

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2007, 12:00 p.m.
Committee Room # 1**

Committee Members Present: Mayor Lowe in the Chair, Councillors Coleman, Holland, Hughes, Madoff, Thornton-Joe and Young.

Absent: Councillors Chandler and Fortin.

Staff Present: P. Ballantyne – City Manager.

Staff Present for a Portion of the Meeting: M. Hornell – Manager, Community Planning Division; C. Gower – Senior Urban Design Planner; D. Day – Director of Planning & Development; R. Woodland - Corporate Administrator; M. McCliggott – Director of Finance; C. Havelka – Recording Secretary.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action: Councillor Hughes moved that the Agenda of the June 28, 2007 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

CARRIED 07/357

3. Downtown Plan Update

The Manager of Community Planning Division reviewed for Committee the importance placed on the Downtown Plan Update as identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan. This led to the Downtown Plan Update Fast Tracked Issues, of which Downtown Boundary and the Interim Bonus Density Policy are the last two to be reviewed.

3.1 Downtown Plan Update Fast Tracked Issues: Downtown Boundary

A Strong Framework:

- Regional Growth Strategy
- Official Community Plan
- Vision
- Principles
- Goals

Opportunities:

- Delivering the Vision
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Development Interest
- Vibrant Central Area and Neighbourhoods
- Placemaking

The Central Area:

- The Central Area is not specifically defined. It is broadly the walkable areas on either side of the Douglas Street transit spine.
- There is growing recognition that this broad area is composed of numerous character areas or precincts.

Moving Forward:

Move forward with the Downtown Plan update in the context of:

- Achieving the Vision.
- Managing future growth and change.
- Addressing land use and urban design in the Central Area.
- Broad study area for development of contextual options.
- Summer devoted to development of Options. Staff are available to meet with interest groups during this time.
- Options to stakeholders for review and input in Fall 2007.

Staff responded to Committee members' comments and questions, as follows:

- The importance of addressing the transition area of downtown and how it relates to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The Downtown boundaries are not changing, but a review of the interface of the neighbourhoods to downtown is important.
- Communicating this subject to stakeholders and the public will be through the web site and e-mail distribution. Staff will meet with interested groups during the summer.
- The transit plan along the Douglas Street corridor will be a challenging but integral part of the planning process.

Action: Councillor Holland moved that this report be received for information and that staff move forward with the next steps of the Downtown Plan Update with respect to Boundaries.

CARRIED 07/356

3.2 Downtown Plan Update Fast Tracked Issues: Interim Bonus Density Policy

Background:

- January 25, 2007 – Council requested fast tracking interim bonus density policy.
- February 15, 2007 – Council received Coriolis discussion paper: *Obtaining Amenity Contributions from New Urban Development Projects*.
- April 3, 2007 – APC resolution to target 85% of land lift for amenity contributions.

Bonus Density – What is it?

- Local Government Act s. 904 gives municipalities ability to link allowable density to provision of amenities.
- Two most common approaches in BC:
 - Amenity density bonus system defined in zoning bylaws.
 - Site-by-site negotiations for voluntary contributions at rezoning.

Bonus Density - Are there Options?

- Greater reliance on regulatory tools (LGA s. 938 – direct provision of works and lands).
- Development Cost Charges.
- Special levies.
- Tax supported borrowing.

Bonus Density – Why Do it?

- To provide facilities and services to ensure liveability.
- To protect valued public goods.
- To achieve larger policy objectives.

Bonus Density – Current Goals

- Heritage preservation.
- Increased Downtown population.
- Customer parking.
- Active, usable public space.
- Extension of walkway network.
- Revitalization of area north of View Street.
- Exceptional landmark design.
- Housing and services for handicapped.
- Extension of shop frontage in the retail core.
- Community facilities (e.g. day care).

Principles – Bonus Density System Should:

- Be fair and transparent and increase certainty to all parties.
- Focus on amenities that can't be achieved by regulatory or other financial means.
- Seek public amenities *not* general categories of use.
- Primarily seek defined amenities for new population and users.

Decision Criteria – Consider bonus density for amenities that:

- Provide a direct & tangible public benefit to Downtown.
- Improve quality of life for everyone.
- Enhance the public realm.
- Secure heritage resources and character of place.
- Secure more affordable and special needs housing.
- Leverage public infrastructure investment.

Delivery Mechanisms:

- Clear policy for on-site & adjacent public realm & design benefits to be secured through regulatory tools, *not* bonusing.

- Quantitative methodology.
- Comprehensive list of desired amenities.
- Standards of acceptability for amenities.
- Standards of acceptability for amenities contributed (capital and operating considerations).
- Dedicated funds for cash-in-lieu (Housing Trust Fund; possible Downtown Amenity Reserve Fund).
- Legal agreements to secure amenities long term (housing & operating agreements, easements).

Bonus Density – Current Issues:

- Ensuring a fair exchange of value in the public interest.
- Limiting negative effects in the Downtown land market.
- Levelling the playing field between office and residential uses.

Bonus Density – Findings:

- Land lift analysis gives clarity on the value exchange between amenity & bonus density.
- Targeting bulk of the lift could limit supply of available lots.
- Eliminating bonus for general residential would reduce market distortions, but have implications.
- Development industry prefers a schedule-based zone system &/or regulatory methods to case-by-case negotiation at rezoning.

Proposed Direction:

- Greater reliance on regulatory tools to achieve on-site and adjacent public realm amenities.
- Clear policy regarding goals, principles, decision criteria and mechanisms.
- Schedule-based bonus density zoning for general situations.
- Reserve negotiation at rezoning for large, complex projects or special circumstances.
- Elimination of bonus for straight land uses.

Committee members expressed the following concerns:

- Preserving heritage while increasing density.
- A schedule based approach towards amenities would provide clarity for Developers and Council.
- Bonus density in respect to how it relates to the Interim Building Height Policy.

A Committee member expressed concerns regarding amenities, preferring public realm amenities to cash contributions and non-public realm amenities.

Committee members discussed Option 2 for moving ahead with the Downtown Plan Interim Bonus Density Policy, as described by staff. Committee members felt this was a good direction to move towards, though more details are needed, particularly in respect to caps in relationship to percentage of land.

Action: Councillor Holland moved that Council approve Option 2 of the Interim Bonus Density Policy, as follows:

1. Current case by case negotiation informed by a proponent funded assessment of net increase in land value calculated by an independent appraisal.
2. Value of amenity contribution determined by proponent funded independent quantity surveyor.
3. Bonus both residential and office equally to a maximum cap.

CARRIED 07/355

Councillor Young voted against this motion

4. CLOSED MEETING – 1:22 P.M.

Action: Councillor Hughes moved that Committee of the Whole convene a Closed meeting that excludes the public under Section 11(6) of the Council Bylaw for the reason that the following agenda items deal with matters specified in Section 11(3)(f) and (k) of the Council Bylaw.

CARRIED 07/354

Committee Members Present: Mayor Lowe in the Chair, Councillors Chandler, Coleman, Holland, Hughes, Madoff, Thornton-Joe and Young.

Absent: Councillor Fortin.

Staff Present: P. Ballantyne – City Manager.

5. City Manager Performance Management Plan

The City Manager reviewed the proposed plan with Committee.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Action: Councillor Hughes moved that the Special Committee of the Whole meeting of June 28, 2007 be adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

CARRIED 07/353

Mayor Lowe, Chair