



Mount Pleasant MPIC Meeting
Thursday April 11th, 2013
Mount Pleasant Community Centre
1 Kingsway
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Stuart Alcock, Stephen Bohus, Michelle Babiuk, Clarence Lai, Kay MacIntosh, Alyssa Myshok, Danielle Peacock, Robert Sutherland, Lewis Villegas, Heather Shea (COV), Harv Weidner (COV), Joyce Uyesugi (COV).

Regrets: Vanessa Brown, Jocelyne Hamel, Grace Mackenzie, Michelle Sturino, Chris Vollan

Guests: Colin Harper (GBL Architects), Dionne Delesalle (Onni Group)

Notes: Heather Shea

1. Introductions (Joyce Uyesugi/ Harv Weidner) (7:05pm start)

- New member introduction: Michelle Babiuk, has lived in Mount Pleasant for 9 years. There have been some concerns with respect to filming the meetings. Some people are uncomfortable with being filmed, though they would be okay with voice recording if necessary – can we have an explanation of why it is necessary.
 - Who has access to the footage? .
 - Stephen Bohus - The footage captured is intended for viewing by MPIC members only. The intention of the filming is to provide MPIC members with a check and balance with what was captured in the minutes.

2. Updates and next meeting (Joyce Uyesugi)

- Project at 2290 Main Street (Main and 7th, Arno Matis) was at the Urban Design Panel on April 10th, and was unanimously supported. Meeting minutes are available at <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/committees/minutes-urban-design-panel-20130410.pdf>.
 - The next step is further internal review, leading up to Council referral for a public hearing. Results from the Open House are with Yan Zeng, Rezoning Planner. The proposed FSR is 4.92.
- The second part of the public realm workshop is taking place this Saturday, April 13th with *Weaving Policy, People and Place Together*.
 - Approximately 50 people are registered at this time.
- Our April 27th event will be a combination of a street fair and an open house.
 - We will be promoting this event next week.There will be a neighbourhood cleanup in the morning, coordinated by *Keep Vancouver Spectacular*, and *Mount Pleasant CARES*. Contact Joyce if you would like to sign up to help clean up in the Broadway East area.

- Fraser Street will be closed from Broadway to the park for the Street Fair (12 – 2:30 p.m.). There will be various activities, music, food and information , including on Broadway East revitalization and community projects.
- From 2:30-5:00 there will be an open house at the *Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House* that provide an update on all of the implementation initiatives.

3. Development Permit Application: 401 Great Northern Way Colin Harper (GBL Architects), Dionne Delesalle (Onni Group)

Project information on City of Vancouver Website:

<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/developmentsservices/devapps/pc401greatnorthernway/index.htm>

- This development is not in the Mount Pleasant area and is a development permit not a rezoning and so is brought primarily for information.
- This is a residential development, but is also going to include artist space.
 - *Going for a warehouse and industrial theme.*
 - *Corrugated metal, large windows.*
 - *209 units proposed, open concept, polished concrete floors.*
 - *Artist studio guidelines are being followed. 2/3rds will be artist studios.*
 - *Majority of units will be 620 square foot studios. These are market units, not affordable rental units.*

