

AREA 'H' VILLAGE PLANNING PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #6

March 4th, 2009 7-9:30 pm, Lighthouse Community Centre

FINAL SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

In attendance:

Amar Bains	Sally Barton	Joyce Bartram
Patty Biro	Keith Brown	Anne Copas
Jim Crawford	Theresa Crawford	Dianne Eddy
David Evans	Margaret Healey	David Heenan
Christo Kuun	Bill King	Els King
Barb Lyotier	John Lyotier	Joan Menzel
Wayne Osborne	Shirley Petria	Gerry Quinn
Angelika Quint	Michael Recalma	Keith Reid
Diane Sampson	Josianne Sequin	Yvonne Slater
Mac Snobelen	John Stathers	Dick Stubbs
Greta Taylor	Linda Tenney	Lynette Twigge
Lisa Verbicky	Sharon Waugh	Catherine Watson
Geo Williamson		

Lisa Bhopalsingh (RDN Senior Planner), and Elaine Leung (RDN Planner)
Dave Bartram, Area 'H' Director

1. Introductions & Review of Agenda

Dave Bartram reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any additions. Margie Healey stated that she would like to discuss the recent circulated Mapleguard flyer, and add it to the agenda. It was decided to add this to the agenda and discuss as the first item.

2. Mapleguard Newsletter

- Advisory Group members discussed the Mapleguard newsletter in relation to information quoted from two Provincial water reports. Dick Stubbs stated he felt the flyer was disrespectful to the Advisory Group and planning process stating "We have to follow the process."
 - On Salt Spring Island development was stopped due to fear of lack of water.
 - We don't want unbridled development, but we want a vision. We have to think about each other.
- John Lyotier discussed the second water report, quoted as a 'never ending supply.' He stated that Dianne Eddy's flyer is misleading. She is only highlighting the results of 2 low level wells, but neglected to mention the 4 others which are fine.
- Dave Bartram discussed the water reports relating to a previous provincial development proposal for Golf Courses and Housing between Qualicum Bay area and Bowser. He highlighted the findings in the two provincial water reports.
- Dianne Eddy said that the Golf course development was cancelled due to lack of water.

- Dave Bartram indicated it was not his understanding the projects were cancelled due to lack of water. He believes the projects were cancelled because of the majority of the community were against the projects and very vocal about it, and that there was a provincial election coming up. He said he had worked with the previous MLA, the RDN CAO and the Chairman of the RDN Board to convince the then Minister of Land and Water BC, George Abbott to have the Province terminate the project. He suggested that cancellation of the project had more to do with politics than an issue with water.
- Dave Bartram believes that there were 2 monitoring wells in Deep Bay. These are the only two wells in Area H that provide controlled scientific monitoring of aquifer information for the Ministry of Environment.
- Joyce Bartram noted that there is now only 1 test well, as Ministry of Environment indicated that the two test wells were too close to each other so results are being duplicated.
- Jim Crawford said that the Deep Bay Water Improvement District's report says that the current water supply can accommodate growth to 2030.
- Sharon Waugh said that with respect to the Mapleguard flyer, she is not comfortable releasing information to the community without first agreeing on it as a group.
- Dianne Eddy stated that she will continue to release flyers. In a democracy, all points of view are welcome.
- Dick Stubbs stated that the Village Plan is supposed to be an educational exercise. Dianne's flyer should be an editorial opinion, not one that is representative of the Mapleguard society. The community reads it and interprets it as saying 'no' to development. 'We should not be planning based on fear'.
- Dianne Eddy said that if people do not like what she is doing then they can 'kick her off the Group'.
- Dave Bartram concluded the discussion by saying that everyone is entitled to free speech and we need to move on to cover the rest of the agenda.

3. Summary Notes from February 11th

- Sally Barton questioned Joyce Bartram about the recorded comments in the February 11th meeting notes saying that the Deep Bay Water Improvement District's reduction in consumption is largely due to customer awareness of water usage. Sally wondered whether another contributing factor to decreasing water usage levels was due also to fixing leaks.
- Joyce responded that a number of factors contribute to decreased water usage, including leak detection. However she believes that customer awareness is a significant factor. The water usage levels are down more than 50% since the meters were installed.
- Lisa noted that Joyce's original notes included these comments.
- Sally requested that the minutes be amended to reflect this note. **Note Minutes Amended as requested and circulated via e-mail Thursday March 5th 2009.**

