

Minutes of Special APC meeting – Area D–Cowichan bay

June 9, 2015 - Cowichan Estuary Centre

Agenda:

- Update on Cowichan Bay Servicing Policy
- Options for Cluster Residential designation

Members Attending: Robert Stitt (Chair and Minutes), Brian Hosking, Hilary Abbott, Kerrie Talbot, Kevin Mayer, Peter Holmes and Joe Kinrade.

Members Absent: Matthew Louie and Calvin Slade.

Ex-Officio: Lori Iannidinaro, Area Director, and Ann Kjerulf, Senior Planner, CVRD.

Meeting called to order at 7.00 pm.

Update on Cowichan Bay Servicing Policy

- Policy document distributed
- Brief discussion:
 - Question re policy item d.: allocation of sewer capacity outside Village and Rural Containment Boundaries for properties identified as having 'sewer service potential.' Does this contradict the intent of the VCBs as defined in the OCP? Ann Kjerulf: Connection may be warranted if there is an environmental or public health concern, otherwise an OCP amendment would be required.

Options for Cluster Residential (CR) Designation

- Issues around CR raised by OCP Implementation Committee (OIC - now part of the APC)
- Topic later discussed by APC – see meeting notes at end of minutes
- Following documents distributed by Ann Kjerulf:
 - Cluster Development overview document
 - Four maps showing Area D OCP designations and potential CR build-out based on current land use designations
- Discussion:
 - CR overview document lists useful high-level factors to help evaluate potential sites – needs fleshing out to be applied in practice
 - Easy access to public transportation and other services and existing rural road configurations have been noted as other factors to be considered
 - Whatever the final designation applied to lands currently designated CR, each proposed CR site needs to be carefully assessed against fully-defined Site Evaluation factors
 - Examples shown in handouts based on ~100 acre sites. Observation: the smaller the site, the more challenging will be the successful realization of the CR concept

- The current CR1 zoning allows a minimum parcel size of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) with community water and up to 15 units/hectare with community water and sewer.
 - The draft Design Principles includes a reference to US ordinances that require CR development be at least 4 hectares (10 acres) in size to derive significant ecological benefits
 - The '15 units/hectare with community water and sewer' was intended to be the density for each full hectare, ie: if a property were only 0.5 hectares, ~7.5 units would be permitted.
- Future options discussed:
 - Eliminating the CR designation entirely outside the VCB but retaining it as a future option on a case-by-case basis – this would require an OCP amendment which is a significant step
 - Changing the CR zoning to more rigorously define the CR concept, including fully developing the site evaluation factors
 - In either case, hold a public meeting, to include all interested owners of CR-designated properties plus other interested parties such as neighbours and other property owners who may be interested in the concept.

Motion by Robert Stitt:

Based on recent activity concerning the Cluster Residential designation and feedback from the OIC, the APC, and the community, the APC recommends that:

- CVRD Planning staff initiate a public process to review the Area D OCP Cluster Residential designation (September suggested)
- Whatever the outcome of this review, any future expressions of interest in Cluster Residential development be subject to a rigorous site evaluation early in the application process.

Seconded by: Kerrie Talbot.

All in favour.

Meeting adjourned 9:15pm

Note: Additional feedback was received from APC members following this special meeting. The feedback restated the critical importance of the Village Containment Boundaries (VCBs) and a requirement for OCP Amendments with a public process to change the VCBs, as envisaged by the Official Community Plan.

Area D APC – Input on Cluster Residential

February 5, 2015

Contributing APC Members:

Robert Stitt
Peter Holmes
Kevin Maher
Joe Kinrade
Kerrie Talbot
Matthew Louie
Hilary Abbott

Based on a review of:

- The OCP Community Goals and Cluster Residential sections
 - Area D zoning map and maps of proposed CR developments
 - Report to EASC of November 25, 2014, re the OCP Village Containment Boundary
 - Board direction to Planning re long-term growth within the VCB
 - Email from Ann Kjerulf of December 12 re resolving challenges with the CR designation and zoning
 - CR discussion paper from Robert Stitt of December 18, 2014
1. Increased density is a key issue. The VCBs were implemented to help manage and contain growth while CR zoning promotes density outside the VCBs. This seems contradictory and is causing dissent in adjoining neighbourhoods.
 2. Some areas proposed for CR have an established character that does not match the higher density of CR.
 3. Greater density means more vehicles, noise and other negative impacts on established, less dense neighbourhoods.
 4. Some areas zoned CR appear better suited to a successful implementation than others. Factors such as road access, traffic, practicality of retaining natural vegetation, etc. need to be considered.
 5. Many properties zoned CR do not have the attributes to make CR viable unless they are assembled into larger parcels. For example, long, narrow properties with significant steep slopes do not appear to be well-suited to a mix of clustered buildings and open spaces.
 6. There is no sewer capacity to support the higher density developments and water quality and quantity is becoming an issue.

7. CR is not well enough defined in the OCP in terms of how it can look and work. Sample layouts would help.
8. Intro to 4.6: Question about why “four to twelve dwelling units arranged around a common space...”
9. OCP is more nebulous about what is to be protected: “... a minimum of 50% of the site remains in its natural state.” The proposed text talks of “dedication of at least 50% of the site as park or conservation area.” The subsequent reference to “small homes” needs clarification.
10. Concerns about possible challenges should be addressed after the wishes and best interests of the community have been considered.
11. The proposal to “remove the policy in the OCP which requires an OCP amendment to enter into the service area” is of great concern. Where are the checks and balances and the opportunity for public input?