob Costanzo presented on the Illegal Dumping Abatement Strategy.
- There has been an issue with lack of clean-up at development sites and issues of illegal dumping. There use to be specific pockets where the majority of these issues occurred, but that has changed.
- If development sites are not maintained properly, the City receives complaints.
- City staff has been considering ways to reduce illegal dumping, through fines, surveillance, etc.
- The City is also developing a bylaw to deal with construction waste, in line with the regional waste management plan. The model that we will be looking at is source separation at job sites. Some transfer stations do not accept certain types of waste. The City is conscious of the risk of charging too much, which may result in more illegal dumping. There are not enough facilities to handle all the divertible waste resources. Operations would like to work with the DAC to address these issues.

Comments:

- Steve commented that the City of Port Moody gives residents free containers for separating waste. If the City of Surrey were to do the same, it would be a lot more effective than putting the responsibility on the citizen. Rob commented that Port Moody is a good example.
- Clarence commented that he gets phone calls to clean up sites that have been completed for a couple of years. The City is trying to reduce the issue of illegal dumping through higher enforcement, but it is difficult to prove these cases. The City has to work with Metro Vancouver to make them understand our concerns. There is a lack of disposal facilities in Surrey even though there has been demand for the last several years. The City wants to work with the developers to find solutions, and ultimately wants to get to zero waste.
- Steve asked why does the City not create specific facilities for wood, etc. Rob commented that the City is planning an eco-centre/drop off for all items. There is one in the Newton area and one is needed in South Surrey.
- Jeff Skinner asked if there any other diversion programs being set up. Rob responded that City staff will keep this group updated.
- Jeff commented that there are other municipalities that are requiring developers to pay for diverting waste (e.g. organic bins, etc.) for end-users. Rob commented that food, waste, recyclables, etc. will be placed in different carts.
- Rob mentioned the City's plan to create a biofuel process using green waste to produce fuel for the City's fleet of garbage trucks. The procurement period is extensive but also lengthy (education and carting out the carts to each home). Education material will be produced.
- Jake commented that one of his concerns is rats. There seems to be a proliferation of rats in the city because of composting, etc. Will there be an education program for people in, for example, how to compost their table waste? Rob commented that the general responses from the experiences of other cities vary
- Deana Grinnell commented that we have to be careful about how we identify the illegal dumping issue. Recycling and illegal dumping are a different problem for development sites. Her company's experience has been that hazmat items have been dumped onto their sites

by others. Their construction sites have also experienced vandalism. Rob commented that the fine for illegal dumping has been increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000 and surveillance may be used.

- Steve described his experience with illegal dumping by others, such as where the perpetrators were not prosecuted even though the police were there. Trying to get a demolition permit is the problem in the meantime. People dump while developers are waiting to get their demolition permit. Getting the old garbage off the site is the problem. He's had sites that were barricaded, etc. Deana agreed with Steve's comments.
- Clarence added that the problem is the small builder who does not have a container to dump in. Maybe create a program for these small builders. Steve commented that the problem is that these new transfer stations will be privately run because it may lead to these people getting free dumping.
- Rob noted that the target is to implement the Illegal Dumping Abatement Strategy by Fall next year.

7. Comments on the Market (all members)

- Deana commented that ParkLane Homes is not marketing any developments in Surrey. They have some in Langley, released some in Fort Langley (2 bedrooms over parkade), 70 units, commercial in the ground floor which they gave over to the municipality for their use. These have had some good activity. There is a townhome project in Murrayville. No price increases. No investors, mainly local buyers.
- Tim commented that Infinity Group of Companies' projects are currently mainly in Langley and Coquitlam. The market has been very steady in single family. A lot of developers are hungry for good land, which makes it difficult for larger developers to find lots. Clarence added that it is also the price point – people cannot afford single family homes. A lot of sites that are left are difficult projects. Deana commented that greater interest in single family homes is achievable if we can make it affordable.
- Steve commented that Progressive Construction Ltd. Does not have anything in Surrey either. He heard that April was a record month for some builders and it slowed down in May. Richmond, the west side of Vancouver, and Burke Mountain are still seeing really high prices.
- Bill commented that CitiWest Consulting Ltd. has been busy mainly with single family. Nothing much has changed in that respect.
- Gopal Sahota commented that the market has been slow and steady. South Surrey is still hot. He has received a lot of inquiries for seniors projects (not age restricted stratas, more like continuum of care, such as Elim Village in north Surrey) from foreign investors. These places provide that sense of security for people who are older. Aside from running to Chilliwack or the Interior, the Lower Mainland does not have much. Don commented that there is a seniors care facility being proposed in West Clayton. Gopal added that some of the inquirers have money but they are not builders. Perhaps this sector of the market could be an area to target.
- Jas Sandhu commented that the commercial market is still the same. Figures are not at peak and are going back to 2004 figures. There is demand for good land.

- David has one project in Surrey. He is waiting for permits for other projects. The leasing market has improved in Campbell Heights. He has another project in SFU. Things have been slow and steady.
- Jeff commented that Mosaic Homes has similar projects to David's. Mosaic Homes' development in Fleetwood has sold out, and they are starting another development in Surrey. Things have been slow and steady in the Lower Mainland. The old streetcar suburbs have been slow. They would like to purchase more but it is hard to find land.
- Jas commented that a lot more deals involving options are being dropped. Tim added that a lot of people are being dropped by more than one company, and are only being saved by inflation. Gopal commented that the perspective that is out there is uneducated because of hearsay and what other people have gotten for their land. People need to be educated because they do not understand the costs of bringing in servicing and other costs that is involved in developing.
- Clarence commented that Hunter Laird Eng. Ltd has been comfortably busy in the office. They are getting things untangled through the approval process, which seems longer. Little things (e.g. comments coming in late) have made them go through so many delays. There are lengthy delays between approval and construction. Land assemblies and purchases – things are not making sense. It is hard to find workable properties.
- David commented that there was a time when the approval process moved very swiftly. If we can go back to how the process was back then (about 3.5 years ago), it would be good. Clarence asked if there are any benchmarks that we can measure by. It is important to create a way to find how long we take to approve a building permit, etc. For example, all the new equipment created to issue a building permit and showing the effectiveness of this. Don made note of this.
- Tim commented that we have to consider that there are newer requirements that did not exist previously. Each project is different. For example, the heritage requirement.
- Jake commented that building permits for single family do not have many requirements so why does it take so long to get approved? It should be a quick check. The market has definitely softened. For the first time in a long time, the HST issue is coming up. Now with the recent news, we are hearing that HST will be 10% instead of 12%. There is an issue of delay. We are seeing a softening of the market, with the exception of the Chinese market.
- Patrick commented that UDI will have a luncheon and seminar featuring an architectural expert from McGill University who will speak on the impact of the HST on June 16 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver.
- Bob Hyslop (sitting in for Norm Couttie) commented that things have been slow and steady. Adera is finishing one project and has a townhouse project that will start next year.

8. Other Business

- Don commented that Grandview Heights NCP #4 is in progress. West Clayton NCP is starting and it will be a bit easier in terms of environmental and servicing.

9. Next Meeting (June 23, 2011)

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.