

Anmore Special Council Meeting  
Discussion of the Official Community Plan (Final Draft)  
May 12, 2014.

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:04. Approximately 45 to 50 residents were present, as were all members of Council, Chief Administrative Officer Tim Harris, and CitySpaces consultants Brent Elliott and Kate Lambert. The purpose of this meeting was for Council to determine what changes need to be made to finalize the Official Community Plan (Final Draft).

Mayor Anderson set the context for the meeting. She indicated that this was a working session for Council and that while residents were welcomed at the meeting, they were not permitted to speak. Council members had received a package of material from the consultants that included an eight page report dated May 8 on the Official Community Plan Comments on Draft Responses. Mayor Anderson said that the package included letters and e-mails from residents from the April 15 and April 29 Special Council Meetings.

Editors' Note: 13 members of the public were able to make it to the May 6<sup>th</sup> Special Council Meeting where the Agenda was revised late in the day on May 5<sup>th</sup> to include "the Municipal Council to review its position with the Official Community Plan and to provide direction to the planning consultant and staff regarding next steps." At the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting Mayor Anderson at first indicated that this was a high-level meeting of Council. Then she indicated that Council members would not talk about substance, but rather only process. The residents at this meeting were invited to submit their comments, but these e-mails and letters were not part of the package for the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Kate Lambert of CitySpaces indicated that she would walk the Council through the proposed changes in the draft Official Community Plan. The objectives were to see where the OCP could be strengthened, and to identify areas that required more discussion.

In the section on Growth Management, the consultants indicated that historically the build-out expectation for Anmore from both the Metro Vancouver Region and the Village was somewhere around 4000 people. Mr. Elliott indicated that this target remains. Mayor Anderson said that the current population is just under 2300 people. Relative to Councillor McEwen's question, there are 637 developed lots, and 724 units. Councillor McEwen speculated that there are approximately 500 more developable lots. Councillor Green wondered at what point, the Village would become a town and was told that the municipality would need to apply for a designated change. Mayor Anderson indicated a threshold of 5000 people would mean a significant increase in costs for policing and other services.

In the section on Financial Sustainability, a tool for local improvements was included. A group of residents can now get together to do local improvements, as long as there is no additional cost to the community. Councillor Thiele asked hypothetically, if residents on Sugar Mountain Way wanted to add a sidewalk, could they? The answer was yes and then ongoing maintenance would fall to the Village.

***In the Village of Anmore Financial Sustainability Plan by Vann Struth Consultants "Only 47% of the 637 developed lots are 1 acre or larger in size. The other 53% are less than 1 acre, including 35% that are less than .5 of an acre..."***

There was considerable discussion about the section of the report on Residential Land-Use. The consultants made it very clear that half-acre lots instead of acre lots on the valley floor were not in the cards. Mr. Elliott said that this was a divided issue. Some residents want to subdivide 1 acre lots into two half-acre lots. Others want to keep the traditional 1 acre zoning. He saw a number of pros and cons for both positions. Instead, he explained that the Advisory Planning Commission felt that the valley bottom should be retained as is, and steep slope development with clusters of houses near the bottom should be the focus of the OCP. This would include removing the 15% cap on Comprehensive Development Zones, and having a 1.5 gross density for new developments.

The consultants explained that in the two information meetings for residents on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> balance was sought. The planners felt that the half-acre versus acre debate was a substantial issue where Council's advice would need to determine the direction. Brent Elliott explained that unlike Anmore with pre-zoned RS-1 (1 acre) zoning, other municipalities do not pre-zone land. He explained that half-acre lots were not a consideration in the draft OCP although the APC had had some discussions on the topic. Councillor Thiele said that infill shouldn't be part of the picture. (By infill, she was talking about 2 houses on one acre) The consultants said infill is hard to predict, but he also said that growing up the hillsides was not the most prudent way to go.

Definition: An **infill home** is known as a new **home** on an old lot. An **infill home** is a brand new **home** built in an existing, older neighbourhood.



**There are a large number of half acre pieces of 'good land' that would be developable in existing neighbourhoods on existing municipal infrastructure should the Council decide to approve 2 half acre lots in current RS-1 zones. This lot is on Sugar Mountain Way but there are many more in communities such as Anmore Estates.**

There was a strong message in the consultations that Anmore Council needs to maintain a cap on Comprehensive Development Zones. Councillor Green indicated that in hindsight she would not have been in favour of 1 acre lots, but she also said that she is opposed to half-acre lots. With the Village financial problems, she indicated that there needs to be some flexibility in zoning, and recognition that suites are a source of revenue and affordable housing. She also said there has not been a lot of talk about how to get through the financial crisis. The needs of landowners with 1 acre could be addressed through the zoning bylaw.

Councillor Palmer-Isaak stated a priority for residents to age in place. She wondered why the Village is having a hard time recruiting volunteers, but also said half-acre lots are not the single solution. Councillor McEwen insisted that there must be incentives for developers to use the RS-2 zoning that currently exists. He sees complicated bureaucracy and timelines as barriers to hillside development and the use of the existing RS-2 zoning.

