

Area 'H' Village Planning Advisory Group Meeting #13
September 16th, 2009 6:30-9:30 pm Lighthouse Community Centre
DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance:

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Keith Brown | Bob Hunt | Theresa Crawford |
| Jim Crawford | Dianne Eddy | Gerry Quinn |
| Jonathan Stathers | Margie Healey | John Lyotier |
| Christo Kuun | Sally Barton | Angelika Quint |
| Josianne Séguin | Mac Snobelen | Wayne Osborne |
| Gordon Webb | Catherine Watson | Wayne Morrison |
| Keith Brown | David Evans | Dick Stubbs |
| Peter Mason | Kerry Mason | Mike Porohowski |
| Sylvia Porohowski | Barbara Christie | Bob Olson |
| Bon Thorburn | Mark Rautiainen | Fred Ryvers |
| Rob ? | | |

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

1. Review of Agenda

Lisa B. reviewed the agenda. No changes to the agenda were made. It was noted that residents of Boorman Road were present and that Lisa would speak with them during the break.

2. Summary Notes from June 24th

There were no amendments to the draft June 24th meeting notes. Lisa noted that those who have not had a chance to review the notes could provide comments/amendments via e-mail and she will resend the original notes.

3. Update on meetings with Highways, Emergency Responders and Commercial Land Owners– including road access and wastewater treatment

Lisa and Dave provided a brief update of meetings that took place on September 3rd in Bowser.

- a. The first meeting during the morning of September 3rd, was aimed at providing local emergency responders with an opportunity to provide input into safety issues with regard to the existing road network and new ideas coming out of the charette. In attendance were, Lisa Bhopalsingh, Dave Bartram, Sally Barton, Dick Stubbs and Jani Thomas (RDN Emergency Services Coordinator), Scott Henley (Citizens on Patrol).

The following issues were discussed:

- § As the Village Plan is encouraging more density, there will be a need to take into account that increased numbers of 'vulnerable' populations will affect emergency response and preparedness including evacuation routes.
- § Looping roads are best for emergency access.
- § Minimizing railway crossings is important.

- § A few ideas for alternate roads or new roads in undeveloped areas where sketched out.

Representatives from BC Ambulance, RCMP and the Fire Department were unable to attend the meeting however they will be provided further opportunity to comment on the proposed road layouts and other sections of the draft Village Plan (e.g. emergency response/safety concerns).

- b. The second meeting in the afternoon involved several owners of commercial land in Bowser Village Centre and included, Mac Snobelen, Dave Desmuelles, Keith Reid, Fred Ryvers, Ron Ryvers, Pete Bennett, Edith Quint and Angelika Quint. Also in attendance were Dave Edgar (Ministry of Transportation (MOT) Planning Engineer), Dave Bartram, Lisa Bhopalsingh and Sally Barton. The key purpose of this meeting was to see if there was interest amongst these landowners in collaborating to deal with common issues related to developing their properties such as wastewater and safe access to commercial properties. It was noted that in order to get density in the Bowser Village Centre there needs to be a community wastewater treatment system in place to allow for higher density development.

Dave Bartam noted that the Legion has approached the RDN with a proposal to develop a 36 unit for semi-assisted seniors housing. RDN staff will advise the Legion of what steps they need to take to meet planning requirements including Development Permits. He noted that the Legion has changed their original idea for wastewater treatment to a system that produces water suitable for landscape irrigation, however this system is very expensive.

The meeting resulted in the business leaders showing interest in collaborating on a joint wastewater system with the RDN leading the way with regards to what the options are. It was noted that business owners did not want to pay more to contribute to a community wastewater system than it would cost them to service on their own.

Dave will be meeting with the RDN's Wastewater Services in the near future to discuss this further.

Roads were discussed in relation to:

- § Having speed limits of 50 km – starting outside of the Bowser Village Boundary. This option would be relatively low cost to implement compared to others.
- § In addition to speed limits need to consider the design of the road to provide cues to slow traffic down (buildings closer to the highway, on street parking, trees, landscaping).
- § Considering roundabouts on Highway 19A at Crossley and Mc Coll Road intersections – this is further out than the locations suggested during the charette because it was felt that this would allow greater likelihood of people decreasing speed before it entering Bowser.
- § Using the highway right of way to create pedestrian separation from car lanes on Highway 19A through Bowser.

- § Cross walks – upon request, MOT will conduct an evaluation of the need for different levels of crosswalks. This will involve a study of traffic flows and pedestrian volume. Costs of cross walks can be high depending on the level of cross walk required/proposed (e.g. flashing lights).
- § Reducing the 4 lane section of Highway 19A between Bowser and Deep Bay to 2, and using lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. It was noted that the 4 lanes predated the building of the Inland Island Highway and with the Inland Highway in place 4 lanes are no longer necessary.
- § Limiting the number of businesses accessing directly onto Highway 19A and encouraging the use of collector roads, side roads and shared driveways.
- § Costs are involved for all these options and items like roundabouts and flashing crosswalks are particularly expensive. We will need to figure out what community priorities are and what contributions can come from developers.

