

# north shore news

## Public to have say before Monterey school demolished for housing

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

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Council voted Monday to send a plan to build single-family homes on the closed Monterey school site to public hearing. Photo Mike Wakefield

School's out and houses are in — maybe.

The plan to replace shuttered Monterey elementary with 12 single-family homes is officially up for debate following District of North Vancouver council's move Monday to push the project to public hearing.

Learning stopped at the kindergarten to Grade 4 school in 2004 due to slipping enrolment and the school's peculiar location on Starlight Way.

"I think we did our grieving quite a few years ago when the numbers just declined and it couldn't stay open," said Mayor Richard Walton. "The location has always been a challenge. I'm not sure what the thinking was in the '60s when it was built."

Walton said he was "very comfortable" moving the proposal to public hearing.

The development proposal — which requires an amendment to the district's official community plan — would divide the site into 12 single-family lots, leaving four lots for parks.

With the public's assent and council's continued support, construction could begin as early as the end of 2015.

The redevelopment can't happen soon enough, according to North Vancouver superintendent of schools John Lewis.

All the money from the redevelopment would go towards the \$49 million replacement of Argyle secondary, according to Lewis.

The rebuild is vastly preferable to a seismic upgrade, which would “simply result in an upgraded 1950s facility,” said Lewis.

The school district sold the Monterey site to a developer for \$6.38 million in 2013. The site’s most recent tenant, L’Ecole Francaise Internationale de Vancouver, vacated in March 2011.

There have been no qualified applicants for a lease since then, according to Lewis.

Despite her opposition to several developments, Coun. Lisa Muri supported sending the Monterey project to public hearing, due in part to the school board’s budgetary woes.

“I am very sympathetic to the challenges that the school district faces,” Muri said, referring to recent budget cuts.

“I quite frankly don’t know how you continue to operate under the direction that the provincial government is demanding you to follow.”

The proposal is a “relatively small lot subdivision on a large piece of land” and will allow the new Argyle school to be built in Lynn Valley, Muri said.

If the proposal is approved, Morningstar Development would be on the hook for a community amenity contribution of \$460,000, more than one-third of which would be earmarked for park and boulevard improvements.

Approximately 113 trees would have to be cleared to make way for the project.

The North Vancouver school district spent approximately \$65,000 on maintaining the property over two years before selling it.

The development would be within Breamar elementary and Carson Graham secondary catchment areas.

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