

# DRAFT



## Meeting Record

### Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Review Community Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30 pm

Bowser Legion

#### Members Present:

Mac Snobelen	John Stathers
Joe Nelson	George Dussault
Margie Healey	Dick Stubbs
Jim Crawford	Keith Reid (arrived at 8 pm)

**Guests Present:** Monica Kunn, Amar Bains

**Others Present:** Bill Veenhof, Electoral Area 'H' Director  
Courtney Simpson, RDN Senior Planner  
Jamai Schile, RDN Senior Planner

#### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW OF AGENDA

Director Veenhof welcomed everyone and extended best wishes for the holidays before turning the meeting over to Planner Simpson.

Planner Simpson began by asking everyone for a one-word check-in.

#### 2. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MEETING RECORD OF NOVEMBER 29, 2016

The meeting record of November 29<sup>th</sup> was considered final by general consent.

#### 3. INTRODUCTION FROM PLANNER

Planner Simpson provided a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting and general format for the evening.

#### 4. DISCUSSION DRAFT SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Planner Simpson provided a brief introduction to the section. She noting that the Community Values Statement appears to be still relevant and applicable today. As such, she wasn't recommending any major

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changes. One change suggested was Community Value No. 11 regarding consultation with First Nations. Language to be updated to reflective the desire for collaboration with First Nations. There were no comments about other additions, deletions, or changes to the Community Values Statement.

## 5. DISCUSSION DRAFT SECTION 4 – COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Planner Simpson provided an overview of the proposed changes for Section 4 – Community Resources.

The following comments were made and questions asked by Working Group members.

- Page 2, Par. 4 – correction/ clarification re trails on Crown Land – the Crown is aware of the trail network on Crown Land, and such shouldn't be considered "unsanctioned". It was agreed that this still doesn't assure long-term protection of these trails/routes. Additionally, it was noted that the RDN is currently providing a supporting role and the words "could play a supporting role" should be altered to reflect this.
- Some discussion on community volunteers in trail creation and receiving donations of supplies. It was confirmed that there are no trail standards in place when trails are created through volunteer efforts and the trails are not RDN trails.
- Discussion on Bowser Ecological Reserve. Planner Simpson explained that the area is designated as a protected area containing the sensitive ecosystem designation of older forest. The area is a reserve and is not to be advertised for recreational use. John Stathers mentioned concern that the boundary of the Ecological Reserve may have been adjusted as it used to abut onto the Cook property and now it appears to extend onto Lot 14. Planner Simpson said they resolve outside of the meeting as she did not believe there were any changes to the boundary.
- Discussion on parkland dedication arising from subdivision. Some concern that in the past some parkland dedications used lands with little value to public use. Planner Simpson acknowledge that some parkland dedications are to support services or wildlife corridors. She is also noted that there is draft language in the OCP to ensure parkland dedication includes land identified in RDN parks and trails plans. There was general support for the proposed changes.
- Page 5, policy 6 - Concern that development cost charges for regional parks development would require someone to "pay" twice, first at subdivision and again when developing. Planner Simpson explained that the amenity value referred to here wouldn't necessarily be received through subdivision so wouldn't necessarily duplicate. She provided an example that it could be a way to achieve the public lands identified in the Bowser Village Plan as that area develops, but where there may not necessarily be subdivision that would require parkland dedication.
- Page 7 - Planner Simpson explained that Institutional is not currently a land use designation in the OCP. She suggests that this is proposed to be changed to recognize the current institutional uses such as the school, Vancouver Island University, government wharf, etc. Planner Simpson explained that the intent isn't to designate every institutional use with an Institutional land use designation.
- Discussion about choosing new school sites and that the Regional District and the community should have a say. The field at the end of McColl Road was mentioned as a possible good location for a new school. It was mentioned that new schools should not necessarily be constrained to be within a Village Centre but should be nearby.

