

Regional District of Nanaimo
Summary of the Electoral Area ‘A’ Official Community Plan Review
Citizen’s Committee Meeting Held on Monday, August 10, 2009 at 6:30pm
At the North Cedar Improvement District Hall
2100 Yellow Point Road

The Chair, Joe Burnett – Called the meeting at 6:30.

Adoption of Minutes

Joe Burnett – Brian Collen stated that some of the comments were mistakenly attributed to him in the July 13th minutes. The committee agreed that the minutes be deferred to the next meeting.

South Wellington Commercial Area

Greg Keller, RDN Senior Planner –The land use designation in the existing Official Community Plan is for an industrial - commercial area. It is a regional industrial service centre that is meant to service the area beyond the Area ‘A’ boundaries. The designation supports industrial and highway commercial uses that do not affect ecosystems and ground water resources. The current Official Community Plan does not support any expansion to this designation. A development permit area is also in place to protect the environment and maintain the ‘form and character’ of the area.

Lavonne Garnett – Explained that she did not understand the ‘form and character’ aspect.

Greg Keller – Explained this is a term used to describe the characteristics of a development such as site layout, parking, landscaping, and screening so there is the least visual impact.

Lavonne Garnett – Stated that the development permit does not seem to be in effect.

Greg Keller – Provided a summary of a high level inventory of the South Wellington Industrial Commercial Area.

Participant – Questioned if the airport area was being considered.

Greg Keller – Confirmed that it is not because it is not located within the South Wellington Industrial Commercial Area.

Kenn Joubert – Questioned where does water supply become a consideration.

Greg Keller – Explained that this is just an inventory. There are a number of Residential 2 zoned properties that if they are rezoned would need to provide adequate supply of water.

Greg Keller – Although we do not have understanding of demand, there is potential for infill in the industrial area. There is an estimated additional 10,000 m² for industrial development. Sandstone is proposing access along fielding road, though we do not know exactly where. The potential for additional floor area is expected to meet the needs of South Wellington during the life expectancy of the new Official Community Plan.

Henrik Kreiberg – Asked if this is a conservative estimate based on displacing existing land uses.

Greg Keller – The estimate does include existing developed lands because many still have the potential for additional development.

Henrik Kreiberg – Is timeframe for build out based on the conservative estimate

Greg Keller – It is a very high level estimate. It would require significant work for more detail.

Henrik Kreiberg – Explained that he is trying to get a sense for the amount of space. In reality it could be much less.

Stephen Henderson – Questioned if there a track record for rezoning residential to industrial land.

Greg Keller – Did not know how many were rezoned, only that some were successful and others were not within the South Wellington Industrial Commercial Area.

Ray Digby – Questioned if this whole area is classified as an industrial area.

Greg Keller – Designation states that it is meant for industrial development.

Ray Digby – Questioned if residential would likely be rezoned. If the community felt that Sandstone would provide enough industrial space, would the Official Community Plan not support rezonings.

Greg Keller – Purpose of this inventory is to give a general idea of what we have today. Not looking at any change to existing Uses.

Terry Paterson – Questioned if you take the Residential 2 zoned land out of the area now.

Dave Dunaway – Questioned why we are revisiting this question if the Official Community Plan said that there will be no more additions to the development permit area. Residents have been complaining for a decade. The only place with a short fall of industrial land is within the City. There is a surplus of industrial land within the South Wellington area. The only thing that it is being used for is mini-storage.

Barbara Ehmig – Would like to go on record on behalf of South Wellington and Area Community Association to be opposed to any further rezoning that is designated for industrial commercial.

Greg Keller – Asked for clarification if this is requesting that the Official Community Plan be amended to remove properties that are not zoned industrial.

Barbara Ehmig – South Wellington community was able to get one industrial land downzoned. A lot of auto wreckers have been around for 35 years, and community has had enough of this sort of business.

Marj Stupich – Pointed out that industrial land in Sandstone will be developed in phase 1 and 2. There is also a conflict between reports on the number of lots that may be created for commercial and industrial.

