



Planning Committee

Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt, Chair
Councillor Bill McNulty, Vice-Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Harold Steves

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The Chair announced that Item 3. (***AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE EXCLUSION APPLICATIONS BY GORDON PUSHEE AT 7340 NO. 4 ROAD, ROLAND HOEGLER (ACTING AGENT FOR STUART TAYLOR) AT 8600 NO. 4 ROAD, PHILIP LEE AT 6580 NO. 4 ROAD AND DEREK BLACKSTOCK AT 6480 NO. 4 ROAD***) would not be discussed at the meeting, and would be brought forward as part of the Planning Committee agenda for Tuesday, June 2, 2009.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

2. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday, **June 2, 2009**, at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room.

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

3. **AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE EXCLUSION APPLICATIONS BY GORDON PUSHEE AT 7340 NO. 4 ROAD, ROLAND HOEGLER (ACTING AGENT FOR STUART TAYLOR) AT 8600 NO. 4 ROAD, PHILIP LEE AT 6580 NO. 4 ROAD AND DEREK BLACKSTOCK AT 6480 NO. 4 ROAD**

(AG 06-353859, AG 06-355496, AG 07-358609, AG 07-360109) (REDMS No. 2605544, 1361302)

Please see the Chair's announcement on Page 1 of these Minutes regarding this issue.

4. **AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE APPLICATION BY THE SANT NIRANKARI MISSION CANADA INC. FOR NON-FARM USE AT 14291 TRIANGLE ROAD**

(AG 07- 368209) (REDMS No. 2554654, 254583.1, 14432, 222141, 2255956, 2268572)

Wayne Craig, Program Coordinator – Development, provided a brief summary of the land use proposal made by the Sant Nirankari Mission Canada Inc. (the Mission) for the 5.2 acre site at 14291 Triangle Road, and stated that the Mission's proposal for non-farm use for 1.38 acres of the site, for assembly uses and off-street parking purposes, could not be supported by staff at a site that is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Discussion ensued between staff and Committee regarding the following topics:

- background information regarding rationale for the City's creation of the No. 5 Road Backlands Policy;
- whether the current economic crisis has an impact on the price of land;
- fill activities done on the site before the Mission's 1993 purchase of 14291 Triangle Road;
- the potential of 1500 square feet of the proposed assembly building to be used by the Mission for the purpose of child care services; and
- the traffic impact study submitted by the Mission.

The Chair invited representatives of the Mission to address Committee. George Cadman of Boughton Law Corporation, Vancouver, advised that: (i) he was the legal representative for the Mission, and (ii) four other people wished to address committee.

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Mr. Cadman recommended that Committee make an exception to its No. 5 Road Backlands Policy and support the Mission's desire to obtain non-farm use/assembly zoning designation for the 1.38-acre portion of the 5.2-acre site. He stated that if the exception was granted, Committee would set a high benchmark that possible future applicants would have to achieve.

Mr. Cadman distributed an aerial photograph of the Triangle Road site (on file in the City Clerk's Office) as well as one page of the Mission's traffic impact study (on file in the City Clerk's Office) to illustrate his remarks.

In addition, Mr. Cadman made reference to letter from MLA Linda Reid, addressed to the Mission, wherein she supported the proposed creation of child care space in the proposed assembly building (letter on file in the City Clerk's Office) as well as a letter from Richmond farmer Bill Zylmans wherein he expressed support for the Mission's application (letter on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Mr. Cadman's further remarks included the following:

- the Mission's proposed improvement to the subject site would not adversely affect the production of blueberries on the site;
- the proposed assembly building would accommodate up to 25 child care spaces and would be dependent on Provincial standards for such spaces;
- the applicant would provide enhanced buffering on the site, especially along the west boundary;
- the proposed assembly building would not mean a loss of agricultural land;
- the work the Mission has already undertaken on the subject property enhances safety and security along the Triangle Road frontage and No. 6 Road intersection; and
- the proposed assembly building would face Triangle Road, not the agricultural land that lies to the north of the subject site.

Mr. Cadman summarized his remarks by stating that should Committee support the Mission's application by granting an exception to the No. 5 Road Backlands Policy, Committee would thereby allow the Mission to: (i) remain a vital part of the City of Richmond, (ii) provide farmed agriculture produce to the community, and (iii) provide other non-agriculture benefits to the City.

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Surjit Arneja, President of the Sant Nirankari Mission Canada Inc., and a resident of the Province of Quebec, advised that the Mission is an incorporated charitable entity, and is funded by donations and the services of its volunteers. Mr. Arneja stated that the Mission is not one 'faith', but is a global spiritual movement dedicated to world peace and human welfare. The Mission promotes universal brotherhood and seeks to overcome barriers that arise between peoples, and between people and God. He summarized his remarks by stating that by promoting peace and undertaking charitable endeavours the Mission would continue to be an asset to the community.

Baldev Nayyar, a member of the Mission's Executive Committee, and a resident of Houston, Texas, addressed Committee and remarked that the proposed assembly building would accommodate a congregation of 350 people. He provided the following details regarding the Mission's work to support their application: (i) a traffic study, (ii) a survey, (iii) examination of agricultural use and non-agricultural land use on site, (iv) chemical/soil study, (v) architectural drawings; and (vi) comprehensive water analysis. Mr. Nayyar concluded his remarks by commenting that the Mission has invested over \$3 million on its Triangle Road site during the 16 years the Mission has owned it, and asked Committee to take this into consideration.

