

DISTRICT OF SECHELT
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING
Held in Community Meeting Room, 5797 Cowrie Street, Sechelt BC, and via
Zoom Online Meeting Platform
Wednesday July 10, 2024

PRESENT Mayor J. Henderson; Councillors D. Bell, D. Inkster, D. McLauchlan, B. Rowe, A. Shepherd (Chair), and A. Toth.

STAFF Director of Planning and Development A. Allen; Senior Development Planner T. Baker; Senior Policy Planner K. Pearson; Deputy Corporate Officer T. Forster; and Administrative Assistant M. Sugars (Recording Secretary).

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Public Hearing to order at 6:02 pm.

2. INTRODUCTION OF APPLICATION

The Chair introduced the proposed Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Bylaw No. 492-35, 2023, and advised those persons in attendance that the Public Hearing was being convened pursuant to the *Local Government Act*.

3. CORPORATE OFFICER PROCEDURES

The Public Hearing was attended by 18 members of the public. The Deputy Corporate Officer explained the purpose and rules of the Public Hearing.

4. APPLICATIONS

4.1 Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Bylaws: No. 492-35, 2023

Staff provided an overview and presentation of the proposed bylaw amendments.

The Chair called for comments from the public.

Name: Candice Sayre, West Sechelt Community Association
Address: 6177 Oracle Road

Ms. Sayre noted she is speaking on behalf of the West Sechelt Community Association, and thanked the District for providing this, and other engagement opportunities. She feels the proposed changes are complex and may change the community as a whole. She expressed concerns regarding the proposed changes to figure 17, and the potential impact of densification on water availability, sewer capacity, traffic congestion, highway and road planning, and the

environment. Ms. Sayre voiced concerns of green space and vegetation loss, including mature trees. She feels the impact of the proposal should be further reviewed. She expressed concerns that affordable housing will not be produced as a result of densification allowed as a result of the amendment. Ms. Sayre believes that the public should receive answers to a number of questions before the amendment should be considered; the plan to subsidize and incentivize affordable housing, how will infrastructure overwhelm be prevented, how will downtown drift be prevented, and how will the beauty of the Sunshine Coast be preserved.

Name: Warren Allan
Address: 5033 Sunshine Coast Highway

Mr. Allan began by stating he is not speaking on behalf of a Community Association. He feels significant issues affecting the community and residents have been ignored. He referenced criteria and wording noted on Sechelt's website regarding changes to the OCP, and believes this amendment does not follow the posted criteria, including community support. Mr. Allan expressed his belief that there are insufficient services available. He feels this, and other amendments do not consider quality of life in the community. He expressed his belief that a Housing Needs Assessment should be completed prior to consideration of the proposed amendment, and any others. He feels the current process is a 'piece-meal' approach and will result in inconsistent development. Mr. Allan expressed concerns that the amendment will reduce the opportunity for community input, and feels this amendment is not minor. He feels Council should temporarily pause all current applications and not accept any new ones.

Name: Angela Letman
Address: 5702 Medusa Street

Ms. Letman presented her submission via PowerPoint, which was also provided to staff. She thanked Council for the opportunity to speak, and stated she feels there are a number of concerns with the proposed amendment. She explained her intent to speak about her background knowledge of OCP Bylaw 492, the importance of figure 17, the proposed amendment, and suggested solutions. Ms. Letman explained she is presenting this information as a citizen, and not as a professional planner or as a representative of a Community Association. She noted she has a background as a planner, including her employment with the District of Sechelt for several years, and is therefore familiar with Bylaw 492. She expressed her belief that figure 17 is a summary of the policies contained within Bylaw 492, and she feels that this amendment is effectively 'throwing out' the current policies. She emphasized her feelings of the importance of figure 17. Ms. Letman feels this amendment will change the face of Sechelt. She feels six storey buildings can be appropriate, but not on the waterfront.