It was noted that the Ministry of Transportation are changing the way they are doing business in terms of considering options they would not have in the past. It was felt that so far during the Village Planning process, MOT have been very open to considering a range of options that meet the community's desire to see traffic calming and improving pedestrian access and safety in Bowser Village Centre.

4. Update on status of Village Plan

Lisa briefly described the draft plan table of contents and noted that the policy sections of the plan are under review by RDN staff. She is aiming to get the full draft to the group by October 7th. The primary objective of the current meeting is to review the draft Land Use Designations.

A public Open House has been scheduled for October 21st to allow the wider community an opportunity to give feedback on the plan.

5. Review of proposed Land Use Designations in Plan Draft Section 4

The group proceeded to review the different land designations.

Density and Floor Area Ratios

- § Lisa discussed the concept of density, housing forms, building heights and lot sizes. She noted that the draft plan contains wording for an average target density for the whole Village Centre and individual ones for different land uses. She showed examples of different densities of development along Garrod Road and Crossley Road.
- § Gordon and Keith noted that they would prefer to see no density limits for the different land use designations.
- § Lisa explained the concept of FAR- Floor Area Ratios (the ratio of the area of a parcel in relation to the total floor area of buildings on the parcel - see attached). FAR's in combination with parcel coverage (percentage of a parcel that can be covered by buildings) and setbacks can be used as an alternative way of achieving control over the height and shape of buildings while still providing flexibility on the number of units provided within a building/on a parcel of land.

- § Jim, Gordon and Keith stated that FAR's provide more flexibility and that they liked working with FAR's over density.
- § The group supports removing target densities from the different land use designations in favour of Floor Area Ratios along with other tools such as height, setbacks and parcel coverage to achieve desired densities and building forms.

Commercial Mixed Use Land Designation

- § There was general agreement on the intent statement for the Commercial Mixed Use Land Designation.

Building Heights

- § Dick noted that in Qualicum Beach the 3rd storey has to be in the roof. Can 'cap' roof height and define roof pitch to achieve desired look.
- § Consider if there are some areas where 3 storeys would not be wanted – so can limit to 2 storeys (or less) for example in some residential areas with ocean views or in areas with light industrial uses so that the buildings do not dominate or overshadow commercial and residential uses.

Consider Community May Not want Increased Density

- § Bob noted that the Advisory Group needs to consider the potential backlash from residents of Bowser who do not want to see increased density.
- § Lisa said that the aim of the Village plan is to help preserve rural land values outside of Village Centres by encouraging density within the Village Centres. By encouraging and allowing greater density and a mix of uses in Village Centres, it will allow for the provision of a greater range of housing choices and affordability for seniors and other groups. Increased density and a mix of residential and commercial uses in a compact area will also help reduce costs of providing transit and other services. [The plan will also make community expectations and priorities clear to developers, land owners and the RDN]
- § Lisa also noted that at the last Open House following the charette, there appeared to be a lot of support for the direction the planning process was going in. However she acknowledged the concerns and noted that the Advisory Group has a role to play in explaining the reason behind the draft Village Plan.

Maximum size and appearances for Retail Stores

Returned to review of Commercial Mixed Use land designation – discussion of size of retail stores including grocery store and possibly hardware stores.

- § Angelika said that Tomm's would ideally like to have up to 16,000 sq ft permitted to allow for future expansion (draft has 10,000 sq ft maximum for grocery stores).
- § There was no opposition expressed in relation to 16,000 sq ft maximum size for a grocery store in the Commercial Mixed Use designation.
- § The use of design guidelines to ensure that stores fit with a rural village appearance was discussed in terms of requiring larger buildings to have smaller retail units within them and provide the appearance of a series of smaller buildings.

Gas Bars and Service Stations

- § Gas stations were discussed in terms of prior discussions with the Advisory Group about not permitting gas stations within the Village Centre Boundary due to concerns over contamination versus the need for a gas and service station for local use (including the whole of Area H). The location of a gas station was discussed in terms of light industrial use. **The current ESSO gas station is in a Commercial 4 (CM4M) zone that permits a gasoline service station– the area known as Georgia Park is in the same zone. The lots across the highway from Magnolia court between the Legion and Railway track road crossing has zoning which allows a gas bar (CM2M). Please note that Lisa thinks that she incorrectly stated this the other way around during the meeting. (Please see attached zoning Map)**

B R E A K

6. Review of proposed Land Uses Continued....

Building Height & Water Pressures for domestic use and Fire protection

- § A question was asked about whether or not water servicing pressure is adequate for fire protection as well as general service for 3 storey building height. Dick responded that Bowser Water is not currently responsible for fire protection. He noted that depending on where 3 storey buildings were located the water pressure would differ, for example on Crossley Road water pressure would not be adequate to service a 3 storey building however these issues can be overcome with pumps installed by developers. Currently there is no ladder truck to service a 3-storey building so that would have to be addressed with developers possibly contributing to the costs.

