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Edgemont eatery The Bakehouse is back

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

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The Bakehouse Photo file, North Shore News

Things are cooking on Edgemont Boulevard following District of North Vancouver council's near unanimous move Oct. 6 to put The Bakehouse back in business.

Council previously approved a café on the Edgemont Commons site at Edgemont Boulevard near West Queens Road, but the change from a 10-seat café to a 30-seat restaurant troubled Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn.

"I'm concerned that the developer left out some details. .. which might have changed the approval vote," he said.

Council's approval of the bigger than advertised restaurant might result in other developers employing backdoor techniques and changing proposals "after the fact," according to MacKay-Dunn.

Despite enjoying the Bakehouse's food and acknowledging a community benefit, MacKay-Dunn voted against the project.

Rather than worrying about zoning changes after the fact, council should take a broader view around commercial operations and not be so "restrictive and prescriptive," according to Coun. Roger Bassam.

"Perhaps this is a lesson for us to be a little more open with the zoning," he said.

Bassam wished the proprietor and customers "many aromatic days" at the restaurant.

While he supported the proposal, Coun. Mike Little suggested the district develop safeguards to stop developers from realizing a "significant economic benefit" by omitting key details from proposal.

"If you don't want the community impugning the motives of developers, we need to find ways to make sure that there is not a significant financial incentive to falsify a submission," he said. "I will not go so far as to say that happened here, but there was evidence that they had intended to include a restaurant at various points."

Aside from a few anchor tenants, most developers are unsure which businesses will end up occupying their developments, according to Coun. Alan Nixon. "Let's not impugn the motives of developers, necessarily, for not having the 100 per cent foresight to be able to predict who all their tenants are going to be," he said.

While acknowledging the neighbourhood isn't "suffering for lack of coffee shops," Nixon said the demand speaks to the Bakehouse's loyal customer base.

The restaurant closed its location at 1050 West Queens Road. A note on the restaurant's website attributed the closure to the municipality's high property taxes.

Some councillors expressed concern about parking in the neighbourhood, but parking problems in Edgemont are "somewhat overblown and overstated," according to Nixon. "I have never experienced difficulty finding parking in Edgemont," he said.

Located on the ground floor of a three-storey development, still under construction, the restaurant is slated to measure 1,325 square feet. The site, which features banking and retail spaces, will provide 46 underground parking stalls.

The restaurant is scheduled to close at 3:30 p.m. on weekdays and 4 p.m. on weekends.

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