Name: Ray Parfitt
Address: 4656 Laurel Ave

Mr. Parfitt provided a paper copy of his submission to each member of Council, which he read from. He noted the multiple information sessions and Public Hearings on this amendment. He

feels this amendment will have a big impact on the community. He explained his interpretation of the difference between units per hectare versus floor area ratio (FAR), noting that FAR allows for the creation of more units within a building. He expressed he has significant experience using figure 17, and the housing types it illustrates. Mr. Parfitt feels the intent of the schedule is disappearing with the proposed amendment. He feels the amendment will affect areas other than the downtown, and these changes will be substantial.

Name: Nancy Leathley
Address: 6552 Anchor Place

Ms. Leathley informed Council that she has experienced great difficulty understanding the proposed amendment. She requested that future updates be presented and explained in a more user-friendly way. She expressed her belief that the previously held public hearing and subsequent engagement sessions were held during busy days and times. Ms. Leathley expressed difficulty seeing the map during the last information session, and is unable to review documents online. She feels having a public hearing in the summer months is inappropriate. Ms. Leathley is concerned if the proposed amendment is passed, that there will no longer be community input for bylaw amendments. She also expressed concern that a bylaw can receive three readings in one meeting, allowing them to be adopted in a short period of time, specifically with the recently passed zoning bylaw amendments to support the Provinces' Small-Scale Multi Unit Housing types.

Name: Warren Allan
Address: 5033 Sunshine Coast Highway

Mr. Allan continued his submission from his previous speaking opportunity. He reiterated that Council should temporarily pause all applications in order to conduct an OCP review. He feels the currently proposed and past amendments are not minor, and believes proposals should be in line with the OCP, and if they are not, they should have a high level of support from the community. He expressed the feeling that the community has not been acknowledged by Council, and feels staff should go beyond Local Government Act requirements. Mr. Allan believes staff should be declining developers when they receive rezoning requests.

Name: Angela Letman
Address: 5702 Medusa Street

Ms. Letman continued with her presentation. She reiterated the importance of figure 17, and believes the current proposed amendment lacks content. She noted that the title of figure 17 contains the term 'forms' however, housing forms are not included in the proposed figure. She is in favour of using FAR and building height as a measurement of density; and agreed some references should be updated to include FAR; however, more context should be given, and policy summaries should remain in the figure. She noted there are no references or accommodations for townhouses, or housing types, within the proposed amendment.

Name: Ray Parfitt
Address: 4656 Laurel Ave

Mr. Parfitt continued from his previous submission. He spoke about the variety of designations and building types in the Davis Bay, Wilson Creek, and Selma Park. He expressed concerns that the amendment will change the character of the neighbourhoods. He noted his belief there is limited infrastructure in the area. He feels the proposed amendment does not consider the existing form and scale of existing neighbourhoods. He is concerned that mobile homes could be redesignated. Mr. Parfitt expressed his belief that the amendment may cause future conflicts within neighbourhoods and current buildings. He feels the proposed amendment is too general, and will cause significant changes. He enquired about the rationale of the proposed amendment, and if staff have considered its affect on neighbourhoods.

Name: Warren Allan
Address: 5033 Sunshine Coast Highway

Mr. Allan continued his submission from his previous statements, and expressed feelings that Council is unable to decline developer proposals. He spoke about the possibility of future, and current incomplete developments due to lack of infrastructure. He enquired what Council and staff plan to do regarding developments that remain outstanding. Mr. Allan stated he has included 13 additional pages of information to his written submission.

Name: Angela Letman
Address: 5702 Medusa Street

Ms. Letman continued with her presentation. She noted the wording located at the bottom of the proposed figure 17, that it applies to all references to residential development densities and building heights, overriding other policies throughout the OCP. She explained her interpretation of how a six-storey building may affect certain areas if the amendment is adopted. She noted wording within the amendment she feels is inconsistent.

After the three-minute timer elapsed, the Chair permitted Ms. Letman to finish her presentation.

