

Development Permit Panel

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

Time: 3:30 p.m.
Place: Council Chambers
Richmond City Hall
Present: Joe Erceg, Chair
Robert Gonzalez, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
Cathryn Volkering Carlile, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

1. Minutes

It was moved and seconded

That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Permit Panel held on May 28, 2008, be adopted.

CARRIED

2. Development Permit 07-399254

(Report: May 21, 2008 File No.: 07-399254) (REDMS No. 2464574, 2366043)

APPLICANT: The Great Canadian Casino Corporation

PROPERTY LOCATION: 8811 River Road

INTENT OF PERMIT:

To permit the construction of a small addition of approximately 3,784.3 m² (40,733.7 ft²) on the north side of the existing casino resort located at 8811 River Road on a site zoned Comprehensive Development District (CD/87).

Applicant's Comments

Howard Blank, Vice President, Great Canadian Gaming was in attendance, as well as Randy Knill, architect and David Stoyko, landscape architect. Mr. Blank stated that the proposed addition on the north side of the existing casino resort would enable a better flow of guests at the resort, enhance overall enjoyment of the resort, and would allow for the resort to accommodate the anticipated increase of guests upon the completion of the Bridgeport Canada Line Station.

Mr. Blank noted the following features of the proposed addition: (i) a new lobby with unique curving escalators; (ii) the food court has been relocated to service guests of all ages; (iii) sky boxes where guests can entertain clients; (iv) a new restaurant with a better view of the North Arm of the Fraser River and the Vancouver International Airport; and (v) an expanded lounge.

Mr. Knill advised that the design of the proposed addition has the same architectural vocabulary as that established by the rest of the resort facility. He stated that the addition's design concept encloses the current courtyard space, an area that is currently underutilized by the resort's guests, and that the proposed courtyard enclosure provides a northern façade and atrium space similar to the successful southern main entrance.

He noted that when the courtyard space is enclosed, the interface between the new façade and the waterfront walkway along the riverfront will be attractive to guests and will encourage more use of the walkway. Mr. Knill mentioned that new administrative offices for resort staff would be situated on the second floor of the enclosed courtyard, and that other 'back-of-house' space required for the separate gaming area, are also part of the design of the addition.

Mr. Stoyko advised that the planned landscape amenities include a meandering stream effect using B.C. native paving elements. The proposed landscaped edge combines trees, shrubs and ground cover. A complete inventory of what exists in the outdoor courtyard has been done and many elements would be reused to create a rainwater runoff feature.

Correspondence

None.

Gallery Comments

None.

Panel Discussion

In response to a question regarding the means by which pedestrians, especially those with mobility challenges, access the proposed addition from the boardwalk, the applicant advised that access is off the waterfront walkway, at grade level, and through the covered courtyard's feature entrance. In addition a ramp connects the exterior walkway with the one level change.

In response to questions regarding plans for illumination, the applicant stated that at present the walkway is illuminated and that additional low level lighting fixtures, as well as new illumination elements at higher levels, will be added as part of the work undertaken for the addition.

Mr. Stoyko further advised that the proposed waterfront walkway improvements would encourage guests to not only enjoy the features of the enhanced walkway design, including attractive paving, landscaping and two fish pools, but also to encourage pedestrians to proceed the entire east-to-west length of the walkway, instead of using just the east end of the walkway, as most guests tend to do now.

In reply to a query regarding the rainwater that will be gathered, the Panel was advised that the collected rainwater would at first be recycled and used in water features at the resort.

With regard to gaming activities Mr. Blank advised that the proposed addition adds to the non-gaming areas, and that the casino will not use the additional space for new gaming tables. The additional space will provide more generous circulation space in the gaming area for existing gaming tables. He added that at present, the casino resort does not have a timeframe for tentative plans to expand the resort to the east of the current facilities.

Staff Comments

Brian Jackson, Director of Development stated that staff recommended in favour of a development permit being issued and that the applicant has responded well to the architecture and landscape treatment challenges posed by the proposed addition. He advised that the developer would contribute \$100,000 towards public amenities allocated between the public art and the Child Care Statutory funds, and in addition that the developer would contribute \$12,000 to upgrade the intersection of Great Canadian Way and River Road to an accessible signal. He stated that the proposed addition required no changes to the Zoning and Development Bylaw.

In response to a query from the Chair, Mr. Jackson advised that the proposed addition would not contravene, nor compromise, the City's Full Service Gaming Policy 5040, adopted by Council in 2002 and most recently amended in 2006.

The Chair noted that the proposed addition on the north side of the River Rock casino resort is a good one, and the Panel agreed that families with underage members would appreciate the addition's non-gaming features.

Panel Decision

It was moved and seconded

That a Development Permit be issued which would permit the construction of a small addition of approximately 3,784.3 m² (40,733.7 ft²) on the north side of the existing casino resort located at 8811 River Road on a site zoned Comprehensive Development District (CD/87).

CARRIED

3. New Business

It was moved and seconded

That the Development Permit Panel meetings tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 30, 2008 and Wednesday, August 13, 2008 be cancelled.

CARRIED

4. Adjournment

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting be adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Permit Panel of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, June 11, 2008.

Joe Erceg
Chair

Sheila Johnston
Committee Clerk