

**DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER
COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

Minutes of the Council Workshop of the Council for the District of North Vancouver held at 5:01 p.m. on Monday, December 8, 2015 in the Committee Room of the District Hall, 355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Present: Mayor R. Walton
Councillor R. Bassam
Councillor M. Bond
Councillor J. Hanson
Councillor D. MacKay-Dunn
Councillor L. Muri

Absent: Councillor R. Hicks

Staff: Mr. B. Bydwell, General Manager – Planning, Properties & Permits
Mr. D. Milburn, Deputy General Manager – Planning & Permits
Mr. J. Gordon, Manager – Administrative Services
Ms. J. Paton, Manager – Development Planning
Ms. S. Dal Santo, Section Manager – Planning Policy
Mr. P. Chapman, Social Planner
Ms. C. Archer, Confidential Council Clerk

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.1. December 8, 2015 Council Workshop Agenda

MOVED by Councillor BOND

SECONDED by Councillor BASSAM

THAT the agenda for the December 8, 2015 Council Workshop be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Nil

3. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL OR STAFF

3.1. Affordable Housing

File No. 13.6480.30/003.000

Mr. Dan Milburn, Deputy General Manager – Planning & Permits, reviewed the discussion to date and plan for moving forward, noting that this is the third session on Affordable Housing, following the introduction of the Green Paper on November 2 and the presentation by Metro Vancouver on December 1 regarding the Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation and the draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (RAHS). Following tonight's session on goals and targets, strategies and actions, the public will have an opportunity to provide input in early 2016.

Mr. Milburn reviewed the draft goals presented by Metro Vancouver:

1. Expand the supply and diversity of housing to meet a variety of needs;
2. Preserve and expand the rental housing supply;
3. Meet housing demand estimates for low to moderate income earners;
4. Increase the rental housing supply along the Frequent Transit Network; and,
5. End homelessness in the region.

Mr. Milburn noted that Goals 1 and 4 are already official District policies in the OCP and highlighted some successes achieved on these goals to date. Further that Goals 2 and 3 are most relevant to the current Affordable Housing discussion.

According to Metro Vancouver 2040, the regional growth strategy document adopted in 2011, 1,400 additional rental units will be required to meet the demand between 2011 and 2021, based on projections of regional demand. In the draft RAHS, the demand estimate is for 700 rental units between 2016 and 2026. Mr. Milburn noted that staff have requested clarification on how the more recent number was reached.

Council expressed concern that if there is more growth in other municipalities, transit will be expanded in those municipalities and not the District. Discussion ensued on increased traffic congestion, transit needs and whether residents in rental housing work locally or commute to other municipalities.

Council discussion ensued on Goal 2, Preserve and expand the rental housing supply, and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Agreement that this goal is in line with District needs;
- Clarified that the goal needs to be in the lower- and mid-range rental rates;
- Goals 2 and 3 could be considered one goal;
- There are many rental units in the District with high rents;
- Demand for rental properties will drive up prices if not enough are built in time;
- There is tension between retention and maintenance of the existing rental stock and expanding the supply of rental stock; and,
- General community objections to density and development need to be addressed.

Staff advised that setting lower or zero growth could have many consequences, including effects on the transportation network and housing affordability. What is proposed is to meet the demand for housing for young families, empty nesters, seniors and others on key corridors and in Town Centres. Housing cannot be provided for these population groups if there is no growth.

Council discussed looking at the City of North Vancouver as part of the solution as a much higher percentage of housing in the City is rental. It was noted that younger people and empty nesters may move from the District to the City and that it may not be necessary to plan a complete community that covers all housing needs in the District. Council commented that despite the amount of rental and other housing built in the City over the past twenty years, housing prices and property taxes have not come down. It was noted that condominium

prices in the City have not appreciated as much as single family dwellings as there is a greater supply.

Mr. Milburn reviewed the RAHS Goal 3, Meet housing demand estimates for low- to moderate-income earners, noting that the average private rental housing rates exceed incomes for low- to moderate-income earners in the District. Rental rates are somewhat contained by Provincial controls on rent increases, but increase significantly when tenants change. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, two percent of District residents are in inadequate housing and spending at least half of their income on shelter.

According to Metro Vancouver 2040, 1,000 additional affordable rental units will be required to meet the demand between 2011 and 2021. In the draft RAHS, the demand estimate is for 610 units between 2016 and 2026.