Discussion/Questions

- Traffic from this development could affect Mount Pleasant. Is there any intent to offer reduced parking facilities, and push bicycle and transit in the way that you've designed the unit?
 - *Our building doesn't directly contribute to that, but it works around those parameters.*
 - *The building will have 215 parking spots. Proposed one parking stall per unit. (It is required that you have one parking lot per apartment). The neighbourhood has requested extra parking here.*
 - *There will be a bike fixing station.*
- The other side of the parking issue is that we have no parking spots on the street. Question whether the reality of not needing parking spaces has arrived yet. Great Northern Way is still full of cars, not as many people are commuting as we think are.
 - *Curbside parking that's free is always going to go quickly.*
- What policy shows that there is a definitive transit station planned to go in there?
- Was this formerly part of False Creek?
 - *We bought the site completely serviced from Great Northern Way campus. We are not aware of it being once part of False Creek.*
- Happy to see the pedestrian right of way restored to this area.
 - *The courtyard will be a public right of way.*
- Commercial could be useful here. If there's no retail, then there's nowhere to buy a litre of milk. This whole area is an area of transition. We don't want people to jump into their cars at 10:00pm to get one item from the grocery store.
 - *We are working within the City's guidelines.*
 - *There is no retail planned for here. The idea is to be able to see the artists at work on the ground floor. There are some townhouses that are 2 level artist studios.*
 - *Joyce: Residents here could be served in part by Lower Main as that area evolves into a mixed use residential area.*
- The reality is a business owner can't stay open for people to buy milk. We can't just look at building by building, we need to look at the bigger picture. This space would need unique shops that people would go out of their way to get to.
- The views could really sell, but the last level won't get the view. Can you do a live/work situation here?
 - *The 6 story wood frame is the route that we took to offer an affordable project.*

- Re: process: the site sign has been installed and a mailout has gone out to notify adjacent neighbours. *Additional comments on this project can be forwarded to Berg Balantzyan, Project Coordinator berb.balantzyan@vancouver.ca .*

4. Public Benefits Strategy Presentation (Harv Weidner)

Harv presented slides on work done to date on the Public Benefits Strategy.

Comments/Discussion

- Would like to exclude the industrial areas to see what the population density would look like without accounting for this land..
- Jobs are important to consider. We have a huge daytime population.
- If 1/3 of the population are going to be low income in the neighbourhood, is adding condos going to be problematic because low income and single parents will not be able to buy into condos? MPIC has a duty to raise these issues
- Could put underground utilities in Mount Pleasant so that the trees don't need to be split.
- There are no bike routes straight down to Gastown from Main Street, we could use one.
- In respect to "smaller growth related needs for the future" it would be a good idea to actually go out and do a survey of the area.
 - *Kids are going to schools in the area, things are changing with young families. Are families actually going to be able to move somewhere out of this neighbourhood?*
 - *This would be worth a look. Families are staying here.*
 - *Do we want this to change? And how could we change this?*
- Main and 7th: The City is considering this site for affordable housing. Affordable housing is a priority for Council. (Site was originally purchased to continue Kingsway Street, "Kingsway Connector".)
- That site was something that came up during the planning phase. In the plan it says that this is a site for public markets, a plaza.
 - *Yes, even with development we would want to include an open space component.*
- Would it remain city owned?
 - *Would be either city owned and/or leased to a non-profit organization for a long term lease.*
- We have many unused streets that could be ideal for a market. The first block of Kingsway, from Main to Broadway, has a diagonal street, this could be a neighbourhood market.
- This slideshow doesn't speak in any way to the character of the neighbourhood.
- Affordable housing and character were continually mentioned in the Community Plan, but we haven't come anywhere near what's important in the neighbourhood.
- Could identify Heritage, assist in this through money collected through development.
- When talking about developers, they should be looking at things relative to what currently sits on the property. For example, at Main and 3rd, the old building is Victorian looking. This becomes very significant as a demonstration of the architectural form that was used in the area.
- Could give developers a "quid quo pro" that they need to work on in dealing with Heritage issues.
- *Joyce: this overview is focusing on what is existing in the community. Comments received from upcoming Open House can help tailor the Public Benefits Strategy for Mount Pleasant.*
- *Joyce: There are existing tools that help preserve Heritage and we can review how these might relate to the public benefits strategy.*
- We can provide owners with incentives to clean up their Heritage buildings.
 - How can we get to have more discussion about Heritage? *Can we set a meeting for these issues?*
 - *MPIC members are always welcome to suggest agenda items for meetings.*

- Can we compare our Public Benefits Strategy with another one to see the differences?
 - *They aren't quite comparable.*
- This community centre is overflowing. Everyone that works and lives in the area all use the gym.
- Does the city look at trade-offs with developers?
 - *We often negotiate \$\$ contributions from developers.*

Other:

- For Main Street from 2nd to 7th, the level of density is going to really affect property values and we've already seen the social effect on property values. We want to keep the character and diversity in the neighbourhood. We were a very well defined community and we are being forced into adding height and density to this area. In my mind, this is not adhering to the Community Plan.