Drive Throughs

- § In reviewing the list of uses under Commercial Mixed Use land use designations, Lisa asked the Group about previous discussions not to allow drive through restaurants. After some debate it was agreed that use of the words “sit down café/restaurants” could be used in the commercial zones to make it clear that drive through’s are not a desired use.

Development Permit Areas & Design Guidelines

- § Lisa noted that development permit and design guidelines can be used to guide what buildings look like. Lisa is building on the existing development permit area guidelines for Village Centres in the OCP to help achieve what residents say they want to see Bowser Village Centre look like while still ensuring sufficient flexibility. She is also looking at improving the development permit area guidelines for Aquifer protection.
- § Concern was expressed about ensuring that guidelines do not constrain development into being too ‘sanitary’ and losing character.

Orientation and Parking, Accessibility

- § There was a comment on sidewalk widths in Parksville being too small to accommodate people, wheelchairs, scooters and pedestrians and the need to ensure that sidewalk widths in Bowser Village Centre can accommodate these uses well.

- § It was noted that there are sometimes conflicts between the needs of a variety of different users from wheelchairs to those who are visually impaired for example in relation to curb side letdowns for wheelchair users that pose a hazard for those who are sight impaired.
- § Comments came from developers that underground parking is expensive and unlikely to occur in the Bowser Village Centre because of cost of \$20,000 per stall.

Costs to Developers

- § Concerns were raised about the cost of different Village Planning requirements for developers. The need to put a cost on different items was expressed. How much will all these things cost the developer?
- § Lisa said that it would be difficult to get exact costs on the different items within the timeframe but could prioritize what is important and realistic as a starting point.
- § Dave responded that we need to design a Village to what the community would like to see and in general the developer will pay, (the community has said that developers should pay for the extra costs their developments require for infrastructure and servicing).
- § Concern was expressed that if development is made so difficult then the development might not go ahead and nothing will happen.
- § Guidelines may be too rigid and prevent development.
- § Desire to see noise restrictions in the guidelines.

Commercial Tourist Land Use Designation

- § Concern about not wanting to end up with development that has taken place in Parksville with high-rise buildings at the waterfront.
- § Do not want to destroy existing view corridors.
- § Should encourage the development of new view corridors as well.
- § Lisa gave the example of where high density can be achieved with lower building heights while retaining views by comparing North and South False Creek in Vancouver with 3-4 storey staggered buildings along a hillside compared to high-rises on the other side.

Commercial Service Land Use Designation

- § Add protection of 'air quality' to the intent statement for this land use designation.
- § Concern was noted about air emissions from Bowser woodworking with seniors residential being placed adjacent to it.
- § Consider the idea of having long narrow lots with narrow frontage with retail uses close to road and heavier uses behind out of site from the road.
- § General discussion about light industrial uses and what would be appropriate in the Commercial Service designation. There was debate and concern expressed about having a Village Centre that was commercial only without enough light industrial.
- § In response to a question, Lisa read out the light industrial definition from the current Zoning Bylaw 500 - "**Light Industry**: The wholesale, warehousing, testing, service, repair or maintenance of an article, substance, material, fabric or compound, and includes artisan and manufacturing shop, having a gross floor area not exceeding 200 sq. metres, and retail sales accessory to the principal use".

Railway Corridor & adjacent land uses

- § Jim commented on a meeting he had with a consultant to the Island Corridor Railway Foundation who noted that if the government funds railway track upgrades then there could be a much higher volume of railway goods being transported along the corridor. This should be a consideration for land uses close to the tracks.
- § He noted that the consultant said they would be open to the idea of a stop in Bowser.

Residential Recreational Land Use Designation

- § Comments that Bed and Breakfasts are currently allowed in all residential zones. B&B should be considered as a home based business use and not listed separately as a use in zoning.
- § Lisa asked the Group what the primary objective was for the Residential-Recreational land use designation - Residential or Tourist Accommodation as the dominant use, what kind of mixture is acceptable? Important to get the intent behind this land use correct as it will determine the types of suitable uses proposed.
- § Concern was expressed about tourist accommodation being used as affordable housing with the potential for people being temporarily homeless during peak tourist seasons when landlords can get higher short-term rents. Dick gave an example of this on Saltspring Island.
- § Noted that the tourist season is only 2 months of the year so the focus should be on residents.
- § The enjoyment of the area is for residents first and tourists second.
- § After some debate it was agreed that the Residential Recreational designation should be removed from the Land Use designations and be replaced by a Residential use where Bed and Breakfast type tourist accommodation could be provided.

7. Announcements – Next Meetings

- Advisory Group meeting October 7th 2009 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Lighthouse Community Hall.
- OPEN HOUSE October 21st, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Lighthouse Community Hall.

The meeting ended at 9:45 p.m.