Participant – Why is the airport not zoned light industrial.

Greg Keller – It is under the federal jurisdiction and it is not within this particular designation.

Lynnia Clark – Heard very little support from South Wellington community for the expansion of the industrial lands.

Joe Burnett - The purpose of this is to visit the topic and discuss it.

Dave Dunaway – Emphasized that the important subject is the Regional Growth Strategy. South Wellington does not have a village node designation. It has requested to be in the Regional Growth Strategy at least a decade ago.

Commercial Opportunities in South Wellington - Ruckledge Store

Greg Keller – Been in discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure that adequate road width is provided. He asked the group if the road issues are addressed, what would the group think about having some sort of development at the site. Also if the group thought that South Wellington should have some sort of neighbourhood centre. The owner of Ruckledge store had the idea to move the store further back on the lot to make more room for an expanded service centre and gas bar.

Mike Hooper – From a safety perspective it would be beneficial to give more room.

Lavonne Garnett – A village node is something they would want to review more in the South Wellington community.

Greg Keller – Stated that when it is at the draft stage we can have more discussion.

David Dunaway – Asked if there can be a special meeting in South Wellington to support the subject.

Joe Burnett – Discussed holding some more meetings about the developments. They would be held in specific areas that are affected by the development and would have the developer at the meeting to respond to the questions.

Gary Laird – Difficult to come to conclusion on the Ruckledge store because the traffic lights are being changed to accommodate Sandstone. The owner may back away if they do not get the traffic light in the location.

Devon Wyatt – It is unrealistic for Sandstone to move the light. Good idea for the actual development of the store.

Nick Dudink – There will be two industrial places not far from each other. People in South Wellington are not happy with it.

Joe Burnett – We had to get the feeling of the community.

1 Hectare Minimum Parcel Size

Greg Keller – Introduces the idea of having a 1 ha minimum parcel size as the smallest lot size outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Donna Sweeney – Asked if this means going from ½ acre to 2.5 acre lots.

Greg Keller – Explained that it would in some cases mean that the minimum parcel size would increase from 2000m² to 1.0ha. He explained that the 1 hectare minimum parcel size makes the zoning consistent with urban containment and sustainability goals. He also explained that a 1 hectare parcel size is required in areas outside of Urban Containment Boundary for community sewer grants. The Ministry of Community Services has made this change a condition of sewer funding. This is something that the RDN would have to consider in the other electoral areas. The RDN is still seeking further direction and other options to get sewer grants. Without grants providing sewer servicing is cost prohibitive. The current Official Community Plan also supports larger parcel sizes, it is only the zoning that lags behind. The zoning has not been brought in line with the Official Community Plan.

Lavonne Garnett – Confirmed that all of these areas are outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Greg Keller – For access to community sewer grants, it is areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundaries that must be increased as these are areas that are not intended to be provided with sewer servicing.

Lavonne Garnett – What about areas being added to the Cedar Urban Containment Boundary.

Greg Keller – These areas would not be affected if they are in the Urban Containment Boundary.

Henrik Kreiberg – If the current Official Community Plan already supports 1 ha, than is there any reason that a new 1 ha policy in Official Community Plan would be anymore successful.

Greg Keller – The way the RGS is worded we can not further reduce parcel size on property located outside the Urban Containment Boundary. So the question becomes are we willing to implement the parcel size that we already support in the current Official Community Plan?

Henrik Kreiberg - Must all electoral area have this in the zoning, not just the Official Community Plan. How many electoral areas have 1 ha minimum parcel size wording.

Greg Keller – Yes all Electoral Areas must have the zoning in place and most Electoral Area OCPs have wording in support of this.

Participant – Questioned how difficult is it to implement.

Greg Keller – It depends on how strongly the community supports the implementation.

Joe Burnett – In regards to sewer requirements of the provincial government, the CAO is in discussions with the province for a different approach.

Greg Keller – Stated that they are also exploring other options.

