

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SAANICH MUNICIPAL HALL, 770 VERNON AVENUE
TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2008 AT 7:30 P.M.

Present: **Chair:** Mayor Leonard
Council: Councillors Brice, Brownoff, Derman, Gillespie, Hunter, Sanders and Wergeland.
Staff: T. Wood, Administrator; R. Fuoco, Director of Planning; C. Doyle, Director of Engineering; S. Hvozdzanski, Manager of Special Projects; and Andrea Park, Senior Committee Clerk.

PLD60
Official Community
Plan

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW 2008

The report of the Director of Planning dated April 22, 2008 recommending that the Official Community Plan (2008) be considered for approval and referred to a Public Hearing; and the supplemental report of the Director of Planning dated May 1, 2008 recommending that the Official Community Plan be amended to incorporate two new policies as outlined, with respect to public school site disposition and use; were introduced.

Mayor Leonard outlined the proposed process for conducting the meeting to review the draft Official Community Plan 2008.

The Director of Planning stated:

- The development of the draft OCP involved extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders whose input contributed to an excellent plan.

The Manager of Special Projects presented an overview of the OCP document and introduced Chapters 1 to 3, which contain background and history and establish context.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**
Chapter 2: **Vision**
Chapter 3: **Planning Context**

Councillor Derman stated:

- A global context should be included in the Official Community Plan not just the regional context.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Mr. Y. Bajard, 1896 Watson Street, President, Networking for a Common Future in Sustainability Society, stated:

- The OCP Vision should acknowledge the need to better manage our human activity rather than the environment; climate change is a symptom of a wider underlying problem.
- Public participation in the development of an OCP must be more extensive.

Mr. N. Mogensen, 3760 Crestview Road, stated:

- Council must address the environmental crisis of climate change more forcefully and seek to engage its citizens.

Ms. Z. Charania, 306–535 Heatherdale Lane, on behalf of Mr. H. Charania, stated:

- A bullet should be added to page 1-3, paragraph two stating “How to provide transportation and mobility in a socially responsible way”.

In response to questions from Council, the Director of Planning stated:

- The issue of climate change will be dealt with more extensively in Saanich’s new Climate Change Action Plan.
- This Action Plan contains a public awareness initiative.

Councillor Derman stated:

- The OCP should outline the general scope of the effort Saanich is willing to make to address climate change.

Chapter 4: **Environmental Integrity**

The Manager of Special Projects outlined the policies contained in the Natural Environment and Built Environment sections of this chapter.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Mr. D. Murdock, 405-899 Darwin Avenue, stated:

- Mobility in light of climate change is the greatest challenge – transportation planning must look at the entire region; alternative sustainable transportation methods, such a light rail transit, should be emphasized.
- Pedestrian & cycling infrastructure and amenities should be integrated into streetscapes.
- An additional policy could be added to the Energy Consumption & Generation section to consider opportunities for energy recovery.
- The City of Richmond is introducing a green roof policy for commercial buildings and Saanich could also consider this as a means of regaining green space.
- Solid Waste Management policies could be incorporated within a zero waste mandate by 2020.

Mr. Y. Bajard, 1896 Watson Street, President, Networking for a Common Future in Sustainability Society, stated:

- Climate change is only a symptom of a much wider problem.
- Saanich should increase its understanding of the issues, look for new ideas and solutions to address concerns over the environment.

Mr. H. Gibbard, 1439 Wende Road, stated:

- The present municipal structures and infrastructure must be retrofitted; new green growth will not solve the existing problems.
- A municipality is a small, manageable unit suited for testing out environmental initiatives and thereby learning what could work on a larger scale.
- With respect to policies 33 to 35 under Public Infrastructure, undergrounding utilities works well for roads and buildings but where large trees are affected by utility lines, give the trees priority and consider placing the lines elsewhere; the phrase “best management

practices” needs clarification.