She continued outlining how the amendment may affect existing policies within the OCP and how the Downtown Village could look, as a result of the amendment. She referenced the Watermark development, as an example of how massing along the waterfront can work; however she does not support six-storey buildings on the waterfront (unless they do not obstruct views). She emphasized that open space along the waterfront is crucial. Ms. Letman referenced several items within the current OCP she feels could be updated. She expressed her feelings that the proposed amendment does not recognize neighbourhood diversity. She stated her concerns regarding infrastructure needs for further development, and believes there should be a distinction between areas on municipal sewer, and those that are not, within the OCP. She expressed her feelings the amendment is premature. She referenced her interpretation of the current active developments.

She stated her belief that it is construction costs preventing projects from progressing. Ms. Letman believes a Sechelt specific Housing Needs Assessment and OCP review should be completed. She suggested several solutions, including:

- Explore a 'Village infill area' which allows three to four storeys, and remove the Downtown as a high-density area.
- Modify Downtown Village Neighbourhood Building Heights.
- Add Building Heights Criteria for Other Neighbourhoods.
- Limit waterfront buildings to three storeys.
- Sensitive integration of new construction.
- Terraced buildings.
- Additional open space.
- Specify sewer service areas vs. areas not serviced by sewer in figure 17.

Council asked Ms. Letman:

- Is six storeys the cap; and the tallest any building in Sechelt should be?
 - The Director of Planning and Development clarified that six storeys is the cap per the BC Building code and fire department capabilities in Sechelt.
 - Ms. Letman stated she does not believe buildings in Sechelt need to be any taller than six storeys.
- Has she considered sea rise in her analysis and the anticipation of sea rise and storm surges? What would the lifespan of a building on the waterfront be with these possibilities in mind; and the overall feasibility of new development along the waterfront?
 - Ms. Letman expressed it is hard to address. She stated the waterfront in Sechelt Inlet is more protected, and less at risk, than waterfront along the east of Sechelt. She recalled a study that explored installing an artificial, protective reef.

Name: Jill Hemmings Anderson
Address: 5970 & 5699 Trident Avenue

Ms. Hemmings Anderson spoke about the upcoming development in their area, with several proposed multi-storey buildings at different heights. She expressed concerns that the proposed amendment could allow the developer to build even taller buildings than already proposed. She expressed she would not be in favour of a six-storey building in their neighbourhood. She thanked Ms. Letman for clarifying the proposed amendment.

Name: Ray Parfitt
Address: 4656 Laurel Ave

Mr. Parfitt continued from his previous submission. He confirmed that many of his comments have been stated by previous speakers. He expressed his belief that policies should drive regulations; and that building criteria such as form and character, density, and height should be determined by these policies. He enquired how density bonusing and amenity contributions will be negotiated. He emphasized the importance of affordable housing. He feels there are

inconsistencies between the proposed figure 17 and Zoning Bylaw 580. Mr. Parfitt feels the proposed amendment does not follow existing regulations within the OCP. He believes an OCP review should be conducted, and confirm the vision for Sechelt, including outlining housing needs. He concluded that further stakeholder engagement should take place, and the proposed amendment should be postponed and incorporated into an OCP review in order to determine more appropriate FAR regulations.

The Chair called a first time asking if anyone else would like to speak to Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 492-35, 2023.

The Chair called a second time asking if anyone else would like to speak to Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 492-35, 2023.

The Chair called a third time asking if anyone else would like to speak to Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 492-35, 2023.

With no further speakers, the Chair reminded the public that no further information is to come forward to Council regarding Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 492-35, 2023.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The July 10, 2024, Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Certified correct:
Kerianne Poulsen, Corporate Officer

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

The following summarizes some of the written and verbal concerns expressed at the July 10, 2024 Public Hearing, along with staff's comments (*italicized*):

- Residential density/height increases leading to view obstructions, increased traffic and demand on local services.

Yes, generally new developments built higher than low-rise housing will impact views, and higher density will result in increased traffic and demand on infrastructure.

- Changes at varying scales and negative impacts to existing neighbourhood character.