Lynnia Clark – Indicated that the Province has made it impossible for sewer grant, since the Regional District of Nanaimo has to go to public with this mandate.

Greg Keller – Explained that the rationale is they do not want to have to bail out property owners with failing septic systems.

Lynnia Clark – Would take years for region wide rezoning amendments. The province has had a mandate that cannot be met.

Gary Scott – Let the CAO talk to the Ministry about other options, such as developers fronting costs. In relation to sustainability principles, any community relying on grants cannot be economically sustainable.

Joe Burnett – The question is if we should carry through with the 1 ha parcel size in the revised Official Community Plan.

Participant – Bad idea to remove it.

Greg Keller – Cannot decrease minimum parcel size. How much emphasis should we put on the implementation of this policy? Should it be supported as regional initiative?

Ray Digby – Suggested that this is a huge task and he would rather see time and energy go into making the rest of it work for community.

Lavonne Garnett – Questioned if there was a possible alternative to providing sewage.

Greg Keller – May be to access green infrastructure grants, such as heat recovery from sewage.

Henrik Kreiberg – Mentioned RGS prohibits decreasing the minimum parcel size. If the policy for a minimum parcel size was not included, than what does it stops people from applying for the minimum parcel size that they want. He would strongly support keeping it in the Official Community Plan do to the potential impacts.

Lavonne Garnett – Why is the focus on building more compact communities in an agricultural area?

Greg Keller – Provides more opportunities for efficient land use and transportation within designated areas. It also reduces sprawl and the impact on the environment. It is really important to encourage development a within well defined area.

Lavonne Garnett – There is lots of agricultural land and sprawl is not a problem here. She suggested that we were changing the landscape of the area by putting it into Urban Containment Boundary.

Joe Burnett – Clarified they are only limiting the growth outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Mayta Ryn – Explained that almost 55% of Area ‘A’ in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The land being addressed is not within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The Agricultural Land Reserve is not under attack.

Joe Burnett – Suggested the approach to include a 1 ha minimum parcel size in the Official Community Plan and take it to the community.

Motion – Use the same wording as existing OCP and take the draft to the community

In favour - Unanimous

Opposed - 0

Island Timberlands Open House

Greg Keller – Opened up the discussion to anyone with input on these open houses.

Joe Burnett – Explained that the RDN held a developer forum to put development proposals in front of the community. RDN is not taking position on any development at this time. The intention is to get feedback from the community and to be transparent.

Mike Hooper – Stated that the Island Timberlands open house was a very informative and open process. It was very well attended.

Participant – Asked what the minimum parcel size was.

Greg Keller – The lands would be included in the Urban Containment Boundary.

Dave Dunaway – Asked if there was any feedback from Dr .Wendling on the capacity of the wells. He stated he wants to be on record that his well has been the lowest it has been in the past 6 months.

Kenn Joubert – He was impressed by the Island Timberland proposal, but does not live in Cassidy.

Greg Keller – A committee member from Cassidy supported it in an email.

Mike Hooper – Stated that the Cassidy Urban Containment Boundary is built beyond its capacity supported in the Official Community Plan.

Participant – Questioned who is for development in the community.

Greg Keller – That is what Island Timberlands is trying to gauge.

Boat Harbour

Donna Sweeney – Impressed that they have taken concerns from July meeting for the protection of green space land, but other participants at the open house have indicated problem with their proposal. There are acreages placed between farming areas. This is a concern to the communities. There is also a concern for the location of sewage treatment. There is a lot of water that feeds people's wells. There were two groups at the meeting: ones who wanted 5 acre parcels with no changes to zoning and others who felt they needed to negotiate for green space and access. The development might be beneficial if done similar to Yellow Point Lodge.

Bert Vermaskari – People opposed to the development overall. Developers did not provide a lot of detail. The amount of parking was not appropriate. Too many people are already parking on the road.

Lynnia Clark – Indicated that she attended and suggested that there was a lot of negative reaction to the smaller residential component.