5. MPIC letter writing process (Joyce Uyesugi)

Joyce's notes on feedback received:

MPIC Letter Writing Process – Ideas and Suggestions March 2013

6 responses received, plus 1 shared opinion

Summary

- Interest in a process where different opinions can be expressed; desire to build greater cohesion and mutual respect despite differences
- Current process doesn't allow room for diverse opinions to be expressed in a respectful manner
- Support for trying to "make order out of chaos"
- Support for using individual comment forms as a tool in responding to developers
- Support for not cc'ing all members with responses; email is a clumsy tool for working through differences in ideas and opinion
- MPIC's role is advisory: can recommend on process and ideas as to how to engage the broader community, but no decision making authority
- Separate *interpretation* of Plan from *opinion*

Ideas and options for letter writing process

- Roundtable during MPIC meeting to collect ideas and opinion
- MPIC members hold separate meeting following developer presentation
- Two people draft up the letter
- Rotate the letter writing
- Categorize ideas and different people take responsibility for a category; then bring them together in one document.
- 'Minority' opinion is stated within the written 'majority' opinion
- Clarify timelines for various drafts; clarify when a written response is required
- COV Communications advice
 - Unanimity is not required; there is no expectation for a unified voice on [other] implementation items
 - Best practices show that individual responses/comment forms is efficient and meaningful
 - Suggestions for helping developers understand who they are hearing from
 - Where a letter is written, suggest putting names on letter including association if applicable (e.g. resident, BIA member, etc.)

- Include opting in question for sharing comments with other MPIC members
- Staff/MPIC prepare summary letter on level of support and attach individual comment sheets for sending to developer, within 2 weeks of presentation to MPIC

Feedback from MPIC Members:

- Could we have a more focused discussion on this issue? Joyce’s recommendation seems to be quite reasonable.
- A 3rd option would be to do nothing. Are we just wasting our time with this? Last time that our letter was sent out, our comments were not even listened to.
- We have 4 more meetings, this group will go until September. How many more developers can we expect to come to us? How many projects will we forward our comments to, is it worth spending the time to perfect this?
 - *What happens after September is unclear. Certainly down the road there will continue to be inquiries and applications, and if the community wants to have some formalized group then they can continue to do this.*
 - *If the city does terminate, the group could be kept running by the citizens, without the City planners.*
- On the comment forms that were collected at the last meeting: Joyce would suggest that we would go ahead and send them in as they are.
- Would Corporate Communications consider a type of blog to have this all in one place ie. have the minutes up there.

6. I-1 Industrial Area Public Hearing

This has already been approved and enacted. This item is no longer relevant for discussion.

7. Other

- More discussion is needed on the Benefits Strategy and Heritage.
 - What is our vision? How do we summarize this?
 - Suggestion of a workshop to go over these topics, could use this to bounce ideas on Heritage and character.
 - *This could go ahead on a Saturday.*

8. Next Meeting (May 9th) and Draft Agenda

- There are a lot of things the MPIC wants to talk about.
 - MPIC should consider whether they want to have these discussions on their own, and/or if they would like to have the City staff there. There needs to be some prioritizing of which topics are discussed when planning staff is present.
- MPIC member suggests: We have a lot more opportunity to influence concrete things that are happening in the neighbourhood. The more you go out to regional planning, the more you start to lose focus on Mount Pleasant.
- We need to focus on Mount Pleasant.

Meeting Adjourned

(9:10 pm end)