

MINUTES of a special meeting of the COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE of the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the District of Oak Bay, held in the Council Chambers, Oak Bay Municipal Hall, 2167 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, B.C., on Tuesday January 29, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Coast and Straits Salish Peoples. Specifically we recognize the Lekwungen speaking people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and that their historic connections to these lands continue to this day.

Mayor K. Murdoch, Chair
Councillor, A. Appleton
Councillor, H. Braithwaite
Councillor, C. Green
Councillor, T. Ney
Councillor E. Paterson
Councillor E.W. Zhelka

STAFF: Interim Chief Administrative Officer, L. Varela
Director of Corporate Services, W. Jones
Deputy Director of Corporate Services, D. Hopkins
Director of Building and Planning, B. Anderson
Manager of Planning, D. Jensen

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Mayor Murdoch provided an overview of the purpose and procedure for this meeting, the strategic planning sessions held to date and clarified that the intent of this discussion was to provide areas of commonality for Council.

Mayor Murdoch also announced the appointment of Ms. Lou Varela as the District's permanent CAO commencing April 8, 2019. The Mayor thanked Ms. Varela for her service as Interim CAO and noted that he had received significant positive feedback from Council, staff and members of the public regarding Ms. Varela's appointment.

The Interim CAO provided an overview of the process planned for this discussion and highlighted that Building and Planning staff were seeking Council's hopes and expectations going forward on the issue of housing and to use this to tease out what the various housing pieces are in Oak Bay.

Mayor Murdoch noted that this session was meant to start a more fulsome discussion and was not the end of the strategic planning sessions.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Strategic Planning: Housing Workshop

- Memo - Strategic Planning - Director of Building and Planning, Jan. 24, 2019
- Addenda Presentation - Strategic Planning Housing Workshop
- Addenda Correspondence - Strategic Planning Housing Workshop

The Director of Building and Planning and the Manager of Planning presented to Committee noting that the subject of housing was understood to be a top Council priority. Staff noted that the Official Community Plan (OCP) contains three goals specific to housing: housing;

neighbourhoods; and the built environment. These goals are influenced by land use designations and housing policy directions.

Staff asked what housing actions Council wished to achieve in this term. Committee discussion ensued including:

- completing a review of the Zoning Bylaw;
- finishing the secondary suites process;
- capturing all of the accompanying policy documents in a comprehensive way;
- revising and concluding policies in areas such as the Approving Officer, Development Cost Charges and Community Amenity Contributions;
- developing Neighbourhood Area Plans or Local Area Plans; completing a housing needs assessment including significant public consultation to guide where citizens would like various housing options to be located;
- incorporating legislative mechanism to control or influence land use for lands not owned by Oak Bay;
- revisiting downtown Oak Bay revitalization initiatives; working to overcome the “missing middle” of housing options such as duplexes, multifamily dwellings, carriage houses;
- leveraging on the expertise of Council’s Advisory Bodies for interpreting OCP policies;
- completing and implementing a Housing Strategy;
- increasing the housing stock options to support the diversity of the population;
- seeking opportunities for development within corridors;
- determining what housing options the District needs;
- creating a clear understanding and certainty for all stakeholders about what can be built; and to work genuinely to address current and future housing needs.

Building and Planning staff highlighted that there are five approaches for housing including policy, strategy, guidelines, regulations and delivery. Staff asked what specific approaches should be considered. Committee Members suggested:

- safeguarding long term supply of rental housing and determining details and massing;
- considering all four village centres when discussing village revitalization
- planning for longer term perspective in the Housing Strategy;
- designing guidelines for infill strategies;
- clarifying definition of terms;
- aligning with asset management to facilitate right-sizing and longer term planning;
- soliciting buy-in from neighbours through a consultation process established at the policy level.

Mayor Murdoch invited members of the public to provide input.

S. Rowntree, Oak Bay resident, that bigger homes previously provided places for guest houses and boarding rooms as housing options that provided diverse options. Ms. Rowntree said that many good plans have been created in the past 5-10 years and these could all be incorporated as Geographic Information System (GIS) layers to determine where conflict areas are and then help to shape the housing strategy. She cautioned that infill should not be completed first; instead density should be added around the villages where the tree canopy has already been removed. She also said that changing zoning requirements will not solve the housing options problems because developers know how to circumnavigate the restrictions. Ms. Rowntree suggested that the Committee consider heights of buildings for the next 50 years of planning and where densification could appropriately happen such as the corridor from Save-On Foods

to Uvic. She also requested that corridors not be situated right at the road but placed behind communities or around community centres which would retain the residential nature of the area.