4. Review of purpose of Village Planning and Process

- Lisa gave a brief overview of the objectives and intended steps involved in the Village planning process. She spoke about her timeline for the project which ends in September and her expectations regarding the project. Several people questioned what would happen if the project does not get completed. "What happens if we don't get there?"
- Lisa spoke about priorities. Perhaps the Group should prioritize what issues/areas they would like to be addressed first.
- Keith Brown questioned whether the Group, and the Village Project is trying to satisfy the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) review timelines. Lisa responded that it is her understanding that the project timing is not dependent on meeting the RGS review timeline. She noted that the results of the Village Project may however result in changes to the RGS and that the work done by the Group may be used throughout the Region.
- Sally responded that perhaps that if the time with Lisa ends, the Group can continue working together without funding. Lisa agreed that this is definitely a possibility.
- Bill King stated that the Group should continue working on the project, using priorities.
- Dave Bartram explained that the project was supported by the RDN Board because of the significant growth that has been occurring in Area H, 21 houses in 2007 and 32 in 2008. This project is directed as part of our OCP implementation process and the project is designed to give the community an opportunity to manage growth in our Rural Village Nodes. It is an opportunity that we have been given to have a say in how our Rural Village Nodes will be planned and developed in the future.
- Greta questioned if development will depend on availability and supply of water.
- Dave Bartram replied that people have the right to develop their property under existing zoning. However, our OCP policies state that as part of the development criteria process the Water Districts will be asked if they can supply water and fire protection for the proposal before it goes to the RDN Electoral Area Planning Committee for consideration.
- Greta questioned whether the Water Districts will make the right decision.
- Dave Bartram said that the Water Districts are owned by the people in the community and that they elect residents to manage the Water District to the best of their ability. All trustees on all the Water Districts take their responsibilities very seriously.

5. John Lyotier's rural village node proposal

- John Lyotier suggested an idea to focus on Bowser Village node and use it as a 'pilot project.' There would be an opportunity to learn and create a template from the Bowser Node that could then be applied to other areas. Choosing Bowser as the first priority to be addressed would allow the Group to focus their time and efforts in one area.
- Margie spoke in favour of the idea. However she would need to know if boundaries would be expanded or not. Most of the population occurs outside urban containment boundaries. Would the Bowser boundaries be expanded to

- include these areas or to expand to Deep Bay?? Before we define urban containment boundaries, we need to know where the node will be.
- Lisa responded that nodes are forms of containment, but most areas of growth in Area H are outside these areas. The boundaries of Village nodes need to be looked at to see what makes sense and how adjusting them meets the Goals set out by the Group. She noted that even if the Group decides to focus on Bowser there will likely be objectives and policies that come up that are relevant and can be applied to the whole area.
 - Sally agreed that the Village boundaries are not clear. Goals are not specific like in the OCP. She is also in favour of John's idea of a Bowser Node and 'blending' Margie's idea of having to look at boundaries and adjacent areas.
 - Mac Snobelen stated that this is a good idea, as there is too much for the Group to handle. Bowser is an area with the most activity.
 - Greta also agreed that Bowser has historically been, and will continue to be the centre of activity.
 - In response to a question regarding what the Village Nodes are, Lisa stated that the Village Node is an urban containment boundary. The boundaries of the Village Node can be considered as the boundaries of an actual Village and the Village 'Centre' can be considered the Commercial core within the Village Node such as the actual commercial areas of Bowser. Subdivisions adjacent to the Village Node could be considered neighbourhoods and policies made to address them specifically.
 - Jim Crawford stated he felt the Group could be productive if they all worked in small groups and tackled all 3 village centres as small groups instead of just one.
 - Wayne Osborne stated that "Dunsmuir and Qualicum Bay is sitting on an unconfined aquifers, and yet we are supposed to be protecting the environment." He questioned whether we can grow responsibly. "Is it even possible to grow on unconfined aquifers? Bowser sits on confined aquifers".
 - Dick Stubbs stated that we should concentrate on one node.
 - Theresa Crawford asked if we had a map of population growth in the area. Dave Bartram was able to provide the population projection map for Area 'H.' **Note: PDF map of population attached to these notes & hard copies available from Lisa at the Bowser office.**
 - Catherine Watson stated that her main interest in the project is the environment, land resources and air quality. She questioned that if there are unconfined aquifers, is there any determination as to whether growth can occur. She questioned if the Group only focuses their attention on Bowser, what opportunities will be lost? The Group should be looking at policies for the whole area, and whether they can be applied to the whole area.
 - Lisa suggested that in the process of addressing the Bowser Village node there will be a need to look at policies for the surrounding area and these will likely develop with the process. At each step the Group will have to consider how different decisions impact reaching their sustainability goals and consider how decisions made for Bowser affect other areas.
 - After a majority vote by a vote of raised hands, Dave Bartram concluded that the Group had come to a consensus, and John's idea was agreed upon. He noted that if there were any concerns, the Group should direct them to Lisa.

