

Schedule 34 to the Minutes of the
Special Council Meeting for
Public Hearings held on Tuesday,
July 26, 2011.

To Public Hearing	
Date:	<u>July 26, 2011</u>
Item #:	<u>2</u>
Re:	<u>Bylaw 8782</u>

Attention: Director, City Clerk's Office, 604-278-5139

From: Kenneth Chan
Address: 802-9188 Cook Road, Richmond, BC, V6Y 4M1

Re: Zoning Amendment Bylaw 8782 (RZ 10-557918)

I am writing to oppose the rezoning of 9099 Cook Road to "High Rise Apartment (ZHE9) - North McLennan (City Centre)", and the proposed development of a 16-storey high-rise apartment building and a 6-storey mid-rise building on that lot.

I am a resident of the adjacent building on 9188 Cook Road (Garden City - Residences on a Park Phase I, the building was mistakenly referred to as "Lotus" in the City staff report) and I strongly believe that the above rezoning and development will negatively impact the neighbourhood and especially the residents of the adjacent apartment buildings on Cook Road and Hemlock Drive.

Below are the issues and concerns that the applicant and the City have failed to address in the application process.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Population Density

- The proposed development has a much higher FAR (3.12) than the existing neighbouring developments (2.5), which is a 25% increase.
- A FAR of 3.12 is permitted in the neighbourhood plan but not at all implemented or tested in North McLennan. It may very well work only in theory as amenities and infrastructure will not be able to back it up. The sharp increase in FAR from the neighbours may be seen as spot zoning of some kind.
- The new development will make these blocks almost as dense as the No. 3 Road residential zones.
- The planner's agreement on the developer's proposal to invest the Garden City Park and greenway as well as public arts in order to support the application and the high FAR has flawed logic. Those improvements should not have anything to do with favouring the development and a higher FAR. This is favouring large development corporation which has the money for incentives and a case of real estate hegemony over the affected residents.
- The rule for higher FAR and affordable housing is not fair either. Only 5 percent of all the units are for affordable housing but the increase in FAR from the adjacent buildings is 25%.
- The City staff report stated that they favour the densest area (this development) transitioning to the less dense apartments and then the Park, which has few facts to back up and appears to be only the will of the

planners. If they so wish they can argue a less dense development can be justified in order to keep the density even.

Environment

- Many trees will be removed from the site for the development. The lot has the last significant wooded area in the neighbourhood outside of the Garden City Park.
- The high-rise will disrupt airflow and can contribute to a stronger urban heat island. This and other factors (see Amenities below) can affect ecology in the nearby sensitive Garden City Lands and Garden City Park.
- The high-rise, mid-rise, and parkade will act to trap car exhaust and pollution in the block.
- The building will narrow the pathways for birds from the Park to weave through.
- The developer proposed to pay for a boardwalk on the shoreline of the pond in the Garden City Park. The boardwalk can affect ecology of the pond and shore. The plan will remove plants and affect the existing wetland. It will cut the landing space for ducks and birds in the pond which impact their food source on the lawn. The boardwalk will increase the amount of trash and pollution in the pond by the park users. An environmental assessment should be done before planning. And the whole grand scheme may not even happen if the Parks Department say no, making it an unfulfilled promise by the developer.

Amenities

- The proposed greenway on the east side of the development will have less use than the report indicated. It sounds good and looks good on paper but for now most residents in the area can have reasonably easy access to the Garden City Park through Katsura Street and Garden City Road. The only residents that may use the greenway will be from the two buildings of the Hamptons on Hemlock. For cyclists there is already a paved path from Garden City to Hemlock which is more convenient than using the greenway.
- The greenway may also be a convenient excuse for the developer to separate the high-rise from the future building on 9233 Cook Road to the east. So that they can sell the units at a higher price.
- The loading space and a Douglas Fir on the greenway make it less desirable to use. It can be dangerous for the cyclists and pedestrians to use the greenway if the loading space is close by.
- The development is in an area already full of high-rises, low-rises and townhouses. However there is a lack of amenities besides a large park. Commercial area is a 10 minute walk away.
- There was no mention of upgrading water, sewage, hydro systems in the application. The new development may overload the infrastructure.
- The developer proposed to pay for a new tennis court in the Garden City Park. However there are tennis courts in the neighbourhood already.

- The proposed boardwalk in the pond may cause liability issues to the City in case of drownings and injuries.

Views

- The 6-storey mid-rise building is out-of-place compared to the adjacent structures immediately on Garden City Road, such as the townhouses across the road, the parking in the Hamptons, and the daycare to the south. Those are all below 3 storeys high. Thus the so-called improvement in quality of design as stated in the staff report is unjustified.
- The proposed high-rise building with an elongated north-south slab will be affecting a wider angle of the southeast/northeast views of 9188 Cook and Hemlock respectively than a square building. It is going to affect more units in the adjacent buildings as well because of the shape.
- A large area of east/west facing windows on the new tower will reflect strong sunlight at sunrise/sunset to the other buildings.
- 4 floors of parkade and townhouses will block views and natural sunlight to the lower floors of the adjacent buildings. The inflated height of the parkade is a wedding-cake approach to get the units in the tower even higher.

Traffic

- The section of Cook Road the lot is on is relatively narrow despite being built not long ago. With another building and another parkade exit, the road will be more dangerous for pedestrians and drivers.
- Access to and from the City Centre and the whole North McLennan relies on Cook and Ferndale which are both narrow with street-side parking. There are occasional congestions as well. The development will only exacerbate the problem.
- There is already a street-side parking shortage on Cook and vicinity. A dense development will only put more cars on the street.
- There are elementary schools and daycare nearby. Children and parents do not need a more dangerous street to walk on during construction and after completion.
- The proposed crosswalk in the middle of the Cook Road block will shorten the already short block to cause traffic back-log to Garden City and Katsura, cut more street-side parking, and be dangerous to pedestrians and drivers if drivers are unsuspected of the crosswalk in the middle of a short block.

The Applicant

- Concord Pacific is one of the developers behind the failed Sun Tech City project near Capstan Way. The project was shelved two years ago because the developers could not meet the rezoning requirements and come up with the necessary fund.
- Concord Pacific has only mentioned the 16 storey high-rise on the rezoning sign on site and failed to state that there will be a 6 storey mid-

rise in the plan as well. Therefore the details of their plan were incomplete and deceiving to the nearby owners and residents. Concord Pacific has been hiding behind the City and residents by sending the architecture firm to apply and be at the meetings. If the proposal is so great why can't Concord Pacific send their own people and face the public?

I hope the mayor and councillors of Richmond can listen to what the residents of Richmond have said and how this rezoning and development will negatively impact us. As well I would like to remind the council that the developer Concord Pacific had failed to deliver what they promised with the Sun Tech City not too long ago, and that the negative impacts brought to the residents by this development outweigh the proposed so-called incentives the developer offers. I would strongly suggest that the council votes to oppose the proposed rezoning and development.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Chan