

Schedule 106 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

Mayor and Councillors

From: Webgraphics
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2015 14:56
To: Mayor and Councillors
Subject: Send a Submission Online (response #881)

To Public Hearing	
Date:	SEPT. 8 2015
Item #	6
Re:	BYLAWS 9280+ 9281

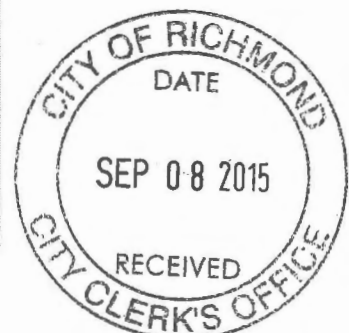
Send a Submission Online (response #881)

Survey Information

Site:	City Website
Page Title:	Send a Submission Online
URL:	http://cms.richmond.ca/Page1793.aspx
Submission Time/Date:	9/8/2015 2:55:18 PM

Survey Response

Your Name	Mark Sakai
Your Address	11762 Fentiman Place
Subject Property Address OR Bylaw Number	9280 & 9281
Comments	<p>08 September 2015 Your Worship Mayor Brodie and Members of Council Re: Public Hearing 08 September - Item 6 – Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaws 9280 & 9281 My name is Mark Sakai, I live at 11762 Fentiman Place, and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association. I would like to express my support for the proposed bylaw amendments before you today. However, I also believe that there is a better way. There have been many letters published in our community newspaper in opposition to the amendments. There are many people who have mentioned "greedy developers", and "builders only concerned about their profits". I would like to address those comments here. First "developers" and "builders" SHOULD be concerned about their businesses, and yes, their profits. If the people who provide the housing for our residents cannot function, operationally or financially, then who will build the homes of our future households? And by "future</p>



households", I am not referring only to new residents from some far off country, as some have narrowly defined it. I am also speaking about young couples, new families, empty nesters and retirees who wish to downsize, and families moving to or returning to BC from Alberta or other parts of Canada. Despite the fact that Richmond is an island, we do not have a drawbridge to pull up, and we don't have a sign which says: "Sorry, Richmond is now full". If we do not provide housing for the people who demand it in Richmond, basic economics dictates that if supply remains constant or declines in the face of increasing demand, prices will escalate. We, as a City, should be concerned with providing homes for all of the different types of households who would like to make Richmond their home. It should be Council's objective to provide the zoning for these homes, because the provision of adequate supply, in all segments of the market, is the best opportunity to control price escalation. There are some who need small condo apartments, or townhouses, or compact single family homes. There are some who need rental secondary suites, non-market housing, or units in purpose-built rental apartment buildings, located close to transit. And yes, there are some who want large homes on large lots. Ideally, Richmond should be providing the widest range of housing possible, to meet all segments of housing demand. Now to the topic of the proposed bylaw amendment. Why are these homes being built? The answer is simple, and complex. Builders construct these homes because there is a demand for them. If nobody wanted to buy them, they wouldn't be built – it's that simple. Because builders must be concerned about the viability of their business (i.e. making a profit), they won't build something that won't sell. It is, therefore, the market (a specific segment of it) which represents the demand for this housing type. Why do they want it? I am not a realtor – I'm not speaking to the purchasers of these homes on a regular basis. But my guess is that, for whatever reason, they enjoy the feeling of a high-ceiling room, and enough space so that members of the family can have their own private space. The existing houses on the historic large lots in Richmond do not have the characteristics desired by this market segment. Is that my personal preference? Frankly, that doesn't matter. And the motivation of those who demand it also doesn't matter. What does matter is that the segment of the market that desires these homes have identified Richmond as a place where they can build them, within the allowances of the zoning bylaw. Is it the role of Council to now say: "There

are people who do not like these houses – we will now make it illegal to build them.” I would suggest that this is a very dangerous approach for Council to adopt – it should be Councils objective to make the decisions which are in the best long-term interest of the City. Council makes decisions for tomorrow’s residents, as well as today’s. As for solutions, as I mentioned earlier, Council should seek to provide housing for all segments of the market. Perhaps it is time, as has been discussed in previous Planning Committee meetings, to look at Neighbourhood-specific zoning. Clearly, there are several neighbourhoods in Richmond where a large number of redevelopments have occurred. Perhaps these areas can be left “as is”, and allow the current process to continue as the market demands. Other areas, where there are large lots, but have seen less (or emerging) redevelopment into large houses, can perhaps be re-examined regarding the Lot Size Policy, and subdivision to smaller lots can be allowed. This act alone will result in reduced housing mass, and will also increase the number of more affordable single family houses on the market. This will also accomplish the much demanded task of “saving neighbourhoods”, as those that are still historically intact will see redevelopment in a manner which reflects the scale of the existing houses. I understand that this is a significant task to place upon your Planning Department staff, at a time when they are dealing with the issue of Land Use Contracts. However, as you can see by the number of people here tonight, this is a matter which has engaged the population – in my opinion, the time is ripe to address this issue in a ‘big picture/long view’ manner – and not in the ‘piecemeal/band-aid’ approach. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this evening. Mark Sakai 11762 Fentiman Place Richmond