- Amar spoke and said that perhaps it would be easier if the Group had a 'prototype plan' to look at as an example. He questioned whether the meeting reflected the Group going backwards.

6. Suggested Open House – April 8th

- Lisa proposed an idea of having an open house for the Advisory Group, and community members on April 8th. The intent of such an event would be to allow the Group to more quickly access a variety of information and options that will influence the development of Village plans. The event would also be an opportunity to let the wider community know where the project is at and also allow them to have questions answered on a variety of topics. RDN staff and other agencies are willing to attend an Open House and work with the Advisory Group with regard to the information they present.
- At present the Group is receiving information during meetings and given the time limits, Lisa is trying to think of alternative ways of covering this information more efficiently. She is open to what the Group feels is the best approach.
- Mac believed that the Group should wait until they approach the community before having an open house, as the Group had just made a major decision about how to proceed with the project.
- Both Bill and Lynette agreed, they believed they did not have enough information to approach the community.
- Sally disagreed and said she believed the open house to be an information forum on receiving information, not an event where the Group is presenting something to the community. She suggested they call it an 'information session' so as not to confuse the community.
- Catherine agreed, and stated that she would like to have such a session.
- A suggestion arose that the information session would be an opportunity to discuss different options for the community, and see what other communities are doing.
- There was debate about the timing of the 'Information Session' and the Group agreed that April 29, 2009 was the best date for it.
- Lisa will send out a list of topic areas that Advisory Group members may wish to consider working with RDN staff on. ***Please see attached to summary notes.***

7. Future Steps & Meetings

- Lisa discussed future meetings and the possibility of having more frequent meetings or longer meetings as an option to help the project move forward faster. Lisa suggested the idea of having regular Friday discussions on a variety of topics for those who are either newcomers or others who have specific questions that do not need to be addressed by the whole Group.
- The Group agreed that the upcoming March 25 and April 15 advisory Group meetings could run for 3 hours, rather than the typical 2 hours.
- Jim Crawford announced to the Group that on March 28 he was holding a special 'walk' in the Deep Bay area on his lands at 1pm in the Ship and Shore restaurant. He also mentioned that they might be bringing Randall Arendt back.
- Lisa said that she would send out a summary of all the key meeting dates discussed. ***Note revised meeting date summary sent out Thursday March 5th.***

8. Review of Proposed Addition to Sustainability Principles and Revised Goals

- Lisa raised John Lyotier's recommendation to add a new sustainability principle based on safety.
- Keith Brown felt that health and safety and administration are two important issues to consider.
- Bob Hunt felt that new guiding principles are a distraction. There are already existing regulations that regulate safety. We will be stuck with what's available.
- Wayne Osborne agreed that health should be an important issue to consider.
- Lisa suggested breaking into groups to review the draft Goals that Sally and others had revised. She said that John's recommendation could be further discussed in the smaller groups.
- Sally noted that she had not made major changes to the goals and had mostly reorganized them.
- Advisory Group members were given the choice of addressing one of 5 topic areas that the Goals were divided into or looking at all five. Members chose to break into self selected groups to discuss a specific set of Goals under a topic area.
- At 9:30 Lisa suggested that the Group break without coming back to plenary given the time. Lisa said she will type up the results of the goals exercise and circulate them the following week. ***Note the revisions to the goals will be circulated that week of March 16th to allow one group more time to work on them.***

9. Announcements

- Lisa asked that Advisory Group members fill out information cards so that the Group can get to know each other better. Indicated that currently people do not know each other well and do not have each other's contact information. Lisa would like to see more open communication among the Group and the ability for people to get together and share ideas outside of the Group meetings. Asked that people only fill out whatever information they are comfortable sharing.
- Lisa announced the Septic Smart Workshop on March 11th, 7 pm at the Lighthouse Community Centre and flagged the handouts. The Urban Development and Environment workshops in Cumberland on March 17th and in Nanaimo on March 12th were also noted.
- Lisa asked the Group if Chris Ling from Royal Roads University could observe the March 25th meeting. She explained that he is experienced in doing sustainability planning and is interested in sharing ideas and learning from our process. She noted that he is a potential resource to the process.

10. Next meeting

Wednesday March 25th, 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Lighthouse Community Centre.

The meeting ended shortly after at 9:30 p.m.