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- Question as to whether the Church located at the McColl Road and 19A intersection should be included within the list of Institutional uses on page 7. Planner Simpson to confirm the location and add as designation where applicable.
- Suggested that a medical center is a long-term desire for the community. A request to added as institutional designation if it's not already in the Bowser Village Center Plan.
- Some discussion on senior's housing – can be institutional, but depends on type of care – residential to extended care.
- Page 9, policy 6 - Planner Simpson, commented a policy in support of cemeteries has been added as requested from members of the community.
- Page 10 – Planner Simpson explained that more information will be added to the aquifer map, which will help bring awareness and further protect these areas. This will also help to identify areas requiring ground water studies before development.
- Page 12, policy 5 - Planner Simpson noted this policy is new to support cluster development. Some discussion, asked if there is a comparison where this policy is in place now. Planner Simpson suggested possibly Nile Landing as an example.
- Request to clarify language to emphasize it refers to a community water system not a municipal/ regional system.
- Page 13 - Planner Simpson confirmed that the Active Transportation Plan will be available for review in the new year. With respect to the policies, it was difficult to say much about the rail trail because its future is uncertain.
- Page 13, objective 3 – it was discussed that it can be very difficult to motivate the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). Progress is being made on the Village Trail on Gabriola, but it would be helpful to have language included that emphasizes that the RDN will be more determined to pursue effective partnerships with MOTI to achieve community goals. Further discussion as to what that may look like in terms of shared costs for works within a highway-right-of-way such as MOTI installing a sidewalk which then would be maintained by the RDN.
- General support for the RDN to take a stronger role in pursuing effective partnerships with MOTI to do public works such as trails, and that policies should be strengthened in the OCP to this effect.
- Planner Simpson confirmed that the Active Transportation Plan will inform area-specific policy for areas where further trail development can be supported.
- General agreement to remove Page 14, policy 2 regarding encouragement of upgrades to Inland Island Highway intersections.
- Page 15 - add policy in support of expanding transit connections to the Comox Valley Regional District.
- Page 17, policy 3 it was noted that the Harbour Authority is a lease holder. It may be more appropriate to direct coordination efforts to the marina.
- Some discussion on either improvement to current boat launch or additional boat launch desired. Support for an advocacy policy for a new boat launch, possibly on Cook property. Planner Simpson

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confirmed this input on need for additional boat launch(es) has been raised in the consultation perviously.

## 6. Refreshment Break

## 7. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT SECTION 5 – DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- Page 11 and 12 – Planner Simpson explained that this morning, additional information was received from Baynes Sound Development (BSI) regarding their desired density and land uses in order to provide the amenities discussed previously with the community. What is being proposed is an estimated 300 units just for Lot A and an estimated 320-335 units for Lot B. she further explained that it's important in the OCP policy to be drafted, that it is clear on what the level of maximum build-out supported and the criteria under which a rezoning application would be approved for the development. Planner Simpson explained that since she recently received the information some time is needed to review before drafting the policies that would apply to the BSI lands.
  - Some discussion on the total area of the lots, buildable area, road dedication to open spaces. It was confirmed that the amount of open spaces has not changed, Lot A about 46%, while Lot B is around 38% open space not including roads, for an average of 42%. BSI representatives confirmed that the average net lot sizes is estimated to be 4,000 – 5,000 sqft. Lot size is about 20 ft wide by 30 ft deep. No zero lot lines. Townhomes are mostly 4 -plexes, some could be 5 or 6 unit complexes.
  - BSI representatives confirmed that until recently, they had only planned their concept for Lot A, but not Lot B. They envision that all residential development will be maximum of 2 stories without basements.
  - Discussion on proposed density for BSI. Some concern regarding if the development area and sewage filtration system on Lot B is at an adequate distance from the ocean in relation to protecting the aquaculture industry.
  - It was proposed that any future development be held to a very high standard of sewage treatment. Desire to go beyond the minimum required standards for sewage systems and solid waste disposal.
  - BSI representatives explained that their proposal is a long term plan - Lot A is estimated to take 8 years to build out with Lot B possibly 20-25 years from now. It is not set in stone that all of Lot B is only residential, there may be opportunities for institutional or employment based use. But, would like to include policy in the OCP to reflect some kind of future developing being permitted now.
  - With reference to Lot C, confirmed that the Agricultural Land Commission won't permit sewage system to be developed in the Agricultural Land Reserve.
  - Further discussion of the importance of protecting the shellfish industry from contamination. There has been some discussion in the past that a combined sewer system for Bowser and BSI lands can be considered not sure if this is open for further consideration.
  - Planner Simpson confirmed that prior to development the BSI proposal would be subject to a public process as part of any future zoning request.