Henrik Kreiberg – One of the issues in past proposals has been a long standing community interest in the Morden Colliery trail that goes to the sea. In the last concept of development there were a lot of roadblocks to the trail. Has this changed?

Bert Vermaskari – The trails stop well before the historic area. One of the most ecologically sensitive and historical areas they want to cover with buildings. The information provided was not sufficient. People will come on board if there is more tangible information provided.

Donna Sweeney – Part of rationale is that if community is opposed to anything than the permitted 5 acre lot and building stratas than they will not bother preparing any detailed concepts.

Norma Czerny – Explained that the treatment plant is on her property line. The development proposes to put density farthest away from village centre as possible.

John Stone - Attended the meeting for Boat Harbour. He emphasised the importance of being transparent and the developer's effort falls short of good public process. The quality of information provided is less than is appropriate for a developer. Some of the concerns and observations at the meeting were that there was no support for the development. A lot of participants concerns were about the densification issue. This is contrary to existing zoning and the OCP. The lack of density was one of the reasons people purchased in the area. There is also concern about the infrastructure and road use. There are proposed sewage treatment areas that people would be bordering on. These areas were selected only because they were convenient. There will also be an impact on existing water resources in the area. The developer did not have any detail and could not define community for the proposal. The proposal made comment on how it related with OCP, though the developer could not explain how it was consistent. Though he could explain why it was consistent with economic benefit and profit. The principle for densification was used in the proposal, but it is out of context. Given the location it was not consistent. The proposal seemed to rely on that a significant part of property would be gifted to the community for recreation. There were no clear answers on a permanent gifting from an ecological or recreation perspective. He understood that there would be a summary of the input to be consistent with the principles of transparency.

Joe Burnett – Explained that the minutes will be available as a circulation. They are planning on holding other meetings where the developer will be present.

Recognition of Tamagawa University

Greg Keller – The University is something unique to Area 'A'. Currently it is in the ALR and is zoned for public use. It is a satellite campus of a Japanese university. Question is if the OCP should recognise the university, because right now it does not

Dave Dunaway – Need to be careful with language so that there are no more exclusions from the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Joanne McLeod – She leased the land for years and it is not very arable. Are they planning on developing?

Greg Keller – It would only recognise it as an education facility.

Gary Laird – Asked what it does for them.

Greg Keller – It gives them recognition.

Gary Laird – Never heard that they ever had a problem.

Ray Digby – Asked if they comply with the zoning. The recognition may not be necessary.

Greg Keller – It is about recognising the land and the university. It does have to recognise the Agricultural Land Commission's jurisdiction.

Mike Hooper – Does it offer them security?

Greg Keller – It was not something they requested, but it was logical to support what they are doing.

Kenn Joubert – Asked how many acres of agricultural land is there.

Greg Keller – Indicated that he believes its about 84 acres

Kenn Joubert – Would there be way of recognizing them, but keeping the land for agriculture?

Greg Keller – The Agricultural Land Commission would also need to give their approval for any changes to the land use.

Lavonne Garnett – Would this set precedence for other uses that may be supported in the Official Community Plan?

Greg Keller – This is a unique opportunity to recognise the university.

Mayta Ryn – More educational facilities being proposed for agricultural land, such as groups looking to do rehabilitation. It might be beneficial to come up with designation of educational – agricultural use of land.

Joe Burnett – It is a subsidiary of a university of Japan, but would like to build a stronger relationship with the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Joanne McLeod – Originally they were very inclusive, but they have really opened up to the community. They are now really integrating with the community.

Norma Czerny – They are interacting with the high school.

Lynnia Clark – Suggest that Greg write and come back with a policy.

Motion – To write and come back with a policy to support the Tamagawa University.

In favour – Unanimous
Opposed - 0

Outline of OCP

Greg Keller – Explained outline and suggested that the group may contact him with any concerns.

Louise Shuker – Suggested that there were errors in the minutes.

Greg Keller – Suggested that he would look into the minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Certified correct by:

Director Joe Burnett, Committee Chairperson