

AREA 'H' VILLAGE PLANNING PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
November 10th, 2008 7-9 pm, Lighthouse Community Centre

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

In attendance:

Mac Snobelen	Brenda Wilson	Gerry Quinn
Els King	Lynnette Twigge	Sally Barton
Bill King	Margie Healey	Patty Biro
Wayne Osborne	Amar Bains	David Evans
Don Reynolds	Mark Belling	John Lyotier
Dianne Eddy	Jim Crawford	Dennis Erickson
Keith Reid	Angelina Quint	Roy Nex
Rod Gentry	Michael Recalma	Catherine Watson
Theresa Crawford	Dick Stubbs	Sharon Waugh

Ginny Cosgrove (RDN Senior Planner) and Elaine Leung (RDN Planner)
Dave Bartram, Area 'H' Director

The meeting started at 7 pm

1. Introductions

Dave Bartram welcomed the group, and asked each person to introduce themselves. He then introduced RDN staff Ginny Cosgrove and Elaine Leung.

The group reviewed the objectives and agenda for the evening.

2. Advisory Group Overview (Handouts)

The group reviewed the role and activities of the Advisory Group, as outlined in the Project Terms of Reference and included in agenda handouts.

Representation - Group exercise: mapping of Advisory Group members

The group participated in a quick "mapping exercise" to show where they lived or had property interest. It was a great way to learn more about the geographical representation of those who attended.



It was commented that there was no representation from Horne Lake and Dave Bartram indicated that he would try to encourage participation from that part of the larger community.

Working Together: a few ground rules

Ginny presented the following supporting goal of the Project, as identified in the project terms of reference which states:

“to provide a planning process which acknowledges that there may be a variety of perspectives on a number of matters and which provides a respectful and productive approach to consensus building”

The group reviewed a handout with the following ground rules for how the Advisory group meetings will be conducted.

3. Sustainability Principles

The group spent the remaining portion of the evening discussing the outcomes of the Sustainability Principles workshop and how guiding principles could be established.

Ginny explained that she had giving some thought as to a framework or roadmap for the project based on sustainability principles. She asked the group how they felt about the outcomes of the workshop, copies of which were included in the agenda package and were displayed on the walls at the meeting. Comments included:

- It was a good brainstorming exercise but didn't result in actual principles
- The background information package that was distributed to the Advisory Group includes background information on the Official Community Plan, including a list of community values – it seems that this list could be useful to us as we look at establishing principles
- Is there a way to narrow down the project so that we can start talking about details. Are there more specific concerns regarding; sewer? water?
- Are people in the community thinking of other communities, and the concerns in other communities?
- What do people believe their community is? Do people have a 'Sense of Place'?
- Concern with the Bowser community was raised, and the desire in keeping the community the way it currently is
- Questions arose regarding the timeline of this project, and whether there were any set time frames (are we looking 5 years out, 10 years out...) - It was discussed that ideally, we would like to see things well in to the future
- How can we define a 'village' if we don't know what it is? Can we clearly define it?
- What does a village node look like? Are there different plans for different villages?
- We have to establish what is important for a village; stores? parks? recreation? What about basic amenities?
- We have to determine the basic fundamentals of villages and establish the boundaries; perhaps a quarter mile radius? Villages are places to go for daily needs? Staff needs to provide guidance and examples of other villages.

Ginny suggested that the group might find it useful to consider the package of information that she had prepared and to work with the chart that was on the wall.

The chart on the wall looked similar to the following:

Project Objectives	Sustainability Definition	Guiding Principles	Themes	Goals	Key Subject Areas (a number of discussion topics such as housing, transportation, infrastructure etc...
<p>To prepare one or more village plan(s):</p> <p>based on sustainability principles</p> <p>where the community determines how it would like to address these principles through village centres and village planning</p> <p>providing comprehensive guidelines for the development of village centres, and recognizing the relationship of village centres to one another and to surrounding areas.</p>					

“Sustainability” Definition

The group considered the following ‘sustainability’ definition:

“We understand “sustainability” to mean that we are able to meet our present and future needs in a way which minimizes our impacts on the environment and ensures that future generations will be able to meet their needs too.”

Discussion included:

- whether we should consider not just the needs of people but other species (seems to focus on human sustainability only) or whether this thought could be captured in the “environment” part of the statement.
- there was some discussion about creating a balance vs. minimizing impacts on the environment, and whether we needed to identify the types of needs (social, economic and cultural, and environmental).
- a question was asked as to “how do we know what future generations want/do not want?” and that perhaps what we meant there was that we are “stewards” of the environment and are trying to ensure that the environment is still healthy for future generations

It was suggested that perhaps the group could put the definition, as proposed on the chart, and that the group could revisit/amend it later if they wanted to.

