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West Vancouver to allow coach houses

Stefania Seccia / North Shore News

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West Vancouver municipal hall. Photo file, North Shore News

Right before breaking for the rest of the summer, District of West Vancouver council allowed coach houses in their backyard once and for all.

At the July 21 meeting, in an almost unanimous decision, council approved two motions that would allow for coach houses. This September, staff is expected to bring forward bylaws that will set up the process, guidelines and costs associated with developing coach houses for council's approval.

But Coun. Bill Soprovich was confused as to why council was approving the amendments to zoning and official community plans ahead of knowing what the process would look like.

"Last time I was told I couldn't say anything," he said. "I'm not asking for anything uniquely different than from the first time."

Bob Sokol, director of planning, land development and permits, said staff wanted to ensure council was on board with coach houses. "Staff feels there is a considerable amount of time and effort that goes into considering a process, and we felt it was much more efficient use of staff resources to make council make a decision on whether they would be allowed or not in the district," he said. "And then we would put the resources in developing the process and particularly developing the materials and information sheets that are necessary for the public."

Soprovich was the lone opposition vote to the two motions allowing for coach houses Monday night.

As previously reported by the North Shore News, there may already be between 10 and 30 illegal coach houses that exist in West Vancouver.

The coach houses may be capped at 1,200 square feet, and the public may have to go through a two-phase approval process. The first step would determine if a detached suite could be built on the lot while the second step would consider the proposed design.

- with files from Jeremy Shepherd

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