Mr. N. Mogensen, 3760 Crestview Road, stated:

- A regional issue is the E&N rail corridor which will become a necessary travel corridor soon, incorporating rail and bicycle pathways; Saanich Council should urge the CRD to double width the rail track to accommodate future needs.
- The height of tall buildings should be limited for safety reasons.
- A policy to encourage home gardens is needed since trucking food across great distances will not be sustainable.
- Urban forests suffer from prolonged neglect; utilize community volunteers to a greater extent in their restoration, without limiting their work.

Mr. P. Gerrard, 2878 Inlet Avenue, President of the Gorge Tillicum Community Association, stated;

- The quality of life in Saanich is excellent and to maintain that, Council should concentrate on the issues of lack of affordable housing, sustainable land use, transportation and streetscapes.
- The OCP’s restriction on height of buildings is already out of date; such density can offer more affordable housing.
- Increasing road capacity only increases traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions; we must upgrade our infrastructure and consider alternatives like LRT; Saanich should partner with BC Transit in upgrading their services.
- Streetscapes should be designed primarily for pedestrians.
- The replacement of aging municipal infrastructure must be given higher priority.

Ms. J. Gaylord, 1692 Carnegie Crescent, stated:

- This is an excellent Official Community Plan.
- Stronger wording is needed for policies to maintain the urban containment boundary including a definition of the phrase “major changes”.
- Include a reference to housing agreements in the section on Centres and Villages.
- Guidelines for bike parking facilities are required.
- The old OCP contains a policy requiring that plans for upgrading roads be referred to the Bicycle Committee for consideration of cycling improvements; the present BIPED Committee is concerned this has been removed from the new OCP.

Ms. C. Herbert, 4568 West Saanich Road, stated:

- Policies to facilitate more affordable housing are necessary.
- Care homes rather than assisted-living homes are required for seniors; civic-supported housing and institutions are needed.

Ms. K. Whitworth, 4580 Viewmont Avenue, stated:

- Density bonusing policies require a framework which would include involving the public in determining what public amenities are acceptable and a dispute resolution process.

- Royal Oak’s designation as a major centre urgently requires that a planning study be done and outstanding issues clarified.

Ms. C. Pendray, 4560 West Saanich Road, stated:

- Royal Oak is the closest community to Saanich’s rural lands and it is not appropriate to designate it as a major centre or allow high rise buildings which will not protect the environment or enrich the community’s urban design; also traffic congestion is an existing concern.
- Bicycle use and public transit must be encouraged equally across the municipality not just in major centres.
- Green building should be required not just encouraged in the Plan.
- A prime goal of the OCP should be to respect neighbourhood concerns.

Mr. H. Charania, 757 Genevieve Road, stated:

- Under Community Values, protecting the natural environment should come before utilizing green building practices.
- In the Sustainable Ecosystems section under policies 5 and 10, take out the word “encourage” and use stronger words such as “preserve” and “retain”.
- In the Centres and Villages section, define the boundaries of major centres; a maximum 500 metre radius has been suggested.
- In the School Lands policies, define what publicly-accessible means; he supports policy 5 with respect to the disposition of school lands.
- In the Parks, Trails, Open Spaces & Vistas section, policy 17 should state “Retain open space on private lands and encourage expansion where reasonable and feasible”.
- In the Mobility section, policy 5 should support alternative transportation not just encourage it; support for bus rapid transit along Douglas Street can be removed.
- In the Public Infrastructure section, clarify that the benefitting land owners will pay for any sewer service extension.

Mr. S. Brygadyr, 847 Cameo Street, stated:

- Environmental concerns should be addressed gradually and long term solutions sought.
- Saanich could undertake a process to educate the public on these OCP issues.
- Clean air, clean water, preservation of the natural environment are the most important goals and minimizing human impact on all three is a priority.

Mr. C. Maltsby 1815 Fairburn Drive, stated:

- He supports Option 3 in the report of the Director of Planning dated May 1, 2008 recommending the down-zoning of all Public Schools, which although strict will be manageable with cooperation between parties and will achieve the goal of preserving public open space.