W. Zink, Oak Bay resident, stated that it was fundamental to identify a housing philosophy before commencing work on housing. Ms. Zink suggested that this starts with the completion of a housing needs assessment to identify what exists, what the gaps are and what the public thinks about this information. She said that the housing strategy required an educational component because many residents lack a detailed understanding of what the spectrum of housing means. Ms. Zink commented that the strategy should ensure a sustainable community for all people by increasing the supply for low and moderate income people, providing a diversity of housing types, tenures and prices through the rental stock, and establishing a regulatory regime through the Zoning Bylaw that explores the implementation of development permit areas to ensure that form and character areas are protected within single family dwelling areas and protection of the urban canopy.

D. Butler, Oak Bay resident, noted that there are significant gaps in the existing housing stock referred to as the missing middle. She said that the District must determine what housing options exist and which ones are missing and then devise a way to implement the missing options. Ms. Butler commented that multi-storey complexes are not the only options as duplexes, townhouses, secondary suites and carriage houses and many other alternate options would also provide solutions to the identified housing option gaps. She encouraged Committee members to re-examine the survey conducted five years ago with the development of the OCP and blending solutions in with existing neighbourhoods through the development of transitional zoning between single family detached areas and higher density, residential or mixed use areas such as the example of Rowan Oaks on Granite Street. She commented that this would allow gentle densification while supporting transit and other available amenities. Ms. Butler suggested that the Zoning Bylaw be revised to conform with the OCP and to develop form and character guidelines for infill housing that respects surrounding neighbourhoods.

J. Armitage, Oak Bay resident, said he often receives inquiries about building garden suites. He stated that the research on garden suites and secondary suites was completed by neighbouring municipalities and should be implemented. Mr. Armitage commented that transportation and geography significantly influence settlement. He suggested that designing for shifts in primary modes of transportation may facilitate preservation of some areas of Oak Bay and innovation in other areas. He commented that Council is embarking on an imprint for the next 100 years so they should not be in a rush to get it done, but to take the time to get it right. Mr. Armitage asked that the obvious and easy options be implemented expeditiously, and that more time be spent thinking about and planning for the more complex options.

C. Smart, Oak Bay resident, supported the suggestion to establish a positive housing vision. Ms. Smart said that implementing the OCP is a solid strategy and that Oak Bay cannot afford to delay implementing some of the obvious strategies for another several years while we study other options. Ms. Smart commented that while conducting studies are important, action is also required to compliment the research so that available and viable options are not lost.

Committee discussion followed including not faltering on what is already understood to be achievable; preserving the rental stock; resolving the secondary suites and duplex issues; planning village revitalizations to incorporate ancillary community benefits; exploring the missing middle options; incorporating an environmental, human and community point of view; building community; exploring alternative options to increasing the housing stock that are suitable for

Oak Bay; collecting factual data to guide decision-making through the housing needs review; developing key indicators of performance to assess whether we are achieving our identified goals; exercising the powers granted through the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter* to establish design guidelines and be less passive in the actions the municipality can undertake; finding creative approaches to funding to reduce reliance upon developers to provide options; and placing the fundamentals of community and neighbourhood on homes and not units.

Mayor Murdoch thanked the public for their participation. He noted that Council and staff are working to align the budget with the strategic planning process this year and seeking to incorporate additional public input into these processes. Mayor Murdoch stated that housing is a significant matter. He said that this Council has a strong commitment to public consultation and to also completing some of these achievable initiatives. He commented that a review of the advisory bodies is planned including how to effectively use their expertise within these processes and initiatives. Mayor Murdoch suggested that Oak Bay is built on a human scale, with walkable neighbourhoods, and an overarching sense of community, and that these qualities should be maintained and enhanced within the development of a Housing Strategy.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn

MOVED and seconded: That the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Certified Correct:

Mayor

Deputy Director of Corporate Services