

North Vancouver Community Association Network (NVCAN) – Special Meeting

November 21, 2019 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.

District of North Vancouver Municipal Hall

Participants:

John Miller (Chair)	Lower Capilano
Irene Davidson	Norgate Park
Eric Andersen	Blueridge
Katherine Fagerlund	Deep Cove
Barry Fenton	Blueridge
Corrie Kost	Edgemont Upper Capilano
Erik Skowronek	Edgemont Upper Capilano
Val Hammerberg	Maplewood
Stuart Porter	Maplewood
Karen Barnett	Seymour
John Hunter	Seymour
Peter Teevan	Seymour
Herman Mah	Pemberton Heights
Chris Sallis	Strathcona
Val Wilkins	Strathcona
Val Moller	Woodcroft
Babs Perowne	Woodcroft

Orwell Non-Market Housing Project Team:

Allyson Muir, Executive Director, Sanford Affordable Housing Society (SAHS)
Joy Haden, Innovation and Engagement Specialist, Hollyburn Family Services Society
Kelly Lin, Development Manager, Terra Housing Consultants
Jennifer Miller, Delaney + Associates (facilitator and notetaker)

Orwell Non-Market Housing – Presentation:

- Presentation about the proposed project by Allyson Muir, Executive Director, SAHS
- 271 Orwell Street is the street address of the project site.

Discussion:

- Park and Ride by Phibbs Exchange: The project team is waiting to receive information from the District of North Vancouver (DNV) on what they want to do with the informal park and ride. The park and ride is not part of the proposed development site (the construction will impact the site, though).
- Architecture/Construction:
 - Architecture of the building is not yet set in stone, but it is close to what it will look like. The building will not be modular construction (it was considered earlier), but it will be traditional construction.

- Adding another storey or two would make the building more expensive to build, and what's approved in the neighbourhood so far is up to 6 storeys.
 - Heating will be electric baseboard heating.
 - NVCAN input: Sometimes cost for modular construction can be less; it takes less construction time and less environmental impact, less road disruption, etc.
 - For modular construction, there needs to be a big site; the site for this project is very tight. There can be some pre-fab/pre-assembled structure. A year ago, the project team was thinking about modular design and the total construction budget was actually higher for modular at that point.
 - Some units will be universally designed (accessible for people with disabilities). Some will go further than universal design. BC Housing has requirements for accessibility that the building will meet - wheelchair accessible shower, ramps, disabled parking spots, other details.
 - Public assembly area or green spaces for tenants: the landscaped courtyard will all be green space. There's also an amenity room in the building for gatherings, etc. The landscape architect right now is looking at the green spaces.
 - Rooftop patio was considered earlier, but it becomes a cost and maintenance issue. The project team has abandoned this idea.
 - A playground for kids could be included in landscaped courtyard. The project team is considering some play equipment.
 - Solar panels have not been looked at. The building will be built to Step 3 for sustainability – a Step 3 / Step 4 hybrid. Construction costs for passive house are prohibitive.
 - NVCAN input: It would be good to consider before going to Council how much more the building will cost if it is Net Zero.
- Parking:
 - 71 parking stalls are planned for the building as the project is trying to strike a balance (there are many families planned for the building, and families usually have a car); the project team doesn't want to add to street parking in the area as it is already stretched for street parking.
 - Carsharing is being looked into. The project team has also reached out to Translink to see if they would be willing to partner in promotion and transit incentives.
 - 5 or 6 spots of the total parking are visitor parking, and one parking spot is dedicated to a staff member. This was also the recommendation of the parking study.
 - NVCAN input: parking is a big issue. Buildings should have 2 spots per unit. / The building is close to Phibbs, is 70 parking stalls too many? / Other buildings in the area are resulting in too many cars; this project is exacerbating the existing problem.
 - NVCAN input: Based on presentations to council, parking spot costs \$40-\$50K to construct. To add parking, parking would go from one level of underground parking to two and that would significantly increase costs. The project team needs to rely on the experts.

- Information about the cost and adding another layer of parking is correct. Also, the location is on a floodplain, so the whole second level would need to be water-tight, which is very expensive. That would have a direct impact on the affordability level.
- The proposed project has approximately 71 parking stalls and the project teams anticipates it will be enough and not too many.
- Parking will be pay parking; the project team anticipates that fee for parking stalls will be charged in addition to rent (this is partly strategic - to encourage people to use other transportation).
- NVCAN input: That violates a rule -the federal government mandate says 30% has to include parking, utilities, etc.
- This is not mandated, and the project has no federal funding.
- The project team is looking into the potential of carsharing and e-bikes. It's too early to say what this will look like. There will be electric vehicle stations as well (that's mandatory).
- NVCAN input: One of the major concerns is parking and impact on street. It's a concern but this project can't be held accountable for mistakes at Lynn Creek Apartments across the street. There is a need for more social housing and fully in support of using district land for that. We know we need rentals - sooner the better.
- Operator would be willing to look into renting out parking stalls if they are not fully used by tenants.
- As a landlord, SAHS is unable to check license plates registered with ICBC (if an applicant has multiple cars registered).
- Selection of tenants:
 - For people on income assistance, it's very easy to check their income (there is paperwork associated with that), and the income tax returns are checked. For the moderate-income family units, the maximum combined household income is about \$100,000/year. N.B. the maximum income for one-bedroom units is \$71,200
 - NVCAN input: Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) has a regulation or law that you may not discriminate based on the basis of lawful employment. How is giving priority to people on the North Shore enforceable?
 - SAHS has discussed with the District that this housing is prioritized for people living or working on the North Shore. (There are similar examples in Richmond and Vancouver; it has not been a challenge). Other people may be eligible, but priority given to people with close ties to the North Shore.
 - Income for people on social assistance and rent geared to income is tested annually. If their income changes, their rent changes. People who go in at the highest rent, they're tested once and not tested again; (this is a BC Housing policy).
 - Household income is calculated as income from all adults who are not dependents. If a student is a dependent, their income is not included. If they are not a dependent, student income is included. Income may be from employment, social assistance or pension benefits, child support, trusts, and certain assets.
 - Assets are also checked - bank accounts, investments, questions are asked about owning property; there is a thorough reference check. There are forms / calculation guidelines