Council discussion ensued on Goal 3 and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- The possibility was raised of building affordable and social housing in Maplewood;
- The purpose-built rental housing in Lynn Creek near Phibbs Exchange does not include any green space;
- Concern was expressed about all affordable housing in the District being concentrated in one area; and,
- General agreement was expressed with pursuing Goals 2 and 3.

Mr. Milburn reviewed three strategies to achieve Goal 2:

1. Make retention and maintenance of existing purpose built market rental housing more attractive;
2. Expand the supply of rental housing, including new purpose built rental housing; and,
3. Ensure tenant relocations are responsive to tenant needs.

Mr. Milburn reviewed possible actions to achieve Strategy 1, Make retention and maintenance of existing purpose built market rental housing more attractive, including continuing with strata conversion prohibition and rental protection policy and updating the offence and penalty provisions of the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw. In response to a question from Council, Mr. Milburn reported that the District does not currently receive many complaints under the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Well-maintained buildings will last much longer;
- Strata buildings may not have adequate maintenance fees, leading to maintenance problems and redevelopment pressures;
- Poor maintenance cannot be used as an excuse for rezoning;
- Possibility of asking the newly elected Federal government for changes to taxation and incentives for maintenance and retention; and,
- Possible incentives for organizations looking for rental properties for a revenue stream.

Staff reported that there are 1,267 units of purpose-built rental housing in the District, including apartment and townhouse units.

Mr. Milburn reviewed possible actions to achieve Strategy 2, Expand the supply of rental housing, including new purpose built rental housing, including a one-to-one replacement policy for redevelopment of existing rental properties. Council commented that one-to-one replacement will not fulfill District affordable housing needs as rents for new units will be much higher than for the units they are replacing. However, market rental becomes affordable housing when buildings get older.

Several regulation actions were noted, including relaxation of parking requirements for development and allowing lock-off flex units and more coach houses.

Councillor MacKay-Dunn left the meeting at 6:40 pm

The meeting recessed at 6:40 pm and reconvened at 6:43

Council discussion ensued regarding strategies and actions to present to the community for their feedback. The following comments and concerns were noted:

- There is not enough in the Housing Fund;
- A portion of CAC's could be directed to increase the Fund;
- Land could be provided to Metro Vancouver or other non-profit groups to develop affordable housing;
- There may be upcoming opportunities to partner with the Federal government that would require having a plan ready when funding and other program announcements are made;
- The possibility was raised of including affordable housing in development applications; and,
- Insisting on too much from developers could reduce building in the District.

Staff advised that the District does not have much land that is suitable for building rental housing. Much of the District's inventory is single family lots scattered around the municipality. Selling those lots and using funds to purchase more appropriate sites is an option, as well as requesting land or cash from developers.

Mr. Milburn reviewed possible actions to achieve Strategy 3, Ensure tenant relocations are responsive to tenant needs, including maintaining the multi-family rental housing demolition notice policy and developing a new tenant assistance policy covering notice, free rent, moving expenses, assistance with relocation and right of first refusal for new units.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- The Mountain Court relocation package did not help tenants who moved early when they found a place to live;
- Low vacancy rates may mean that relocation policies will not help those who cannot find suitable housing;

- Retention of existing rental units and building new rental units work against each other;
- Support was expressed for exploring the provision of land to Metro Vancouver or another housing organization; and,
- The Green Paper called for consulting with developers as part of researching affordable rental housing options.

Staff advised that scenarios and costs could be developed for Council's review and that developers have ideas to share.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

4.1 Mr. Richard White, Community Housing Action Committee:

- Commented that affordable housing is a necessity in the District;
- Noted that the District has land resources other municipalities lack;
- Advised that regional growth is about one and a half percent; and,
- Commented that the Federal government's election platform included affordable housing initiatives.

4.2 Mr. Don Peters, District resident:

- Queried the status of the District's affordable housing fund.

Staff clarified that the policy discussion has not yet taken place.

4.3 Mr. Corrie Kost, 2800 Block Colwood Drive:

- Queried if the rental demand changed between the two Metro Vancouver reports because renters are being displaced;
- Opined that due to self-reporting in the household survey, the number of people really in inadequate housing is likely higher; and,
- Remarked that the District could establish a policy of no rezoning outside Town Centres, which would give strata owners no choice but to maintain buildings.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor BASSAM

SECONDED by Councillor BOND

THAT the December 8, 2015 Council Workshop be adjourned.

CARRIED

(7:12 pm)

Absent for Vote: Councillor MACKAY-DUNN

Mayor

Municipal Clerk