

## **JANUARY 28, 2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

5:30 p.m. Council Chamber. Members present: K. Brown, J. Pearson. Absent: A. Hraban. Others present: A. Christianson 1, A. Christianson 2, A. Kenyon.

### **Call to Order:**

Chair J. Pearson called the meeting to order.

### **Assisted Living:**

Adm. Christianson advised that he spoke with a local assisted living provider the previous day and learned that at least that provider doesn't believe there is currently a need for additional assisted units. He did acknowledge existing ones are full, or have only an occasional vacancy. The Housing Supply and Demand Analysis report updated last year does indicate a need for up to 60 additional units "over the next 15 years". That is only four per year and we are only one year into that time period.

The same report does, however, indicate a need for worker housing units. In excess of 600 workers are believed to commute more than 50 miles each way daily to work here. Another 500 plus are believed to travel between 25 and 50 miles. Those are people who might consider moving to Ladysmith to reduce both travel time and costs.

There was discussion of whether a closed school could be economically converted to apartments. It seems logical on one hand yet, when looked at closely, such conversions seem to be more costly than new construction. The latter results in exactly what is desired. What a closed school may cost the community if it remains unused may need to be taken into consideration. Eventual demo costs, for example. The LMS is within the halo zone of TIFD #8, whereas the LES is not within any TIF district or halo zone. Just how TIF funds might be used to assist such project was not discussed.

Mrs. Pearson advocated development of upscale retirement apartments. Preferably in a location along the river, such as Bruno Ave. Atty. Kenyon advised that this is referred to as "service enhanced housing". Flambeau Village was originally built for that type of role, but has evolved into more general occupancy in recent years.

### **Museum:**

A question was raised whether it might be possible to re-open the children's museum at the former ranger station site on Highway 8 W., where remaining exhibits are still stored.

### **Murals:**

Those present reviewed a few mural examples from other communities. Subjects of these included, but were not limited to, the following:

\*Occupational depictions and vintage advertising.

\*Long gone buildings.

\*Old street scenes, old cars and old trains.

\*Logging, Native American and farming scenes.

All present were in favor of pursuing additional murals.

### **Rail Yard Access:**

A map of the rail yard north of Pederson Ave. was used to show possible options to reroute empty logging trucks exiting the yard. Rather than routing them across Pederson Ave., new routes could, perhaps, be built that reduce the number of dwellings these trucks pass by. It was noted that new

routes could result in shifting any problems to another location, and angering folks who currently don't feel impacted. It was noted that "no good deed goes unpunished".

Possible reroute options include creating a rail yard outlet to Cleveland Ave., where there are only 5 dwellings, compared to 14 on Pederson Ave. Or south on W. 6<sup>th</sup> to Lake Ave., where there are just 3 dwellings. Each would seem to require construction of a 300' single lane gravel access road, which shouldn't be terribly costly. It was suggested that CN should pay such costs, but deemed highly unlikely. On the other hand, CN may be willing to provide ballast as road base if it has it in its stockpile. While those present agree with the concept, it is uncertain whether these access roads could be built now by scraping the routes and laying new material over the top, or if what is there needs to be removed first.

**Setback:**

There was discussion of a residential property owner's desire to construct a new garage with near zero set back from the right of way on a side street rather than 22.5' back as called for in the zoning code. It was noted that the code provides exceptions, but this property doesn't meet the tests to qualify for them. An approach that could meet the owner's desire is to narrow the subject section of street by taking 10' off its west side and adding it to the owner's property. The street would still be 56' wide and receive State aid. Only one house has primary service from this section. Narrowing it would put 6,000 sq. ft. on the tax roll. The equivalent of about 70% of one standard lot.

E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. north of Lindoo was once similarly narrowed so that part of an owners' porch would not be in the street, but on their lot. And, just last year, E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. S. was narrowed on just its west side, in the 200 south block, to enable La Casa Mexicana to add an outdoor seating area. So, there is some precedent. It was noted that such an action would not likely be without detractors. No recommendation was made to narrow the street.

**Match Funds:**

Those present were asked their thoughts on a "look back" provision whereby applicants for façade assistance could be credited for, perhaps, investments made into the subject property in the two years prior to making application. Sometimes, folks proceed with efforts without considering that those investments could have netted them assistance with additional upgrades. That is because the façade grant program requires additional applicant investment of four times the amount granted. A current example was cited where a downtown building owner is deferring a desired building facelift to first complete a more urgent structural repair. If that owner were to make application for facelift assistance before doing the structural repair, that repair could count toward the owner's required matching expenditure. Motion was made by Brown, seconded by Pearson and carried to recommend Council approval of a look back provision that allows documented expenditures made up to two years prior to façade assistance application filing to be counted as required applicant matching funds.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.