Over 80% of the housing stock in Sechelt consists of single family homes. Neighbourhoods have evolved over decades with no development design requirements other than meeting zoning and BC Building Code requirements. Efforts are made to encourage new developments to blend thoughtfully within established neighbourhoods. District development permit objectives and guidelines have existed since the 1990s, including in the current OCP. If new residential development was required to match with the scale and design of existing neighbourhoods, then minimal new development at a multi-family scale would be allowed, and our housing shortage would continue.

- Policy change will not force developers to build low-cost housing.

The proposed amendment would encourage higher density development, allow more options for housing using FAR and overall assist to lower cost housing.

- Inadequate water supply and infrastructure capacity to accommodate new development and population growth in general.

A development cannot proceed to the construction stage without being fully serviced to District standards in general, and in particular to SCRD standards for water.

- Global warming, rising sea level, flooding, wildfires, other hazards and community safety.

Land that may be susceptible to natural hazards are routinely examined on a site by site basis during the development permit, building permit or subdivision application processes. Like most municipalities in BC, the District defers to the professional reliance model to ascertain site-specific hazard and risk assessments prior to approvals. In an ideal scenario, we would have a broad array of studies completed before designating and rezoning land for development; however the costs for all of those studies would be

excessive and likely out of the District's financial scope. The designation of land in most OCPs is somewhat of a crude exercise; looking at what makes common sense for residential, commercial and the other potential land uses and primarily based on past designations, new opportunities and known constraints. We have an urban containment boundary that is already limited by the extent / capacity of roads and infrastructure, the Agricultural Land Reserve, ocean shorelines, and steep sloping, forested Crown land. As for the wildfire interface, options to lessen the impact of this type of hazard on new residential neighbourhoods will be presented in the OCP update.

- “Figure 17 is losing its purpose.”

This figure is a helpful reference in the current OCP. The intent is to modify the Figure 17 matrix so that it is less rigid and more simplified as OCP policies ought to be. The proposed increased densities and heights are sync with past and recent development trends and tuned-up for the near future.

- “The timing of this amendment in advance of an OCP Review.”

Yes, local governments routinely amend their OCPs prior to a comprehensive OCP Review (see final comment). There have been 19 amendments to the current OCP since it was adopted in 2011, the majority of which were initiated by applicants. It is the responsibility of District's planning staff to initiate important amendments such as this for Council's consideration. If staff believed that this amendment should be held back to adoption of the next OCP, then this proposal would not be in front of Council.

- “Inadequate consultation for the amendment.”

There has been more than adequate consultation with this OCP amendment, as has been well documented in the staff reports.

- “Amendment does not address detailed neighbourhood planning.”

The importance of neighbourhood planning is acknowledged. The proposed amendment addresses FAR / Building height policies that would apply to serviced, residential neighbourhoods based on the current land use boundaries. Detailed neighbourhood planning is not the intent of this amendment and is even outside of the scope of the comprehensive OCP Review underway. It is hoped that provincial and federal grant funding will assist us in developing neighbourhood plans in concert with the review.

- Amendment does not meet... “Official Community Plan amendments will be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. the use is in the best long-term interests of the community as a whole;

2. the community has been consulted and the proposed use has a high level of support in the community;
3. the proposed use is consistent with the overall vision for the community and local neighbourhood;
4. there is a demonstrated need for the use in light of projected population and employment trends and other available sites in the community;
5. the proposed use is suitable for the site and compatible with adjacent land uses;
6. water and sewer, transportation and other community services are available and are not negatively affected;
7. the proposal puts forward creative, sustainable and innovative design approaches.”

The above is posted on the District’s website on the OCP page. Meeting all of the above may not be achievable for each and every OCP amendment; however staff believe that the amendment is aligned with most of the seven criteria that are relevant to this proposal. The above is also followed by another statement, which is entirely applicable to this OCP amendment:

“The OCP is meant to be a long-term guide to future land use and development in the District of Sechelt, and to provide a level of certainty to residents regarding the land uses to be provided in the community. However, it is not a static document, and Council may be required to respond to unforeseen conditions and circumstances that warrant reconsideration of the policies or map designations of the OCP.”