Baldev Arora, 7615 32-A Street, Surrey, stated that as Pastor of the Mission he is responsible for: (i) social services, (ii) spiritual services of the congregation, and (iii) accommodating meetings. He made reference to a site the Mission purchased on Horseshoe Way and remarked that services are held there due to a lack of meeting space. Mr. Arora stated that volunteers are responsible for the blueberry farming activities at the subject site. Other activities by the Mission's congregation include blood donation drives that benefit the Vancouver and Surrey Red Cross blood banks, and regular donations to the Richmond and Surrey food banks. In conclusion, Mr. Arora stated that the Mission's challenges include having no room for the youth of the congregation to meet, and therefore no place to engage children so that they can be guided toward involvement in humanitarian services.

Bob Fisher, 9311 No. 6 Road, a blueberry farmer, noted that the Mission's blueberry bushes are good producers. He commended Mission members on their involvement in harvesting blueberries and stated that the portion of the subject site that is not currently being farmed is not viable farmland, and remarked that the cost to bring it up to farmable standards would be very high.

Discussion ensued among Committee, the delegates and staff regarding the delegates' remarks and in particular on:

- whether it is in the best interest of the Mission to pursue their application or whether the Mission should buy property that lies outside the ALR;

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- the majority of the studies submitted to City staff by the Mission were standard studies that all applicants for non-farm use applications are instructed to submit;
- the nature of blueberry yields in the City and how they vary from year to year;
- land not suited for soil-based agriculture does not preclude other agricultural activities;
- if Committee granted an exception for the Mission's application the message the exception would send to potential future applicants wishing to approach Committee for exceptions based on their unique set of circumstances;
- at the time of the Mission's purchase of the subject site, the property was within the ALR;
- the Mission's application includes: (i) a proposed assembly building measuring 10,000 square feet, and (ii) planned paved parking surfaces; and
- the buffer provisions in the Official Community Plan measure 5 to 15 metres in width.

It was moved and seconded

That authorization for the Sant Nirankari Mission Canada Inc. to apply to the Agricultural Land Commission for non-farm use for a portion of the property (0.56 ha or 1.38 acres) at 14291 Triangle Road be denied.

The question on the motion was not called as further discussion took place among Committee members.

Comments were made that the Mission undertakes charitable work that is of benefit to the community, but that the property they have owned since 1993 is part of the ALR and for that reason staff's recommendation to deny the Mission's application to the ALC for non-farm use for a portion of the property should be supported.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

5. **MINOR HOUSEKEEPING AMENDMENTS TO RICHMOND GROUP HOME PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

(File Ref. No: 08-4055-01) (REDMS No. 2580225)

Terry Crowe, Manager, Policy Planning advised that the proposed amendments to the City's group home framework bring it into compliance with recent provincial legislation in regard to group homes.

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A brief discussion took place during which staff clarified that the Province licences some group homes, but the City regulates group home locations. The proposed amendments to Richmond's group home planning framework does not change the City's group home approval process.

Advice was given that a new group home receives three separate inspections by the Province during its first year of operation, and receives, at minimum, one inspection per year thereafter.

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) the City enter into the amended "Licensed Group Home Protocol Agreement" (Attachment 3 to the staff report dated May 14, 2009 from the General Manager, Planning and Development, entitled "Minor Housekeeping Amendments to Richmond Group Home Planning Framework") which shall replace the current "Licensed Residential Care Facility (Group Home) Protocol Agreement" dated September 27, 2002 between the City and Richmond Health Services (Attachment 2) on the date that Attachment 3 is executed by both parties; and*
- (2) the Mayor and Director, City Clerk's Office be authorized to execute Attachment 3 (to the staff report dated May 14, 2009 from the General Manager, Planning and Development, entitled "Minor Housekeeping Amendments to Richmond Group Home Planning Framework") on the City's behalf.*

CARRIED

6. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

(1) Steveston Study

No report was given.

(2) Official Community Plan (OCP)

No report was given.

(3) Regional Growth Strategy

Mr. Crowe remarked that the City had submitted its comments to Metro Vancouver before the May 22, 2009 deadline.

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(4) Social Planning Strategy

Mr. Crowe advised that staff would soon bring Social Planning Strategy information forward to Committee.

(5) BC Housing

Joe Erceg, General Manager, Planning and Development Department, reported that senior City staff will meet with BC Housing representatives in the near future to discuss the Province's plans for new rounds of funding for (i) affordable housing and (ii) a woman's emergency shelter.

(6) Market Rental Housing

Mr. Erceg reported that, during this time of economic downturn, developers have expressed interest in market rental housing and that staff is working with developers to explore what the City can do to encourage the development of this type of housing.

A remark was made regarding recent land acquisitions on the part of Metro Vancouver Port. A brief discussion ensued regarding the care taken by the City where land adjacent to port lands is concerned.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (5:35).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009.

Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Chair

Sheila Johnston
Committee Clerk