from BC Housing that take into consideration savings, trusts, etc. and how to calculate a portion of those as income.

- This building is not for people coming straight out of homelessness. People coming straight out of homelessness tend to require supports, and this is not a supportive housing building.
- NVCAN input: It is positive that families who need three bedrooms and are on income assistance could live here.
- Housing Income Limits are set by region each year by BC Housing. North Shore fits into the Vancouver calculation.
- NVCAN input: The maximum income seems high.
- The \$104,440 is a province-wide figure set by BC Housing. There is a range of rent levels because it is good to have a wide range of people in a building; it makes for a more vibrant community. The higher rent category also helps to offset the very low rents. The higher rents will always be lower than comparable area market rents; if market rents were to soften, these would come down as well. NOTE: All incomes / rents were presented using 2019 figures. These will be slightly different by the time the building opens.
- SAHS uses the Canadian National Occupancy Standard to identify when you need two-bedroom, three-bedroom unit, etc.
- The tenants are selected from the BC Housing registry – a waitlist. People on the registry are allowed to identify their preferred properties and areas. The waitlist will be longer than what this building can house.
- NVCAN input: There are 22,000 people on the BC Housing waitlist currently, province-wide.
- Mix of units:
 - NVCAN input: It seems like a high number of one-bedroom units (the District is looking for housing for families).
 - The project team is trying to maximize opportunities for seniors. Some of it goes back to the number of parking stalls; more families means more need for parking. The project team is trying to balance the whole building – current proposal serves a range of needs. One-bedroom units could also be couples.
 - Studios were considered and there were iterations of the design that included a few studios. Studios can only have one tenant, and they are less rentable / less desirable for a lot of people. The cost to build a one-bedroom unit is not much higher.
 - The mixed income model has been around for a long time. The specific mix of rent levels is under BC Housing's Community Housing Fund, which is fairly new (unable to specify examples with the exact same mix of rent levels as the buildings are not complete yet).
 - The land is not owned by SAHS; the land is being leased from the District; it's a 60-year lease.
 - The example of a potential tenant (the single mom with 5-year old son); when the son grows up and moves away to college, the mom would have to move (as she would be considered over-housed in a two-bedroom unit alone; she could move to next available one-bedroom unit).

- Laundry room: The building will have a laundry room; the project team is also looking at in-suite laundry for the 3-bedroom and potentially for the 2-bedroom units too. Common area laundry would be pay-laundry (usually using a card reader).
- Pets: The building will allow pets; there is a limit on the number of pets, but not the size. The maximum is one pet per unit.
- Mail service: the project team assumed it would be a mailbox in the lobby for tenants, but this will depend on what Canada Post wants to do.
- Security:
 - NVCAN input: There have been reported extra assaults and crimes at Phibbs – and increase in drug use at Phibbs. Will there be security at the building?
 - The building will have no security guards, but it will have features such as fob access, cameras, gated parkade, etc. As everything in that area gets redeveloped, the project team believes the neighbourhood overall would be safer.

Discussion: How to engage NVCAN moving forward, and recommendations for broader community engagement

- In Blueridge – something (if not too lengthy) can be added to the newsletter. The CA also has a Facebook page.
- For a meeting, it would be best to have it close to the location – at Kenneth Gordon School in Maplewood (they rent out their rooms).
- Inter River CA is near the site. It is not a particularly active group but there is a contact - Elise. Also, Phil lives in the Inter River area.
- There is another Facebook group that is development-oriented that is mostly east of this area
- It is important to get the business community involved on the issues of parking, of new tenants – businesses should be made aware of this. More flyers should go to the businesses in the area. The 100-metre radius isn't enough for this site.
- The location is in the central zone where every transportation route is congregated. Traffic in this neighbourhood impacts everyone.
- Potentially, intercepts considered at Phibbs, Open House at Bridge Brewing Company.
- NVCAN can certainly help get the word out. Babs can put the project team in touch with individual members.
- NVCAN would like to hear more as things develop and receive notices if there are significant changes.
- RCMP needs to be on the engagement list - security in the area is important and there is a new Police Chief.
- The project team should inform NVCAN through Babs when it is going to Council.
- There will be a town hall meeting with RCMP superintendent on Wed Jan 15, so the project team is welcome to join.