

# north shore news

## Former North Vancouver school Monteray to be redeveloped for single-family homes

### Council supports rezoning for 12 homes on Starlight Way

Chris Slater / North Shore News

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The former Monteray elementary school has been unoccupied since 2011. File photo North Shore News

The District of North Vancouver voted unanimously Monday to rezone the site of the vacant Monteray elementary school to make way for 12 single-family homes.

Council passed second and third readings of the bylaw to change the zoning of the school site at 4343 Starlight Way. Money from the development will go towards a rebuild of Argyle secondary.

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which was last occupied in 2011 — taken down. The property was sold to Morningstar Development in 2013 for \$6.38 million. But a final deal was contingent on getting the development project approved by council.

“I think the major concern in the community was the site itself and the deteriorating facility that is there right now,” said Coun. Lisa Muri, after hearing from area residents. “They were very worried about increased vagrancy on the site, vandalism. I think the community has grown tired of the property in the state that it is. There was a significant amount of support.”

Muri, who is in favour of the rezoning, expressed concerns however on the amount of construction the project will bring to the area in conjunction with a current project of replacing the Capilano water main.

“I would like staff to make sure that we know coming forward in the future . . . how we’re going to deal with the traffic, given the issue of the Capilano water main being replaced, and the number of projects happening on the western side of the district.”

Despite her support, Muri said it's unfortunate that the school district must sell its land to pay for necessary infrastructure upgrades.

"The place that the school district finds itself in, contributing funds from their land in order to contribute to infrastructure replacement for Argyle is really, under this government, the only opportunity that we have at improving our schools, unfortunately."

Coun. Matthew Bond, who is also in favour of the rezoning, said two concerns area residents brought up had to do with area parking and potential impacts new homes could have on residents' views.

He said residents are concerned about having to navigate around an increased number of vehicles on the street while trying to manoeuvre out of already steep driveways. He said one resident he spoke with was concerned with new homes blocking his view and wanted to know whether height restrictions would be put on future homes, which Bond said he believes bylaw staff will be able to follow up on.

Mayor Richard Walton, whose own children attended Monteray elementary, said it will be sad to see the school go. But he said it's ultimately the right move with the changing demographics of the area since the facility was first built approximately 50 years ago.

"In its day it was one of the most wonderful schools probably in the history of North Vancouver District," said Walton. "But it's time came and went . . . I think it's the right thing to do."

He said it's unlikely a demand for a school in the now highly expensive residential neighbourhood would arise in the future, as there are too few children left in the area within walking distance.

Council voted unanimously in favour of the project. Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn was not present at Monday's meeting and Coun. Jim Hanson left before the vote due to illness.

A fourth and final reading will be given in upcoming weeks.

Site preparation and construction work could start as early as late 2015.