

north shore news

Towers approved for Lower Capilano

DNV council votes 5-2 for Larco highrises at CapWest Club site

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

November 7, 2014 12:00 AM



An artist's rendering of Larco's tower approved for Capilano and Marine Drive Photo image supplied

Towers are going up in Lower Capilano.

In their last action before standing for reelection, District of North Vancouver council voted 5-2 to bring Larco's 451-unit development to the former CapWest Athletic Club site, located west of Capilano Road between Fullerton Avenue and Curling Road.

The phased development includes 18-and 12-storey towers, a new community centre, four low-rise buildings and 20 townhouse units to be built by a numbered company owned by Larco.

Bringing the project to an area described as a "blight" and a "garbage dump" constitutes a longawaited turning point for the neighbourhood, according to Coun. Alan Nixon.

"The community of Lower Cap will see the light at the end of a long tunnel," he said, describing his relief at approving the project with two weeks left in his 12-year tenure on council.

The revised agreement will penalize Larco if the company fails to build the community centre within eight years.

The community centre's shell must be built by Nov. 17, 2022. If Larco misses that deadline the district can buy back the land for \$1. Larco is also on the hook for an \$8.5 million letter of credit that has to be in the bank before anyone moves into the phased development and a \$2.5 million community amenity contribution.

Couns. Lisa Muri and Doug MacKay-Dunn opposed the project.

Muri previously talked about "playing hardball" with Larco to get the developer to agree to an \$8.5-million letter of credit. "I remain concerned. I remain disappointed in how we've gotten here," she said, explaining that she's never been through a public negotiation like this one.

With the neighbourhood set to absorb growth, the community centre might not meet the neighbourhood's needs, according to Muri. "It probably will not be sufficient given the density that is coming to that area," she said.

Concentrating growth in town centres such as Lower Capilano is an expedient way of handling the inevitable, according to Coun. Robin Hicks. "I'd like North Van to remain a sleepy little village forever but we all know that cannot happen," he said. "Everybody wants to deposit their spare cash here. ... so we've got to accommodate growth."

Coun. Mike Little, who is also at the end of his stint on council, expressed worries about concrete and glass dominating the site's plaza. The "neighbourhood living room" concept needs to be preserved, according to Little.

"It has to be a warm space and some of the drawings that I saw at the later stages still looked fairly bleak," he said.

The district also faces "significant hurdles" in managing traffic around the site during a lengthy construction period, according to Little.

After having explored a Lower Capilano community centre for 18 years, the community finally has certainty, according to Coun. Roger Bassam. "It would've been nice to have it a little quicker, but we now have a timeline, we know when this will be delivered," he said.

Development on the 4.4-acre site is scheduled for four phases over approximately 10 years, with construction beginning at the site's south end, close to Curling Road.

The project includes a 45-unit, four-storey seniors building as well as a sixstorey, 74-unit market rental building.

Larco's development also includes a 125,000-squarefoot underground storage business.

The project is set for adoption Nov. 17.

© North Shore News