Mr. L. DesFosses, 10 – 4580 West Saanich Road, stated:

- The development of school lands is an unexpected change in any community; many residents oppose the development that is occurring

on the former Royal Oak Middle School lands.

Mr. A. Lubkowski, 2886 Ilene Terrace, Land Use Director, Camosun Community Association, stated;

- The OCP should be an enabling document.
- Instead of having policies which bind us to specific actions, perhaps the OCP could include developing a school land strategy comprised of policies and bylaws which recognize the importance these lands have as community centres, serving the diverse institutional, social and open space needs of the surrounding residents.
- Another option could involve the municipality having the right of first refusal on school lands for sale.
- We are school-centred communities for more reasons than the open space around them.

Ms. N. Chambers, 4317 Blenkinsop Road, stated:

- Climate change may have the effect of making the Island more agriculturally productive; we must protect our agricultural and buffer lands.
- Infill development erodes farmland.

Mr. B. Cottier, 382 Merriman Drive, stated:

- Too much spot rezoning has occurred in Saanich; this OCP must be respected.
- A comprehensive transit plan for the region is required.
- Urban villages cannot straddle a major through road.
- High rise buildings isolate the residents; to create community the land on ground level could be row housing.

Mr. P. Beaumont, 42 Obed Street, stated:

- Increased density should be allowed in selected neighbourhoods.
- Region wide planning is not occurring; developers face many unnecessary challenges.

Ms. D. Dickson, 4059 Monarch Place, stated:

- In 2002, the future of Haro Woods was targetted for study in the proposed (Institutional Property) Action Plan; this has not yet been initiated and there is concern about the preservation of this natural area.
- The Urban Forest Strategy requires explanation.
- Could Haro Woods be included in the Parks, Trails, Open Spaces & Vistas policies.
- Replace the words "Knowledge Precincts " with "Schools".

Mrs. C. Lee, 151 Homer Road, stated:

- Her neighbourhood has changed and is now part of an Urban Centre; amenities have been lost.
- The OCP will allow 18 storey buildings in this area; they will result in increased traffic problems, heat and light pollution and affect viewscapes.

Mr. B. Slagboom, 4530 Markham Street, stated:

- The concerns in the Royal Oak area are the development of school lands, 12 storey buildings and the preservation of heritage properties such as the Royal Oak Schoolhouse.
- The present infrastructure in Royal Oak cannot absorb increased density ; traffic problems are serious.

Mr. G. Wilson, 1485 Mt. Doug Cross Road, representing the Urban Development Institute (UDI) Victoria Chapter, stated:

- The UDI supports the OCP 2008 document.
- There is still a need to increase industrial land area and density to meet continuing growth needs.
- Secondary suites should be legalized.
- The density bonusing policy requires clarification as to how it will operate.
- Sustainability relies partly on well planned densification; the eight storey cap on building height is therefore regrettable; affordability is tied to densification .

Mr. K. Whitcroft, 1044 Inverness Road, stated:

- The wording of the Environmental Integrity chapter should be made stronger to emphasize restoration, rehabilitation and protection, not just conservation.
- The importance of protecting our watersheds is not recognized in this OCP; consider incentives for the creation of urban forests as part of watershed rehabilitation.
- Policies dealing with water quality should aim to eliminate rather than reduce contamination.
- It is not clear where, in Major Centres, the 18 storey buildings will be allowed; separation between such buildings must also be considered.
- Infill development does not solve the housing affordability problem.
- Alternative road design should control contaminants which flow off the road.

Mayor Leonard stated:

- Since public input on Chapter 4 has now been completed, it would be appropriate to adjourn the meeting and reconvene on Tuesday, May 13, 2008. The next meeting will commence with consideration of Section 5 of the Draft Official Community Plan 2008.

**MOVED by Councillor Gillespie and Seconded by Councillor Brice:
"That the meeting be adjourned."**

CARRIED

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 10: 10 p.m.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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MUNICIPAL CLERK