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District to name new 'hoods

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

June 14, 2015 12:00 AM

What's in a name? That which we call Seylynn or Lower Capilano might soon be known as Lynn Bridges or Lions Gate Village.

District council, tasked with christening two new communities - Lower Capilano Marine Village Centre and Lower Lynn Town Centre - with new names, explored the age-old question at a Committee of the Whole meeting May 25.

Capilano Village is the name district staff are recommending for the phased development slated for west of Capilano Road between Fullerton Avenue and Curling Road.

The project includes two towers, a new community centre, four low-rise buildings and 20 townhouse units to be built over the next decade. Allowing it Capilano Village generated a mostly positive response at the meeting. Coun. Robin Hicks suggested adding a "Lower" prefix to Capilano Village, just to give the area some extra geographical distinction on that long stretch of road.

Keeping distinctive monikers in mind, Coun. Roger Bassam would like a new name altogether for that area: Lions Gate Village.

"I also wonder why we wouldn't look at Lions Gate ... which is the more appropriate name for that area," said Bassam. "It resonates with the major geographical feature there which is the Lions Gate Bridge." Noting there is already a Capilano Village Shopping Centre on Marine Drive, Mayor Richard Walton surmised the owners of that complex would most likely challenge the district's use of that name. Coun. Mathew Bond,

however, disagreed with Walton, pointing out Lynn Valley Town Centre applies to both the shopping mall and the area.

Couns. Doug MacKay-Dunn and Jim Hanson had no qualms with the name Capilano Village, while Coun. Lisa Muri took umbrage with the "village" designation.

"I just want to get away from 'village,'" said Muri. "It (Lower Capilano) doesn't suggest to me a village at all. It's going to be tall highrises, tall hotels, four-lane road; I don't think of a village when I think of that. Edgemont is a village."

Council, in the end, narrowed down the list of names to two choices: Lions Gate or Capilano Village.

As for branding Lower Lynn, staff's suggestion of "Bridge District" - which came out of a brainstorming session with area stakeholders - didn't sit well with some members of council. Walton wasn't convinced the name would grow on residents who have come to know the area as Seylynn or Lower Lynn.

When they were going through the Lower Lynn renaming exercise, the district's social planning staff searched for something "new and hip" that appealed to North Van's missing generation, and that was "not buried in historical references," council heard at the committee of the whole meeting.

Incorporating the word "bridges" in Lower Lynn seemed obvious to staff, because from a physical view the area is home to a variety of pedestrian, train and vehicle bridges.

Muri and Hanson requested that a different physical feature in the area - the Lynn River - be celebrated as part of the new name. Bassam then suggested Lynn Bridges or Lynn Bridges District.

Hicks, however, felt that adopting the name "district" might create some confusion, given there is already a district of North Van. Council will kick the names around for a bit before announcing in the coming weeks what the new communities will be called.

C North Shore Historical Society president John Stuart, weighing in on the "Bridge District" suggestion, said in 20 years no one will remember why it was called that. Making a case for using a geographical moniker, Stuart used the example of the renamed Second Narrows Bridge. "Most people still refer to it, because it's probably faster to say, the Second Narrows Bridge - and that gives you a geographical location," said Stuart. "When you say the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge - there are a lot of people that are recent arrivals that are not going to have a clue where that is."

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