Discussion Re Guiding Principles based on that definition

The group continued through the handout package to look at the following proposed Guiding Principles:

1. Meet the present and future social, cultural, and economic needs of the community and ensure that these needs can be met in the development of our village centres and village planning.
2. Consider how our social, cultural, and economic needs are interconnected. Too much emphasis on one will upset the balance that is necessary to ensure sustainability.
3. Recognize that everything that we do in our community, whether it relates to our social, cultural or economic needs, affects our natural environment, positively or negatively. Through this project, we want to ensure that the plans created minimize the negative impacts on the natural environment.
4. Meet our near term sustainability goals without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their goals also. This means understanding what the long term benefits and costs are in our planning.
5. Ensure that the community is actively engaged in the planning process and that there is transparency in governance.

It was suggested, similarly to the approach used for the sustainability definition, that these guiding principles could be added to the chart on the understanding that the group could go back and rewrite or change these.

Discussion re Village Planning Themes & Goals

The group considered the following possible sustainability “themes” to represent a number of the ideas that came out of the workshop:

Meeting the needs of the community within the community/more self-reliance

Careful Use of Resources & Ecological Integrity

Sense of Place

Governance & Participation

Equity between generations/ understanding Short term & Long Term benefits and costs (implications)

For each theme, the following information was provided for discussion purposes:

- a list of the various ideas generated at the workshop.
- Official Community Plan Community Values Statement and the Regional Growth Strategy Goals that related to each theme
- Examples of possible village planning goals that could be generated

Moving forward with the Chart Exercise

Concern was expressed regarding the format of the meeting, noting that the group size was extremely large and that it was difficult to have real discussions. It was also noted that the chart was difficult to see (some people needed to turn their back) and that proposed discussion information should have been made available before the meeting.

It was agreed that the group should have the opportunity to review the materials included in the agenda and come back to the next meeting to discuss the information further.

Other discussion points/topics:

- The group discussed possible ways of encouraging discussion - whether it smaller groups could work together in the mtgs or perhaps form working groups/subcommittees or whether we could have targeted discussions for each geographical area. It was noted that there are some common themes that do relate to all of the areas (such as transportation).

- A phrase which was repeated by several was ‘linking communities together,’ ie. geographically, neighbourhoods. This could be done with safe transportation, and should be done to meet the needs of all of the communities in the area.
- Several also commented on the importance of ‘sense of place’ and how well planned, aesthetically pleasing communities encourage people to go there. Can people safely walk to services? Do people want to go there?
- Comments also arose over the senior community, and whether they as a group are being undervalued. They still provide income to the community, and thus, their services and needs should be continued to be looked at. The community should be designed around their needs.
- However it was recognized that we need to address others, as the age in the community will change. The community needs to attract younger families to carry on. The goal is to provide services to all, so everyone can remain in this community. You must change to meet the needs of the community.
- this approach (of comparing what was said through the workshop with the general values and principles of the OCP) could be useful as a way of identifying possible areas where there might be gaps or parts of the OCP that don’t fully address sustainability issues. Industry was raised as a topic for instance – Ginny indicated that two of the existing village centre areas have industrial zoned land and therefore industry was likely to be a topic for discussion.
- We are not an industry driven community, but more a service driven community. However, we need to be prepared to accommodate new industry to the area, while protecting what we currently have. We should provide quality care for seniors.

Dave Bartram asked other participants for their ideas at this time – responses included:

- Whether we should eventually be focusing on Bowser & Deep Bay (comment also made that we should not discount Dunsmuir)
- That it seems that we have a highway oriented development and that there is chance to plan it the way we want – “plan it and they will come”; an opportunity to create identities to each place;
- Perhaps that we need to develop more than 1 plan
- That money will determine what gets built where and that Bowser seems to be where it is happening;
- That perhaps we need to also consider what is happening outside of the boundaries of our community (whether village centres are being considered outside of Area ‘H’) & whether we need to consider Horne Lake and whether there will be people living there (it was noted that current regulations do not support year round residence there);

- That there should be an opportunity for different areas to talk about what their sense of place is
- in response to a question regarding whether there should be a proposed area for Deep Bay (that the project so far seems to have focused on Dunsmuir, Qualicum Bay and Bowser), there seemed to be a bit of confusion over identifying a boundary at this point in the process. Ginny acknowledged that the community feedback dating back to June 2008 did indicate that there are questions about whether the Deep Bay area should be considered as a village centre. Ginny suggested to the group that at this point in the project, it might be worth not thinking too much about boundaries of village centres but rather trying to understand what we are trying to do with village centres generally.
- Wayne Osborne commented that he had the opportunity to become familiar with the Bamberton community planning process which used a similar approach (establishing sustainability principles at the start of the planning process) and that there is a document from the Bamberton project which might help people. Ginny will drop off the document at the Bowser Library. Wayne commented that he thought it is important to establish the guiding principles first. *(please note that the Bamberton document is now at the Bowser Library for those who are interested).*

Objectives for the Next meeting

Dave Bartram commented on the importance of establishing guiding principles first before getting into the details of the project. He suggested that in preparation for the next meeting, that the group:

- Review the materials presented at the meeting
- E-mail thoughts and comments to Ginny at gcosgrove@rdn.bc.ca

The meeting ended shortly after 9 pm.