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- Discussion about potential for sewage system failure. BSI representatives confirmed that modern designed sewage systems have mandatory contingences in place such as holding tanks, back-up generators to avoid or reduce the potential impact from malfunctions.
  - BSI representatives confirmed that lot sizes are approximately 1/8 acre. Working Group members expressed concern with the proposed density and concern with the removal of solid waste for disposal offsite. There was some discussion on current solid waste removal practices and that it is standard practice to have to dispose of solids elsewhere.
  - Discussion that the proposed (updated) density may be a reflection of the amenities that the community is seeking. Certain economic thresholds have to be achieved to accommodate the requested amenities.
  - BSI representatives confirmed that their intent is not to create only ½ acre lots. Market research supports smaller lots with access to open spaces.
  - In terms of density, there was discussion on comparative examples in the area such as to Nile Landing. It was thought that there were similarities in lot size but Nile Landing lacks trails or open spaces, so not directly comparable.
  - BSI representatives confirmed that the anticipated amenities already expressed by the community will cost an estimated \$8 – 10 million, including rail crossing, roads, sewage system, trails.
  - Further discussion, that higher density may seem reasonable to achieve the amenities that the community is seeking.
  - Planner Simpson suggested a few options could be considered, such as some amenities that can be tied to Lot A before develop begins on Lot B.
  - BSI representatives confirmed that without a high degree of certainty in terms of number of lots it is difficult to secure a loan for development.
  - Comment about “absorption rate” in terms of real estate sales - how many units you need to sell per year. BSI representatives said that at moment their estimate is about 40 units would sell per year.
  - It was noted that there has been a lot of talk about amenities tonight, of those two really service community – access road to highway and boat trailer parking. Maybe this is where the priorities should be focused.
  - Further to this comment, it was remarked that in this area retaining public access to the trails is perhaps the most important amenity, as well as avoiding development along the bluff. Some prefer these amenities to road access.
  - It was noted that most of the focus to date has been on Lot A, not sure if there is community support for development on both Lot A and Lot B to the number of lots being discussed tonight.
  - General comment that we’re at a critical point in the process and there is a need to avoid mis-information being circulated to the community.
- Page 15, Village Centres introduction - Planner Simpson – acknowledged that description of different neighbourhoods will be included in the OCP as previously requested.

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- Comment, will we be talking about the other village centers. Some concern that we may be missing an opportunity by not having this conversation.
- Planner Simpson confirmed that at the start of this project, a focus on village centres was not identified. She explained that several years ago the RDN undertook a Rural Village Centres Study, which led to the Bowser Village Center Plan process and resulted in the Plan itself. She acknowledged that village centers are an important consideration in broader planning terms. However, this may not be the time in the OCP process for exploring options to expand or change existing village centers.
- A Working Group member clarified that the Bowser Village Centre planning project began as a project to plan for all village centres in Area H, but was later re-focused on only creation of a Plan for Bowser.
- Planner Simpson explained that an OCP can be either very explicit in terms of support and specific density, open space areas or less explicit by acknowledging a future development area, but if taking the second approach to identify a future development area, a future amendment to the OCP would still be required, in addition to rezoning. Designating a future development area signals that the community has already considered development in that area, so a future OCP amendment is likely to have a high level of community support.
- Planner Simpson proposed to provide more explicit policy for Lot A and to identify Lot B as a future development area.

To conclude, Planner Simpson presented information on the status of the draft OCP including which sections had been reviewed by the Working Group and which were still to come. She said that the next step is to compile all sections, both those reviewed and those not yet reviewed, into one complete draft. That would be reviewed by the Working Group at their next meeting, yet to be scheduled, but likely in late January. After Working Group review, the draft would be presented to the community at a widely-advertised open house likely in late-February or early March. Following that, a final draft would be presented to the RDN Board.

Adjourned meeting at 9:15 pm