Mr. Elliott of CitySpaces indicated that some of the issues can be dealt with in the re-writing of the zoning bylaw. He sees the two big issues as: i) the density cap and ii) the minimum lot size. He heard from Council members that while there needs to be a metric in the OCP, the OCP needs to be more flexible. Thresholds for development need to be set. He was not optimistic about the number of units on the valley floor that might be available by moving to two lots per acre.

Kate Lambert of CitySpaces mentioned that perhaps a zoning bylaw could be developed on a piece-by-piece basis. She reminded Council that the OCP sets the guidelines. There is a need to determine what is rural and what is required in the rural designation in the regional growth strategy. Mr. Elliott said at the

moment RS-1 equals 1 acre lot, RS-2 is one lot per .6 acres, and CD zoning is .5 lots per acre. In reality, lot sizes are as small as .25 and .3 lots per acre.

Councillor McEwen then brought the quality of buildable lots into the equation. He said with limited 'infill' possibilities on good land Council does not want to be handcuffed by stringent regulations. As well, with the build out cap of 4000, some landowners may be out of luck when the cap is reached.

Councillor Thiele reminded Council of the necessity for financial sustainability. The middle growth scenario allows for 21 lots per year. She indicated that there are 440 acres of undeveloped land in Anmore, and 400 lots might be available. She said that with the 15% CD cap it was a race to the finish. This might be a similar situation.

Mr. Elliott explained that the current OCP has some confusion about the .6 minimum lot size in the RS-2 zone versus .5 minimum lot size in the CD zones. Mayor Anderson indicated that in Dogwood and Crystal Creek developments, the properties were as small as a third of an acre. She said that the community was nervous about smaller lot sizes but said that she doubted that people could tell which lot was half an acre and which lot was a third of an acre. Councillor Isaak indicated that the rezoning in Comprehensive Development packages, coupled with Public Hearings, provided a tool for development. Mayor Anderson said this is a way for members of the community to have their say.

Councillor Isaak said it was difficult for Councillors to make decisions when they didn't understand the different options for CD zoning. She asked Mr. Elliott, what CitySpaces could do to show Council members what the options might look like. Mr. Elliott indicated that they could provide a bird's eye view in visuals. Mayor Anderson indicated that she was concerned about the additional time such information would take given the tight timelines before the November Municipal Election.



**Steep slope development is not without risk. There have been two serious washouts on Pinnacle Ridge. In Mayor Anderson's Report in the May 2014 Anmore Times, she says "the majority of the flat land in Anmore has been developed, so the lands on the**

**hillsides will be the focus of future developments. The Financial Sustainability Plan highlighted that when the Village takes over the responsibility for infrastructure then we have to plan for the replacement of that infrastructure. (\$9,000,000 deficit in 2012) One acre developments tend to have longer road lengths, water lines and if they are located on hillsides they often require water booster stations. This infrastructure will have to be replaced by Anmore taxpayers in the future. If we can find a way to cluster housing developments so the infrastructure is more efficient, then we will put our Village in a better financial position in the years to come."**

Mayor Anderson called for focusing attention on eliminating RS-2 zones. She said that this type of zoning had never been used. Councillor Green said that proceeding without the proper tools was like a crapshoot. Councillor Thiele called for streamlining the RS-2 approval process and making decisions in a much more timely fashion. Councillor Isaak indicated that perhaps there might be a density incentive for developers who wish to use the RS-2 designation.

Mr. Elliott explained that making it work is not the role of the OCP. The OCP sets out a vision, the zoning bylaw deals with issues such as density, lot size, and lot configuration. Councillor McEwen said that with a bigger pot of gold at the end as an incentive, more developers might use the CD and RS-2 zones. Maximum yields need to be set out in the OCP according to Mr. Elliott. Councillor Thiele wondered about pre-zoning for steep slope development just as is currently done with blanket zoning for 1 acre lots.

Mr. Elliott indicated that the language must be very clear. The OCP sets the direction and zoning is used as an implementation tool. Mayor Anderson said that pre-zoning may not be a good idea. Mr. Elliott talked about not including minimum lot size in the OCP, but rather the number of units per acre. Mr. Elliott also asked what lot size Council was comfortable with for CD and RS-2 zones.

Mayor Anderson said that RS-2 hasn't worked and she would want to make it administratively easier. She wants to lift the 15% cap on Comprehensive Development Zones and not have lot sizes as small as a quarter acre.

Councillor Thiele asked the consultants what they had heard about the 1.5 density level for Comprehensive Development Zones in the public consultation. Kate Lambert of CitySpaces said that there were mixed comments about flexibility and options. They received the full range of feedback and tried to stake out a middle ground that reflects all of the perspectives. When asked if they should keep the 1.5 (2/3) acre density, she said that she thought that 44% had said to keep it and another 36% did not support this size for CD developments. She did not mention what the other 20% preferred.

