

ON TABLE ITEM

Date: OCTOBER 19 2020
Meeting: PUBLIC HEARING
Item: 1

Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, October 19, 2020.

From: Badyal,Sara
Sent: October 15, 2020 3:36 PM
To: 'John Roston, Mr'
Cc: CityClerk
Subject: RE: Polygon Talisman Park Proposal

Dear John Roston,

Thank you for your email and letter regarding the rezoning application RZ 18-836123. Public input is encouraged and may be provided to the City through a Rezoning application process by letter, email, the City's website, or in person at the General Purposes Committee, Council and Public Hearing meetings.

The purpose of this email is to let you know that your correspondence will be forwarded to the upcoming Public Hearing meeting along with the staff report and to share some information with you. As you are aware, the application will be considered at the Public Hearing meeting scheduled for 7pm Monday, October 19, and the rezoning application staff report is published on the City's website as part of the October 19 meeting agenda package at: https://www.richmond.ca/agendafiles/Public_Hearing_10-19-2020.pdf

Regarding market rental housing, the proposal incorporates the voluntary OCP Market Rental Housing Policy with a stand-alone market rental housing building comprising 65 market rental housing units and indoor amenity space in the first phase of development.

If you would like to discuss further or require additional information, please feel free to call me at 604-276-4282.

Regards,

Sara Badyal, M. Arch, RPP
Planner 2
Development Applications Department
City of Richmond
604-276-4282
www.richmond.ca

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-----Original Message-----

From: John Roston, Mr <john.roston@mcgill.ca>
Sent: October 15, 2020 2:21 PM
To: Brodie, Malcolm <MBrodie@richmond.ca>; McNulty,Bill <BMcNulty@richmond.ca>; McPhail,Linda <LMcPhail@richmond.ca>; Loo,Alexa <ALoo@richmond.ca>; Steves,Harold <hsteves@richmond.ca>; Au,Chak <CAu@richmond.ca>; Day,Carol <CDay@richmond.ca>; Greene,Kelly <kgreene@richmond.ca>; Wolfe,Michael <MWolfe@richmond.ca>
Cc: CityClerk <CityClerk@richmond.ca>; Badyal,Sara <SBadyal@richmond.ca>; Nikolic,Diana <DNikolic@richmond.ca>; Craig,Wayne <WCraig@richmond.ca>; Eve Edmonds <eedmonds@richmond-news.com>; mrantanen@richmond-news.com
Subject: Polygon Talisman Park Proposal

Dear Mayor & Councillors,

It is good to see the City functioning so well in such difficult circumstances thanks to Council's initiatives.

Attached is the Richmond Rental Housing Advocacy Group submission on the Polygon Talisman Park proposal being discussed at the Public Hearing next Monday.

We believe that market rental housing in downtown Richmond will be an issue in the next municipal election and at that time, we plan to review Council's record on relevant major development proposals. Council has already approved thousands of new housing units that are currently under construction for sale to investors. Anyone who wants to buy one has plenty to choose from including 1,820 at Richmond Centre. Only 200 units there are market rental. This Polygon Talisman Park proposal has an even lower percentage with only 65 market rental units.

Developers can sell entire buildings to pension plans and REITs with huge capital resources that want the long term steady return from rentals. They will not make as much as from selling to individual investors, but they will still make a reasonable profit. It is a question of how many millions they really need to make. If they abandon a project, someone else will eventually come along and build the rentals we need on that land. We can't use the land twice.

This is the time to turn the rental housing crisis around and send the strong message that Richmond's priority for large downtown developments is purpose-built market and below market rental housing.

Best regards,
John

John Roston
12262 Ewen Avenue
Richmond, BC V7E 6S8
Phone: 604-274-2726

Re: Polygon Talisman Park, File RZ 18-836123

Excerpts from Editorial, *The Globe and Mail*, August 28, 2020:

“Mr. Siddall [head of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.] sees a fundamental problem: a shortage of housing in key economic cities such as Vancouver and Toronto. He favours building density ‘on a grand scale’ – the big priority being rental housing. This view is not wild-eyed.”

“*The Economist* did not mince words. This housing market, with its high prices and lack of opportunity, is a ‘rotten edifice.’”

“These are not normal times, and housing problems are worsening. Research suggests that if housing was more affordable in New York, San Francisco and San Jose, the U.S. economy would jump significantly. The same could be said for Toronto and Vancouver. These cities are the engine of Canada’s present and future. If people can’t afford to live there, it is all of Canada’s loss.”

There continues to be an acute shortage of market rental housing units in downtown Richmond and yet Richmond City Council only makes feeble token efforts to do something about it. A dramatic increase in the number of new market rental units is required to meet demand and bring down high rental rates driven by scarcity.

The Government of BC has given the City the power to designate all or a portion of new housing developments as market rental, but Council refuses to take bold action and endorsed the Richmond Centre redevelopment plan with only 200 market rental units and 1,850 units for sale to investors. Our children and grandchildren brought up in Richmond will resent this inaction as they are forced to move elsewhere and endure long commutes which add to our greenhouse gas emissions.

This Polygon Talisman Park proposal will create 1,226 residential units of which 150 are below market rental units. Ideally 80% of the remaining 1,076 units or 860 units, should be market rental. Instead there will only be 65 units or 6%, a ridiculously small number. This is even lower than the totally inadequate 10% market rental units in the Richmond Centre redevelopment.

Developers with short term financing who need to sell the housing units to repay their loans can instead sell entire buildings to pension plans and real estate investment trusts (REITs) that want the long term steady returns that come from rentals.

Even when investor purchasers of individual units rent them out, rental rates are high and service can be poor due to absentee landlords and the high costs of maintenance and repair. The best way to reduce these costs, provide prompt service and lower rental rates is through efficiencies of scale. The larger the purpose-built rental project, the lower the administrative costs with on-site rental offices and full-time maintenance and repair staff.

There is a very limited amount of land in downtown Richmond that can be used to create market rental housing and once Council allows it to be used to sell housing units to investors, it is lost forever. To prevent that happening, it is time for Council to send the strong message that Richmond’s priority for large downtown developments is purpose-built market and below market rental housing.

John Roston, Coordinator, Richmond Rental Housing Advocacy Group