



OCP process a careful balancing act

NORTH SHORE NEWS APRIL 17, 2011

Dear Editor:

This letter is written in response to the April 8 letter to the editor, Say Goodbye to North Van's Character.

The District of North Vancouver's official community plan engagement process began two years ago with one of the fundamental goals being to encourage community participation and input. In response to this invitation more than 5,000 participants from across the district have been involved in over 75 consultation events. Based on that input and with the guidance of a citizen's advisory group created to ensure that the draft plan reflected the input received, a draft plan has been prepared that council will be soon be considering through the public hearing process.

With any updated OCP, there is bound to be a variety of views, however the discussion should be based on the facts, not misrepresentations. In last Friday's letter, the author refers to approvals of "a 600-unit high-rise project in Seymour pushed through despite the support of a meagre four per cent of the residents, an 11-storey high-rise in Parkgate approved despite an almost riotous public hearing, and a high-rise apartment complex at Capilano Road and Paisley in Edgemont, opposed by 98.6 per cent of the community."

The 600 medium- and high-rise complex which includes rental and affordable housing units is in Lower Lynn, not Seymour, and was well supported by the local community. The 11-storey building in Parkgate is a much needed seniors complex and there were both supporters and detractors for the project at the public hearing, which was quite civil rather than "almost riotous." The Edgemont project was three stories consisting of 14 units on Capilano Road, a major transit route.

The author of the letter goes on to allege a hidden agenda in favour of development, sweeping plans to change single-family neighbourhoods, and an unwillingness to listen to the residents. Council's recent down-zoning of two commercial areas in Seymour in response to resident concerns; the intent of the OCP to focus any significant density and growth to four village/town centres in the district in order to meet housing needs while preserving the single-family character in the balance of the district; the integration of the current nine area plans into the OCP and an unprecedented community engagement process simply don't square with the allegations.

Council is very mindful of the careful balance that must be achieved in order to make changes that preserve and sustain the quality of life our residents are so passionate about. Many who have participated in the OCP process to date believe that it will achieve just that. There is still time to learn more about the OCP and get involved. Find out more at www.identity.dnv.org.

Mayor and council

District of North Vancouver

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