Councillor Green indicated a range of 1.5 to 5 housing units per acre for smart growth. She called for being more flexible in lot size.

The next item for discussion was Transportation. The consultants proposed that an extended Charlotte Crescent “need not be designed solely as a motor vehicle thruway. Rather, road design options that enhance pedestrian connectivity may be considered. Area specific development cost charges may be used to finance the construction of a road along this alignment.”

As well, with reference to Fern Drive, the document stated, “an alignment extending Fern drive is identified on schedule C – Road Network Map. As new subdivisions are developed, this alignment may be developed to serve as the north-south minor collector on the west side of Sunnyside Road, providing connection between Fern Drive and Sunnyside Road, where possible. This road will be located on the east side of Schoolhouse Creek. (Please note: the map shows a large gap between the two sections of Schoolhouse Creek at the current end of Fern Drive – possibly filled in at some point?). This alignment is intended to establish a looped connection to accommodate municipal services, resident access and emergency response vehicles. Given these priorities, should an extended Fern Drive be required along this alignment, it need not be designed solely as a vehicle throughway. Rather, road design options that enhance pedestrian connectivity may be considered. Area-specific development cost charges may be used to help finance the construction of this road.” Councillor Green insisted that any future costs not be the responsibility of the Village.

Mayor Anderson likewise insisted that Fern Drive and Charlotte Crescent were always on the books and were needed for an operational road network in the Village. She also did not like the way Crystal Creek subdivision was closed off from the rest of the community. Mr. Elliott explained that connectivity was the objective not just for vehicles but also for pedestrians and bikers. Mayor Anderson insisted that there is a need to protect the original alignment.

There was some discussion about having a gravel connection instead of a paved road. Mayor Anderson said that gravel roads are costly to maintain. The conversation then focused on covenants and rights of way that currently exist in those areas.

Under the next topic, the Environment, policy E-9 states, “all applications for development are required to meet or exceed the setback minimums and requirements established through the Province’s Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) assessment methodology. The Village will ensure the protection of riparian areas through the application of a Development Permit Area (DPA) generally illustrated in schedule F – Watercourse Protection Development Permit Area Map, and set of DPA guidelines, to be outlined in the Village’s Zoning Bylaw.”

Further, the Environment Protection Area and RAR processes are articulated in detail in the revised wording. While these are provincial requirements, Anmore has not implemented them. By using a Development Permit Area designation,

applicants are enabled to have conversations with Village staff about their particular areas. According to Mr. Elliott, this would be the simplest most flexible approach.

Mayor Anderson indicated that a number of residents are concerned about bureaucracy encroaching on their independence as landowners. Ms. Lambert indicated that in other communities, residents would have to go through a more cumbersome assessment process. She also reiterated that this is the law and Anmore has not been enforcing it. She said that if the property is outside of the 30 m setback area, a simple contact with staff might be all that is necessary.

Councillor Thiele reminded Council that there are limited options here. Something must be done. There is no choice. How it is done is up to Council, but it must reflect the standards of the RAR and the Fish Protection Act. She indicated that It is not a question of property rights, it is the law. Currently, Anmore uses a 15 m set back.

The report from CitySpaces brought more detail into their description of this topic. It says “the Watercourse Protection Area illustrated on schedule F has been established to encompass the RAR assessment area and is generally 30 m from the top-of-bank of a stream or ravine. In some instances the illustrated Watercourse Protection Area may extend beyond 30 m to allow for variances in ravine width.

The DPA applies to residential, commercial and industrial land uses. Certain development activities may be restricted within the DPA. Prior to undertaking any of the following activities, property owner should consult the Village to determine if a Development Permit is required.

- Removal, alteration, disruption or destruction of vegetation;
- disturbance of soils;
- construction, erection of buildings and structures;
- creation of non-structural impervious and semi-impervious surfaces;
- flood protection works;
- construction of roads, trails, docks, wharves, and bridges;
- provision and maintenance of sewer and water services;
- development of drainage systems;
- development of utility corridors; or
- Subdivision as defined in section 872 of the Local Government Act.

Finally under the Section for Social and Community Well-Being, some of the language was strengthened.

Following this Council discussion on the final draft of the Official Community Plan, Mayor Anderson cited the need for clarification in the residential land-use section and then offered an ambitious schedule for completing the document before the next Municipal Election. Mr. Elliott emphasized the uncertain timelines

for necessary approvals by Metro Vancouver committees and staff. Councillor Isaak stressed the need to be responsible and have a visualization of different levels of density before moving forward with the First and Second Readings of the OCP by-law.. She too said that it is important to take the necessary time to have a good Official Community Plan.

Mr. Elliott sensed that there was no support to finalize the plan and move forward with First and Second Reading at this juncture. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 without a public question.

Editors' Note: At the May 13<sup>th</sup> Anmore Regular Council Meeting, Mayor Anderson indicated that there is now some uncertainty about the timeline for completion of the OCP before the Municipal Election in November.